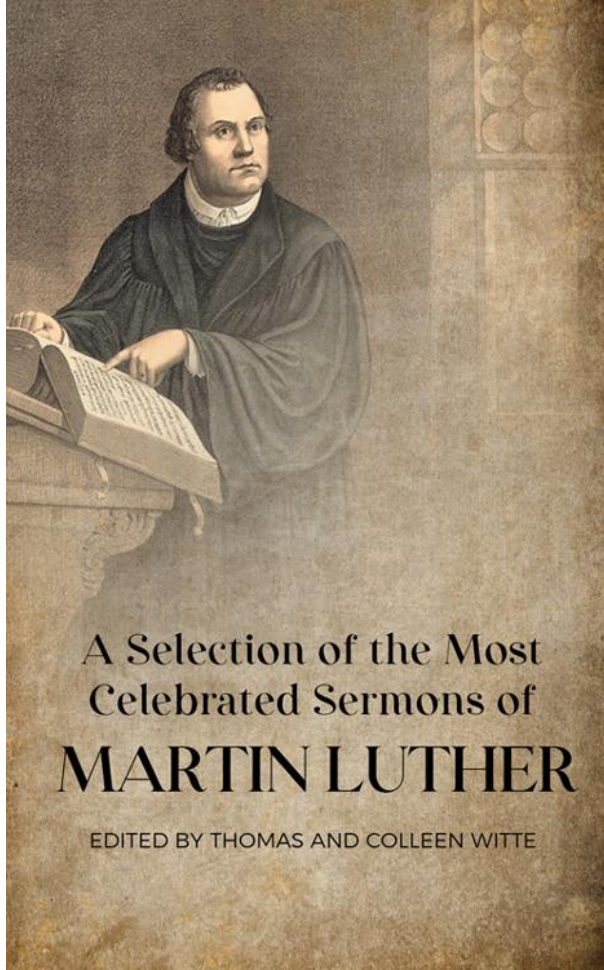




A Selection of the Most
Celebrated Sermons of
MARTIN LUTHER

EDITED BY THOMAS AND COLLEEN WITTE



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**A
SELECTION
OF
THE MOST CELEBRATED
SERMONS
OF
MARTIN LUTHER,**

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL,
AND PRINCIPAL LEADER IN THE
PROTESTANT REFORMATION

(never before published in the united states.)

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
A BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY
OF HIS LIFE.

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In offering this selection of Sermons to the public, the publishers have not been governed by Sectarian principles, but have selected Sermons upon various subjects, that the reader may understand the general doctrine held forth by this eminent divine. When we consider the mental darkness which enveloped the world in the days of Luther, under Popish superstition and idolatry, and that he was the first who attempted to emancipate the human intellect from more than “Egyptian darkness,” the reader will undoubtedly censure lightly any defects that may appear in his discourses; considering his great object to have been, the removal of that servile yoke of Papistry under which nations were groaning, and of bringing mankind into the liberty of the gospel.

Luther's Sermons, after having been translated, were published in the year 1581, and re-published in 1649. In consequence of the imperfection of the English language, when these Sermons were formerly published, it was found necessary to revise them,

and correct the language; but in so doing, particular care has been taken to preserve precisely the original meaning.

Southern District of New-York, ss,

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the seventh day of January, A.D. 1831, in the fifty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, S & D. A. Forbes, of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit: —

“A selection of the most celebrated Sermons of Martin Luther, minister of the gospel, and principal leader in the Protestant Reformation. (Never before published in the United States.) To which is prefixed, a biographical history of his life.

In conformity to the act of Congress of the United States, entitled, “an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned.” And also to an act, entitled, “an act, supplementary to an act, entitled, an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.”

FRED. J. BETTS,

Clerk of the Southern District of New- York

LIFE AND CHARACTER OF MARTIN LUTHER, D.D.

WITH A

DESCRIPTION OF THE REFORMATION.

EXTRACTED FROM THE WRITINGS OF J. G. BURCKHARDT, D.
D.

Before we give an account of Luther's life and character, some general observations will be made on the state of the Christian church before his time. What Isaias said of the state of the world before the advent of the Messiah, that ***darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people***, may be equally applied to the darkness of ignorance, idolatry and superstition, eclipsing the light of the gospel, many hundred years after our Lord's ascension. The state of the church, in the centuries preceding the ***reformation***, was indeed deplorable.

Since the time of Constantine, who declared in favour of Christianity, introducing the distinctions of the state and civil government into the discipline of the church, there had been a perpetual contention for supremacy or superiority between the bishops of Constantinople and Rome; till in the ninth century, the Eastern or Greek church was entirely separated from that of the West; and the ***pope*** of Rome, in the eleventh century, established his authority so prejudicial both to ***church*** and ***state***.

From that time the ***popes*** of Rome, as the pretended vicars of Christ, assumed a power little short of Omnipotence itself; and showed their despotick and domineering spirit in political as

well as ecclesiastical concerns; presuming to have the sovereignty over men upon earth, over the angels in heaven, and over the devils in hell. They dictated to the world a system of doctrine and morality suitable to their selfish views, but contrary to the word of God, which was forgotten, and forbidden to be read by laymen.

The authority and infallibility of the pope was the first article of the Christian belief; and the false opinions of indulgences, purgatory, relicks, pilgrimages, celibacy, &c. were more respected than the essential doctrines of the gospel. The bible was not read by the laity, nor understood by the clergy. The people were imposed upon by the fictitious relicks of persons and things which never had existed: viz, a piece of earth from which the first man was made; bones of the calf from which a meal was made at the joyful reception of the prodigal son; a step of the ladder which Jacob saw in a dream; a lamp of one of the foolish virgins; the skeleton of a child killed at Bethlehem, &c. and many instruments used at the crucifixion of Christ.

The history of the popes and clergy, in those times, is a history of the most horrid crimes: Rome was the school of political intrigue, and the seat of falsehood, adultery, avarice, lewdness, and homicide. There was nothing which could not be bought for ready money at the court of Rome: even the gifts of the Holy Ghost were sold to the highest bidder; and it was as customary to buy, sell, or exchange prebendaries and livings as any other estate. The lower clergy being forbidden to marry, were, however, allowed to violate their vows of celibacy by paying a certain sum, which was called the milk tax. These, and many other errors and abuses were brought into the church by the papal system or hierarchy, which Roman writers do not deny.

The necessity of a reformation of the church, of the pope, and of the clergy, was acknowledged and wished for on every side; and four general *convocations* and *diets* of the empire were held for that purpose: the first at Pisa, in Italy, 1409; the second at Constance, in Switzerland, from 1414—1418, where John Huss, that celebrated martyr, was burnt alive in the most unjust and cruel manner; the third at Siena, 1423; and the fourth at Basil, 1431.

The popes, however, always found means to elude that salutary design: and though in all the national assemblies the necessity of a reformation was proved and felt, the work itself, and the manner in which it was to be begun or effected, was a task too difficult for the wisest and best men of that age; till God, in mercy to his church, sent Luther to deliver the world from a darkness and bondage more oppressive than that of Egypt, and no less detrimental to society than destructive to religion.

Some steps indeed had been taken before, preparatory to it. The simplicity and purity of the evangelical doctrine had been preserved by few, in the midst of horrid persecutions, and the blood of martyrs was a seed from which more professors sprung. When Constantinople, the residence of the Christian emperors, was taken by the Turks in the year 1453, many learned men were driven to the western parts of Europe; where, particularly in Italy and Germany, they found an asylum for the study of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages, so necessary and useful in translating and explaining the literal sense of the sacred writings.

About the year 1440, the important art of printing was invented, to which the work of the reformation owes its more rapid progress; for by these means, printed bibles, the writings of Luther and other eminent reformers, were dispersed among thousands.

The foundation being laid, the great work itself begun, it was carried on with such evident marks of a divine interposition, that we have reason *to give thanks unto the Father, who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.*

What so many powerful and wise men, during centuries before, had tried in vain to accomplish, was suddenly effected by an Augustinian Friar, **MARTIN LUTHER**; whose great work, from an inconsiderable beginning, spread to an immense extent. The more enemies he had to oppose, the more he was encouraged to go on, till the good cause was victorious, and true religion restored to, and established in, the visible church of Christ.

Luther's birth and education.

Luther was born Nov. 10, 1483, at Eisleben, a town formerly belonging to the county of Mansfield in Thuringia, but at present subject to the elector of Saxony. His father, who was a miner, took particular care of the education of his son: during the progress of his study, he gave many indications of uncommon vigour and acuteness of genius.

While attending school at Magdeburg, the attention of an elderly rich lady, of the family of Cotta, was directed to him; who, his parents being poor, supported him in his literary pursuits. In the eighteenth year of his age, he was sent to the university at Erford to finish his education. His father had designed him for the law; but God directed it otherwise. His mind being naturally susceptible of serious impressions, and somewhat tinctured with that religious turn which delights in the solitude and devotion of a monastick life, he resolved to retire to the convent of Augustinian Friars. Mathesius, Luther's intimate friend, informs us of two awful accidents which he thinks

confirmed him in taking that resolution: the first was, that Alexius, an acquaintance of Luther, was stabbed; and the second, that he was struck down by lightning in a thunder storm. Be this as it will, Luther assumed the habit of that monastick order, without suffering the entreaties of his parents to divert him from what he thought his duty to God.

Luther soon acquired great reputation; not only for piety, but for his love of knowledge, and his unwearied application to study. He had been taught the scholastick philosophy and theology, but having found a copy of the Latin bible, which lay neglected in the library of his monastery, he abandoned all other pursuits, and devoted himself to the study of it with such eagerness and assiduity, as astonished the monks, who were little accustomed to derive their theological notions from that source.

To detain him from that uncommon course of study, they employed him in the meanest services of the convent; from which he was released by the intercession of Staupitz, who recommended him to Frederick, the elector of Saxony, to teach philosophy, and afterwards theology, at the university of Wittemberg, on the Elbe; in which place he was much admired, and made doctor and professor of divinity. This was of great comfort to him in many storms which gathered round him at the progress of his undertaking; and when his enemies disputed his right to reform the church, and asked who had given him that authority, his answer was, that he was lawfully called, and in taking his degree had sworn, not only to teach the sound doctrine of the gospel, and of the prophets and apostles, but to defend its purity against vain and heretical tenets.

It was by the bible his eyes were opened; and men of experience and foresight prophesied that he would effect a revolution in the church,

because, he studied the sacred records which had been so long neglected. It was one of the first principles of the reformation on which Luther acted. The bible was the source of his doctrine, the foundation of his faith, and the bulwark of his safety. With this sword of the spirit in his heart and hand, he defied the fierce attacks of his innumerable enemies. Having spent many a night in reading its holy contents in his solitary cell at the monastery, in the character of a publick teacher, he began to explain it to the students at Wittemberg.

The first book which he expounded was Paul's epistle to the Romans; in which the words, ***The just shall live by faith***, chap. i. 17, made a deep and lasting impression on his mind; and by writing his comment on the epistle to the Galatians, his knowledge and sense of justification by faith was augmented. In 1510 he went a journey to Rome, as commissioner of his order, to settle some affairs there, where he had an opportunity of being an eye witness to the degenerate state and ignorance of the clergy. After he returned to Wittemberg, he continued to preach the gospel with uncommon eloquence and power, to listening multitudes. Being commissioned by Staupitz, in the year 1516, to hold visitations in the monasteries of the Augustine order, as an under vicar, he recommended to the friars the reading of the bible; and the seed thus scattered in different places, by his good advice and counsel, did not fail to produce the most salutary fruits.

The beginning of the reformation, by Luther's opposing the sale of Indulgences; A. D. 1517.

Leo X., who filled at that time the papal throne, finding the revenues of the church exhausted by the vast projects of his ambitious predecessors, and his own extravagance, tried every device to increase his finances; and among others, had recourse to the sale of

Indulgences; which Luther, from laudable motives, had the boldness publickly to oppose. Since it was from that source that all the mighty effects of the reformation flowed, it deserves to be considered with more minute attention.

Dr. Robertson, in the history of Charles V., gives the following account of the origin and nature of **indulgences**; a subject almost unknown in protestant countries, and little understood at present in several places where even the Roman Catholic religion is established. “According to the doctrine of the Romish Church, all the good works of the saints, over and above those which were necessary towards their own justification, are deposited, together with the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, in one inexhaustible treasury. The keys of this were committed to St Peter, and to his successors, the popes; who may open it at pleasure, and by transferring a portion of this super-abundant merit to any particular person for a sum of money, may convey to him either the pardon of his own sins, or a release for any one in whose happiness he is interested, from the pains of purgatory. Such indulgences were first invented in the eleventh century, by Urban II. as a recompense for those who went in person upon the meritorious enterprise of conquering the Holy Land. They were afterwards granted to those who hired a soldier for that purpose; and in process of time, were bestowed on such as gave money for accomplishing any pious work enjoined by the pope. Julius II. had bestowed indulgences on all who contributed towards building the church of St. Peter at Rome; and as Leo was carrying on that magnificent and expensive fabrick, his grant was founded on the same pretence.”

Albert, elector of Mentz, and archbishop of Magdeburg, having been empowered by the pope to promulgate indulgences in Germany,

employed Tetzal, a Dominican Friar of licentious morals, to retail them in Saxony. This infamous traffick was conducted in a manner which gave general offence. The Roman Chancery published a book, containing the precise sum to be exacted for the pardon of each particular sin. A deacon guilty of murder, was absolved for twenty crowns: a bishop or abbot, might assassinate for three hundred livres: any ecclesiastick might violate his vows of chastity for one hundred livres. Tetzal violated all the laws of decency in recommending the purchase of indulgences; the efficacy of which was so great, he said, that as soon as the money tinkled in the chest, the souls escaped from the torments of purgatory.

Some traders in indulgences had recourse to the exposing of relicks; as a *plume* from the wing of the angel Michael; some *hay* upon which Christ was laid after his birth; some *coals* upon which St. Ignatius had been burnt, &c. Indulgences could be had not only for past, but future sins; which Tetzal, however, in one instance, found to be to his own disadvantage: for a soldier having purchased the day before indulgence for a sin which he intended to commit, attacked him the next day in a forest, taking from him the chest of money, under pretence of having bought before of him the right to rob him.

They carried on this extensive and lucrative traffick among the credulous and ignorant for some time; and immoralities and crimes increased by the facility with which pardon could be obtained. The deluded people being taught to rely on the indulgences for the pardon of their sins, did not think it necessary either to study the doctrines, or practise the duties of Christianity.

Such was the deplorable state of the Christian church when Luther made his first appearance. He found the evil effects of the sale of indulgences, in the immoral lives of his parishioners. When they

came to the auricular confession, he told them, ***Except ye repent, ye shall all perish***; (Luke xiii. 3.) a doctrine which they could not, or would not understand, since they had the seal of their pardon in their pockets.

When Tetzl was informed that Luther opposed his trade in private, he was so much exasperated, that he preached publicly against him, and all those that dared to resist the authority of the pope. Luther, who was at the height of his reputation, and whose pious zeal was warm and active, wrote to Albert, and remonstrated against the false opinions, as well as the wicked lives of the preachers of indulgences: but he found that prelate too deeply interested in their success to correct their abuses. He then published ninety-five ***theses***, Oct. 31, 1517, containing his sentiments with regard to indulgences; and challenging any one to oppose them, either by writing or disputation.

The first of these ***theses*** was; ***Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, commanding repentance, requires that the whole life of his believers on earth, is to be a perpetual repentance without intermission.*** These theses were not yet perfectly free from his implicit submission to the authority of the Apostolick See: but they were spread in a fortnight's time over all Germany, with astonishing rapidity. They were translated and read with the greatest eagerness, and all admired the boldness of the man who ventured to oppose a power at which all the princes of Europe trembled; and which they had long, though without success, been endeavouring to overturn.

The secular princes had reason to be jealous of the growing power of papal authority, and its exactions, draining, their credulous subjects of their wealth. But in the elector of Saxony, the wisest prince at that time in Germany, it was not so much interest, as the love of truth and

justice, to support and screen Luther from the violence of his enemies. No sooner had Luther given the signal of attack upon the overbearing power of the pope, than a general attention was excited throughout Germany, how the boldness of the measure would end. While popish sophists, as Eccius and Prierias, wrote against, others rose in support of Luther.

The court of Rome little regarded this controversy at first, but the progress of Luther's opinions soon appeared too serious to be despised; and Leo summoned him to appear at Rome: but Luther had his reasons to decline this invitation, and wished rather to be tried in Germany. The university, as well as the elector of Saxony, interceded in his behalf with the pope, who so far gratified them, as to empower his legate in Germany, cardinal Cajetan, a Dominican, to try the cause. It was strange, however, that in the pope's letter to Cajetan, Luther was already declared a heretick, and condemned before he was heard and tried.

Luther arrived at Augsburg, Oct. 8, 1518; and under the safe conduct of the emperor, but much more of his own native intrepidity and just cause, waited on the cardinal; who, in a haughty manner, insisted upon a simple recantation, and desired him to abstain for the future from the publication of new and dangerous doctrines; such as, that the merit and atonement of Christ did not belong to the treasury of the church, and had nothing to do with the sale of indulgences; and that faith was required in receiving the holy sacrament worthily. The cardinal declared in private, that if Luther was ready to recant in point of indulgences, the doctrine about faith was of no great matter; which is a plain proof that **money** was of higher value at Rome than **faith**.

Luther declared that he could not renounce opinions founded in reason, and derived from scripture; that he was willing to submit to the mediation of some universities; and at the same time delivering a formal protest, the cardinal asked— “What do you mean? Do you rely on the force of arms? When the just punishment, and the thunder of the pope's indignation break in upon you, where do you think to remain?” His answer was, “***either in Heaven, or under Heaven.***” At last the cardinal forbid his appearing again in his presence; and since there was strong reason to suspect that he was not safe, he was prevailed on to depart from Augsburg and return to Wittenberg.

The pope, as well as his legate Cajetan, did every thing to bring over the ***elector***, his master, to their design; that he might be sent to Rome, and delivered up to their vindictive indignation: but that prince was too wise and cautious to comply with their request: and when Luther was about to quit Saxony, not to give his sovereign any uneasiness, the latter, finding it his interest to keep such a man as an ornament to his university, assured him of his protection. The German reformer, however, was in a perilous situation still; and for his safety, published an appeal to a general council, which he maintained was superior to the pope; whose infallibility he began to call in question.

He continued his inquiries from one doctrine to another, and having till now little thought that his actions would have such an effect as to produce a revolution, he began to form higher ideas of his call, and that it was nothing less than to assert the liberty of mankind.

Luther's excommunication, and perseverance.

The court of Rome published, with all formalities, a ***bull*** of excommunication against Luther, June 15, 1520; in which not

only himself, but his followers and protectors, were outlawed and condemned as hereticks; which all the princes and subjects of the empire were called upon to seize and deliver into the hands of justice: but Luther's undaunted spirit acquired additional fortitude from such an instance of opposition. He complained of the impiety and injustice of the pope, and boldly declared him to be the **man of sin**, or **antichrist**; and exhorted all Christian princes to shake off his yoke.

Luther's books having been burnt in several places, he, by way of retaliation, in the presence of a vast number of spectators in a field near Wittemberg, with great pomp threw the pope's **bull** of excommunication and the canon law into the flames, with these words; **Since thou hast grieved the Holy Ghost, may eternal fire grieve and devour thee!** This action, which has been censured by his enemies with much severity, he has justified by a particular publication: and the reasons he assigned for it were, because it was a custom to burn poisoned and hurtful writings; and that as a doctor of divinity, he was called to destroy the weed grown in the church of Christ; and because his enemies had done the same with his books.

It was not the design of Luther, at first, to overturn the whole system of papal arrogance and superstition; but the opposition with which he met, in questions where truth and justice were unquestionably on his side, urged him to proceed in the discussion of other subjects. The doctrine of justification, and our acceptance with God by faith, being once fixed, he was naturally led to inquire into the doctrines connected with it: and having overthrown the errors with respect to indulgences, he was soon convinced of the idolatry of worshipping saints; of the vain trust reposed in pilgrimages; of the delusive

terrors of purgatory, and of other false doctrines and practices of the church.

Waldus, Wiclef, Huss, and other martyrs of religious truth, in the foregoing centuries, had indeed prepared the way; but they were too feeble lights, not to be extinguished by the power of darkness. Many grievous complaints had been made known in the diets of the empire; but the influence of papal authority had grown too strong to be resisted. The clergy indulged themselves in all the vices to which idleness and affluence naturally give birth. It was reserved for Luther to attack boldly the prevailing corruption. The circumstances under which he began and effected the reformation, the wonderful concatenation of so many causes, the seasonable preparations made for spreading his opinions and tenets, evince the intervention of a higher power, and that the same God who planted the gospel, was watchful to preserve it from utter destruction.

The invention of printing, half a century before, and the revival of learning, was extremely favourable to the progress of the reformation; and many learned men, as Melanchthon, Erasmus, and Reuchlin, who, on account of the timidity of their tempers, would not have ventured to wage the war with a powerful enemy, assisted Luther with their learning; who had a mind furnished with all the stores of solid and useful literature, united with the courage and boldness of an invincible champion.

Proceedings of the diet at Worms; with Luther's trial and concealment, 1521.

At the diet of Worms, after some deliberations concerning the political affairs of the empire, the state of religion was taken into consideration; and Luther was summoned to appear, and give an account of his writings and opinions. Some of his friends,

being apprehensive of his safety, advised him not to go to a place, where, perhaps, like Huss, he would be burnt: but his undaunted spirit was superior to the fears and terrors of danger; he thus replied to his friends: "I am lawfully called to that city, and thither will I go and defend the truth in the name of the Lord, though as many devils as there are tiles upon the houses were there combined against me. The same Lord is still living who preserved the three men in the fiery furnace." It appears to have been his firm resolution, rather to lose his life, than to recant.

Many princes and noblemen, together with a vast number of admiring spectators, left the town to meet him upon the road. Many of the popish legates and ecclesiasticks privately instigated the emperor, Charles V., to imitate the example of the council of Constance, and silence this incorrigible heretick with the flames of a pile, or by the hands of an executioner. But the emperor, as well as other members of the diet, would not consent to violate the publick faith, and stain the German name and history with such another ignominious action; by which, notwithstanding an imperial *safe-conduct* Huss, a hundred years before, had been burnt.

There was, perhaps, never a trial before a higher court and more august assembly. It consisted of the emperor and his brother Ferdinand, six electors, many princes, dukes and states of the empire, bishops, abbots, ambassadors and officers. Luther appeared twice before this awful tribunal; the first time on the 17th of April, 1521, when, on account of the crowd of people, the herald conducted him through private apartments to the great hall, where to his great surprise and comfort, he heard a spectator repeat to him the words of our Saviour: "Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake: but when they deliver you

up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.” Mat. x. 18, 19. Luther was not over-awed by such a sight, but behaved with great calmness, decency, and firmness.

Two questions were put to him to answer: the first, whether he confessed the books which lay before him to be his writings? and the second, whether he would recant or not? To the first, he prudently replied, that he could not acknowledge any book to be his own unless they specified the title to him; and as to the second, he desired another day to consider of it. This being granted, at his second appearance he acknowledged the books to be his productions, and at the same time, that in some of his controversial works, he had been rather vehement and acrimonious; but refused to retract his opinions, unless he were convinced from the word of God that they were false. “I cannot (said he) consent to be tried by any other rule than the word of God; for **councils** and **popes** have erred, and are not infallible. Unless I am bound and forced in my own mind by arguments which convey conviction, to retract, it is not safe to do it. Here I am—I cannot! I dare not! I will not! So help me God. Amen.” This was the language of a man, who standing upon bible ground, like an unshaken rock in the midst of a roaring sea and tremendous storm, challenged all the world to refute him.

Neither the entreaties of his friends, nor the threats of his enemies, could prevail on him to depart from this resolution. When the elector of Saxony consulted him how matters could be settled to the satisfaction of both parties, he gave him the advice of Gamaliel. Curiosity, as well as high regard for the man who had stood the trial so well, and was the leader of a great party, was the cause of many visits from personages of the highest rank, during his stay at Worms. A few days after his departure, a most severe and cruel **edict** of the

emperor was published against him; by which not only himself was deprived of all the privileges which he enjoyed as a subject of the empire, but all princes and persons were forbidden, under the penalty of high treason, loss of goods, and being put to the ban of the empire, to receive or defend, maintain or protect, Luther or his opinions.

However, his faithful and discerning patron, the elector of Saxony, took a prudent precaution to screen him from the fury of the storm: for while Luther was on his return from Worms, he was taken and carried to Wartburg, a strong castle near Eisenach. While the emperor's edict was thundering throughout the empire, Luther was safely shut up for nine months in this place; which he used to call his Patmos and Hermitage. While in this place, he employed his time in publishing several treatises, and in translating the New Testament into the German language; which was shortly after printed; whereby his followers were enabled to read and judge for themselves. People of all ranks read the translation with uncommon avidity, and were astonished to discover the great difference between the doctrine of Christ, and that of his pretended *vice-regent* at Rome.

Luther, after remaining nine months in the castle, addressed a letter to the elector of Saxony, informing him that he had not received the gospel from man, but from Heaven, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and that he intended to call himself a servant and evangelist of God: and for fear of doing discredit to the gospel, he was constrained by necessity and his own conscience, to proceed in a different manner. Thinking his presence absolutely necessary at Wittemberg, without waiting for the elector's permission, he left his retreat, and forgetting the danger to which he was exposed, seemed only concerned for his cause. This shows the greatness of his mind and faith; to brave in such a manner the fury of a frowning world, and to rush into the

most imminent danger, rather than lie safely concealed in an inglorious retreat.

Many indeed were the enemies of Luther and his doctrine; for while the most mighty princes and their edicts threatened without, the disputes about doctrinal points, the extravagance of fanaticks and revolting peasants, tended to sap the foundation within. But many were also the patrons and favourers of the reformed doctrine and mode of worship; and the example of a progressive and gradual reformation adopted in Saxony, was followed by many countries of the Germanick empire and other parts of Europe.

In the year 1526, Luther was married to ***Catharine A. Bore***, a nun of noble family, who had thrown off the veil and fled from the cloister. He has been censured for it as intemperate, and breaking through the bonds of chastity and monastick order. He maintained, however, by that act, the natural right of marriage for the whole succeeding clergy of his party, which they had been deprived of before, contrary to the law of nature and revelation, by the presumptive power of the pope.

Origin of the name of Lutherans and Protestants; and further progress of the Reformation.

Eccius, Luther's inveterate antagonist, was the first who used the name ***Lutherans***, to denote the followers of that great reformer; and though he meant to express by it a refractory sect and party, separating from the established church, in the progress of time it became honourable and characteristic. Luther was always averse to introducing his own or any other name into the church, which could give rise to distinctions; which he considered injurious to the bonds of brotherly love, and repugnant to the spirit of religion. He would

have his disciples call themselves **Christians**; for, said he, our only master is Christ.

But the origin and design of the name of **protestants** requires a minute investigation. During the long absence of Charles in Italy, the party of Luther had gained so much ground, that the new form of worship was established, and the rites of the Romish church suppressed in the territories of many imperial cities. A diet had been held in the year 1526, when a decree passed, which was almost equivalent to a toleration of Luther's opinions. But by another decree of the diet of Spire, where Ferdinand presided, in the year 1529, matters were differently decided. It was decreed, that where the edict of Worms had been received and obeyed, none should change the old religion; that the Romans should have every where a free exercise of religion, but no one be permitted to embrace the new heresy; and that no farther innovation in religion should be attempted before the meeting of a general council. But six evangelical princes, and fourteen free and imperial states and cities, entered a solemn **protest** against this decree, and were on that account distinguished by the name of **protestants**; which in progress of time has been applied to all denominations which have separated from the Roman See.

Not less memorable are the proceedings of the diet assembled at Augsburg, June, 1530. The emperor made his publick entry with great pomp; and when Campeggio, the legate of the pope, who was in his suite, gave the benediction, all the Roman princes, with the emperor, fell down upon their knees, but the protestant princes stood erect. The elector of Saxony, successor to Frederick, who died, 1524, espoused the same cause with the same zeal and prudence: he would not permit Luther to accompany him to Augsburg, but left him at a castle in Coburg; where

a correspondence was kept up, in which everything was communicated to Luther, who endeavoured to confirm and animate his party by several treatises and letters.

Melanchthon had drawn up a confession of faith in the name of the protestants, which was read June 25th, both in German and Latin, before the emperor and the whole assembly; by which means many were better informed relative to the doctrine of the protestants. This creed, which is known by the name of the ***Confession of Augsburg***, consists of twenty-eight articles, and is the first symbolical book of the Lutherans. Melanchthon, who was of a gentle and pacifick disposition, altered some articles in it, after it was delivered into the hands of the emperor. It was soon printed and translated into different languages.

The emperor insisted upon the return of the protestant princes to the mother church, and in case of resistance, threatened to take rigorous measures against such obstinate hereticks. There were now so many marks of distinction established between the two contending parties, that all hopes of union disappeared. A severe decree of the diet was issued against the protestants, which almost amounted to a full prohibition of their religious liberty; and contained even encroachments upon their rights as states and citizens of the empire. Charles himself acceded to the combination of popish princes for the maintenance of the established religion. This alarmed the protestant princes, and they were convinced of the necessity of a similar union for their own safety, as well as for the success of their cause. Accordingly, they assembled at Smalkalden, in Dec. 1530, and concluded a treaty of mutual defence against all aggressors; by which they became a regular political body, and implored the kings of France and England to assist their new confederacy. Luther was not quite satisfied with this league; and often expressed his

apprehension, that if the princes depended on the force of arms, or made the first attacks, the flames of a religious war would be kindled all over Germany, not easily to be extinguished. The prediction was fulfilled after his death.

Luther made his attack upon the popish system with such formidable impetuosity, that the very foundation of the papal authority was shaken. The minds of men were roused to shake off that yoke to which they had hitherto submitted, and to assert their liberties both as men and Christians. A spirit of innovation broke out in different parts of Europe, and penetrated even into those provinces which acknowledged the papal supremacy.

As early as the year 1518, Ulrich Zwinglius of Switzerland, publicly remonstrated against the scandalous sale of indulgences. Luther had the happiness to see his cause espoused by vast multitudes of people of every rank, not only in the provinces of Germany, but in the most powerful kingdoms of Europe. In France, the number of converts in a short time were so great, that they ventured to contend for superiority: but under the name of Hugonots, they were persecuted in a most shocking manner.

Henry VIII. of England remained zealously attached to the Romish church, and was so exasperated against Luther, that he wrote the book on the seven sacraments, in answer to his opponent's treatise on the Babylonish captivity; for which Leo X., as a testimony of gratitude, conferred on him the title of *defender of the faith*. But when he was opposed by the pope, in his claim to a divorce with his queen, he threw off his yoke of allegiance to the *holy father*, and acted upon the same principles (though not with the same wisdom) as Luther, in reforming the errors and abuses of the church, and striking at the root of papal dominion in his kingdom. Denmark,

Sweden, and other northern countries, were soon brought over to the same system; and even in Italy, Spain, and other bigotted countries, the protestant doctrine gained many proselytes.

Many commotions ensued in all those countries between contending parties. The Romans, thinking themselves exclusively possessed of truth, and relying on the pope as the pretended vicar of Christ, and only supreme judge and arbiter in religion, persecuted the protestants with a cruelty, unheard of even in the pagan world. Human nature recoils at the recollection of tortures and cruelties which were committed by that hydra, the inquisition, against innocent and defenceless protestants. The history of France is stained with the treacherous and bloody massacre of all the protestants, at the marriage of Henry, in the year 1572. Nor was the religious liberty of England bought without blood. The flames of Smithfield in London, the Irish Massacre, the Gunpowder Treason, may convince us of the open attacks, and secret machinations of popery, to over-turn the effects of the **reformation**; until it was established in the reign of queen Elizabeth.

Germany was for near a century the theatre of war and bloodshed. No sooner had Luther closed his eyes, than the confederates of Smalkalden were involved in a war; in which the leader of the protestant party, the elector of Saxony, was taken prisoner. Charles V. by a stretch of his imperial power, deprived that unfortunate but generous prince of his electoral dignity, and transferred it to Maurice, a Saxon prince of another branch of the family; who with a view of such a reward, had deserted the protestant cause, and joined the emperor to take arms against his kinsman. About the same time the landgrave of Hesse, another associate in the Smalkaldick league, was obliged to surrender himself and his dominions to the disposal

of the emperor, and accede to a most humiliating treaty. Thus the reformation in Germany seemed to be overturned; when suddenly Maurice began to act another part, and was instrumental in reviving it. Maurice, having remonstrated against some gross impositions practised by the imperial ministers upon the landgrave, his father-in-law, and finding his intercession with Charles to be of no effect, began to form designs against the emperor; and after a successful attack, forced him to sign *the peace at Passau* in the year 1552; and three years after, *the recess of Augsburg*; the basis of religious peace in Germany.

Another war broke out in the year 1618, which lasted thirty years; in which the protestant princes fought with unequal contest against the Roman confederacy. The king of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus, a protector of the protestant cause, was killed near Lutzen, a village in Saxony. After much confusion and many bloody battles, the protestant religion was established forever in Germany, by the treaty of Westphalia, concluded in the year 1648. *Death and Interment of Luther, with some remarks upon his Character.*

Luther died February the 18th, A. D. 1546, at Eisleben, where he was born. The Almighty, who had protected him against so many dangers, saved him by a seasonable death from the tempest which was gathering, and ready to break forth against his followers. When he felt his strength declining, he made his last will, which is preserved in its original state at Wittemberg; which concludes as follows: "I had my reason to omit in my last will the usual legal formalities; and I hope I shall be credited more than a notary: for I am well known in the world, since God the Father of all mercy has intrusted me, an unworthy sinner, with the gospel of his Son, and enabled me to this day to preach it with truth, faithfulness and perseverance; that many persons in the world have been

converted by my ministry, and think me a doctor of truth, notwithstanding the ban of the pope, the emperor, and the wrath of many kings, princes, parsons, yea, and of all the devils. Why then should I not be credited in a matter so insignificant; particularly since my hand writing is well known, and sufficient, if it can be said, this is written by Dr. Martin Luther, the notary of God and witness of his gospel.”

Though he felt great pain during his last illness, his native intrepidity did not forsake him: he conversed with his friends to the last, about the happiness of the future world, and of meeting again hereafter. When the pain began to increase, and death approached, he called for Justus Jonas, who had accompanied him from Halle to Eisleben; who heard him repeat three times these words: “Father, into thy hand I give up my spirit”—and say the following prayer: “O my heavenly Father, who art the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, thou God of all comfort, I thank thee for having revealed to me thy dear Son Jesus Christ, on whom I believe, whom I have preached and professed, loved and praised, but who is despised and persecuted by the pope and all the wicked. I pray to thee, Lord Jesus Christ, let my soul be recommended to thee. O my heavenly Father, though I must leave this body of clay, and depart this life, I know for certain that I shall remain forever with thee, and that no one shall pluck me out of thy hand.” When marks of approaching death appeared in his face, Jonas asked him, “Reverend father, do you die in Christ, and upon the doctrine which you have preached?” having answered with a loud voice, “Yes!” he fell into a soft sleep, and expired.

His remains were laid in a tin coffin, and carried to St Andrew's church at Eisleben; where, on the succeeding days, Drs. Jonas and Coelius preached funeral sermons: the first from 1 Thess. iv. 13

— 18; the second from Isa. lvii. 1, 2. In a solemn procession it was carried from thence to Wittemberg, where it was deposited in a vault in the electoral church. A brazen plate covers the grave, whereon is an inscription to his memory; and opposite to it is the tomb of Melanchthon.

Luther has been justly celebrated as the greatest man since the time of the apostles. Many great and pious men attempted before him to stop the current of popish idolatry, superstition, and rapaciousness; but they fell victims to that haughty and overbearing power, and were silenced in dungeons, or in the flames of a pile. It was reserved for Luther to deliver the world from more than an Egyptian servitude; although danger surrounded him on every side, he carried on, unhurt, the great work of the reformation, under the protection of Heaven, against the resistance of the most formidable powers on earth. His mind and heart seemed to be endowed from above with more than common gifts, and such talents as constitute a great reformer.

From this short narrative of his life, it is evident that he was appointed by a higher hand, as the instrument for executing the great design of the Divine government: he was led on step by step, under the most favourable circumstances, to overturn the system of popery, and establish the gospel of Christ. He was resolved to stand or fall with the just cause of truth, liberty and religion. He would not come to any compromise with his enemies, or recur to palliatives and improper remedies to cure the evil: he aimed a deeper blow; to strike at the very root of an authority so prejudicial and opposite to the principles and rights of true Christianity. He did not, however, pull down before he knew what he could build up in its stead; all his proceedings were stamped with marks of the most circumspect prudence and caution. The minds of men were prepared by degrees

for such a necessary and useful innovation in the doctrines of the church. As a good shepherd, he did not take care of the sheep only, but of the lambs also; having provided for the adult the most salutary spiritual food, by the translation of the bible, he wrote his catechism to instruct the rising generation in the principles of religion.

It is not pretended that Luther was a sun without a spot; but it must be confessed that he was a great reformer, and a sincere Christian. He showed on all occasions respect to superiours, and obedience to lawful authority. But when he found himself treated in an unjust manner, and authority abused for the oppression of innocence and truth, he looked upon **emperors, kings, and popes**, with contempt; and called them as enemies of God, by names which they were not used to hear from their flatterers. In his treatise, entitled, "Popery established by the Devil," he calls the pope, instead of **holy**, a **hellish** father. If a change of heart by the grace of God and influence of the Holy Spirit, if a true and living faith in Christ the Redeemer of the world, if the love of God's word and fervent prayer, constitute the character of a good Christian, Luther is entitled to it in an eminent degree. A short time before his death, he was often heard praying that the Lord might receive his soul, and establish the kingdom of truth and peace after his death.

The Lord has heard his prayers; for though he is dead, yet he speaketh; and his doctrines are so deeply rooted, that they still flourish independent of the hand which planted them. May we, from this sketch of the life and character of that great man, be convinced of what God has done in former times for establishing our faith by this reformer; and endeavour to copy that illustrious example of faith, which he has left us as a Christian.

LUTHER'S SERMONS

SERMON I.

Galatians, Chap iv. from the first to the seventh verse, inclusive.

1. Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;
2. But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.
3. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:
4. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,
5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.
7. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

This text touches the very pith of Paul's chief doctrine; the cause why it is well understood but by few, is, not that it is so obscure and hard, but because there is so little knowledge of faith left in the world, with which it cannot be that one rightly understands Paul, who every where treats of faith with such force of spirit. I must therefore speak

in such a manner, that this text will appear plain; and that I may more conveniently illustrate it, I will speak a few words by way of preface.

First, therefore, we must understand the treatise in which good works are set forth, far different from that which treats of justification; as there is a great difference between the substance and the working; between a man and his work. Justification is of man, and not of works; for man is either justified and saved, or judged and condemned, and not works. Neither is it a controversy among the godly, that man is not justified by work, but righteousness must come from some other source than from his own works: for Moses, writing of Abel, says, “The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering.” First he had respect to Abel himself, then to his offering; because Abel was first counted righteous and acceptable to God, and then for his sake his offering was accepted also, and not he because of his offering. Again, God had no respect to Cain, and therefore neither to his offering: therefore thou seest that regard is had first to the worker, then to the work.

From this it is plainly gathered, that no work can be acceptable to God, unless he which worketh it was first accepted by him: and again, that no work is disallowed of him, unless the author thereof be disallowed before. I think these remarks will be sufficient concerning this matter at present, of which it is easy to understand that there are two sorts of works; those before justification, and those after it; and that these last are good works indeed, but the former only appear to be good. Hereof cometh such disagreement between God and those counterfeit holy ones; for this cause **nature** and **reason** rise and rage against the Holy Ghost; this is that of which almost the whole scripture treats. The Lord in his word defines all works that go before justification to be evil, and of

no importance, and requires that man before all things be justified. Again, he pronounces all men which are unregenerate, and have that nature which they received of their parents unchanged, to be unrighteous and wicked, according to that saying, Ps. 116. "All men are liars," that is, unable to perform their duty, and to do those things which they ought to do; and Gen. 6. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually whereby he is able to do nothing that is good, for the fountain of his actions, which is his heart, is corrupted. If he do works which outwardly seem good, they are no better than the offering of Cain.

Here again comes forth *reason*, our reverend mistress, seeming to be marvellously wise; but who indeed is unwise and blind, gainsaying her God, and reproving him of lying; being furnished with her follies and feeble armour, to wit, the light of nature, free will, the strength of nature, also with the books of the heathen and the doctrines of men; contending that the works of a man not justified, are good works, and not like those of *Cain*; yea, and so good, that he that worketh them is justified by them; that God will have respect first to the works, then to the worker. Such doctrine now bears the sway every where in schools, colleges, and monasteries, wherein no other saints than *Cain* was, have rule and authority. Now from this error comes another; they which attribute so much to works, and do not accordingly esteem the worker, and sound justification, go so far, that they ascribe all merit and righteousness to works done before justification; making no account of faith, alleging that which James saith, that without works faith is dead. This sentence of the apostle they do not rightly understand; making but little account of faith, they always stick to works, whereby they think to merit exceedingly, and are persuaded that for their work's sake they shall obtain the favour of God: by this means they continually disagree with God, showing themselves to be the posterity of *Cain*. God hath respect

unto man, these to the works of man; God alloweth the work for the sake of him that worketh, these require that for the work's sake the worker may be crowned.

But here, perhaps, thou wilt say, what is needful to be done? by what means shall I become righteous and acceptable to God? how shall I attain to this perfect justification? The gospel answers, teaching that it is necessary that thou hear Christ, and repose thyself wholly on him, denying thyself and distrusting thine own strength; by this means thou shalt be changed from **Cain** to **Abel**, and being thyself acceptable, shalt offer acceptable gifts to the Lord. It is faith that justifieth thee: thou being endued therewith, the Lord remitteth all thy sins by the mediation of Christ his Son; in whom this faith believeth and trusteth. Moreover, he giveth unto such a faith his spirit, which changes the man and makes him anew, giving him another reason and another will. Such a one worketh nothing but good works. Wherefore nothing is required unto justification, but to hear Jesus Christ our Saviour, and to believe in him. Howbeit these are not the works of nature, but of grace.

He, therefore, that endeavours to attain these things by works, shutteth the way to the gospel, to faith, grace, Christ, God, and all things that help unto salvation. Again, nothing is necessary in order to accomplish good works but justification; and he that hath attained it performs good works, and not any other. Hereof it sufficiently appears that the beginning, the things following, and the order of man's salvation are after this sort; first of all it is required that thou hear the word of God, next that thou believe, then that thou work, and so at last become saved and happy. He that changes this order, without doubt is not of God. Paul also describes this, saying, Rom. x. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on

him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?"

Christ teaches us to pray the Lord of the harvest, to send forth labourers into his harvest; that is, sincere preachers. When we hear these preach the true word of God, we may believe; which faith justifies a man, and makes him godly indeed, so that he now calls upon God in the spirit of holiness, and works nothing but that which is good, and thus becomes a man saved. Thus he that believeth shall be saved; but he that worketh without faith is condemned; as Christ saith, he that doth not believe shall be condemned, from which no works shall deliver him. Some say, I will now endeavour to become honest; it is meet surely that we study to lead an honest life, and to do good works. But if one ask them how we may apply ourselves unto honesty, and by what means we may attain it, they answer, that we must fast, pray, frequent temples, avoid sins, &c. Whereby one becomes a Chatterhouse Monk, another chooses some other order of Monks, and another is consecrated a priest: some torment their flesh by wearing hair cloth, others scourge their bodies with whips, others afflict themselves in a different manner; but these are of **Cain's** progeny, and their works are no better than his: for they continue the same that they were before, ungodly, and without justification; there is a change made of outward works only, of apparel, of place, &c.

They scarce think of faith, they presume only on such works as seem good to themselves, thinking by them to get to heaven. But Christ said, enter in at the straight gate, for I say unto you, many seek to enter in and cannot. Why is this? because they know not what this narrow gate is: for it is faith, which altogether annihilates or makes a

man appear as nothing in his own eyes, and requires him not to trust in his own works, but to depend upon the grace of God, and be prepared to leave and suffer all things. Those holy ones of Cain's progeny, think their good works are the narrow gate; and are not, therefore, extenuated or made less, whereby they might enter.

When we begin to preach of faith, to those that believe altogether in works, they laugh and hiss at us, and say, dost thou count us as Turks and Heathens, whom it behoves now first to learn faith? is there such a company of priests, monks, and nuns, and is not faith known? who knoweth not what he ought to believe? even sinners know that. Being after this sort animated and stirred up, they think themselves abundantly endued with faith, and that the rest is now to be finished and made perfect by works. They make so small and slender account of faith, because they are ignorant what faith is, and that it alone doth justify. They call it faith, believing those things which they have heard of Christ: this kind of faith the devils also have, and yet they are not justified. But this ought rather to be called an opinion of men. To believe those things to be true which are preached of Christ, is not sufficient to constitute thee a Christian, but thou must not doubt that thou art of the number of them unto whom all the benefits of Christ are given and exhibited; which he that believes must plainly confess, that he is holy, godly, righteous, the son of God, and certain of salvation; and that by no merit of his own, but by the mere mercy of God poured forth upon him for Christ's sake: which he believes to be so rich and plentiful, as indeed it is, that although he be as it were drowned in sin, he is notwithstanding made holy, and become the son of God.

Wherefore take heed that thou nothing doubt, that thou art the son of God, and therefore made righteous by his grace; let all fear and care be done away. However thou must fear and tremble that thou

mayest persevere in this way unto the end; but thou must not do this as though it consisted in thy own strength, for righteousness and salvation are of grace, whereunto only thou must trust. But when thou knowest that it is of grace alone, and that thy faith also is the gift of God, thou shalt have cause to fear, lest some temptation violently move thee from this faith.

Every one by faith is certain of this salvation: but we ought to have care and fear that we stand and persevere, trusting in the Lord, and not in our own strength. When those of the race of Cain hear faith treated of in this manner, they marvel at our madness as it seems to them. God turn us from this way, say they; that we should affirm ourselves holy and godly, far be this arrogance and rashness from us: we are miserable sinners, we should be mad, if we should arrogate holiness to ourselves. Thus they mock at true faith, and count such doctrine as this execrable error; and thus try to extinguish the gospel. These are they that deny the faith of Christ, and persecute it throughout the whole world; of whom Paul speaks, 1 Tim. iv. "In the latter times many shall depart from the faith," &c. for we see by these means that true faith lies every where oppressed; it is not preached, but commonly disallowed and condemned.

The pope, bishops, colleges, monasteries, and universities, have more than five hundred years persecuted it with one mind and consent most obstinately; which has been the means of driving many to hell. If any object against the admiration, or rather the mad senselessness of these men, if we count ourselves even holy, trusting the goodness of God to justify us, or as David prayed, "Preserve thou me, O Lord, for I am holy," Ps. 86. or as Paul saith, "The spirit of God beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God they answer, that the *prophet* and *apostle* would not teach us in these words, or give us an example which

we should follow, but that they being particularly and specially enlightened, received such revelation of themselves. In this way they misrepresent the scripture, which affirms that they are holy, saying, that such doctrine is not written for us, but that it is rather peculiar miracles, which do not belong to all. This forged imagination we account of, as having come from their sickly brain. Again, they believe that they shall be made righteous and holy by their own works, and that because of them God will give them salvation and eternal blessedness.

In the opinion of these men it is a Christian duty to think that we shall be righteous and saved because of our works; but to believe that these things are given by the grace of God, they condemn as heretical; attributing that to their own works, which they do not attribute to the grace of God. They that are endued with true faith, and rest upon the grace of the Lord, rejoice with holy joy, and apply themselves with pleasure to good works, not such as those of Cain's progeny do, as feigned prayers, fasting, base and filthy apparel, and such like trifles, but to true and good works whereby their neighbours are profited.

Perhaps some godly man may think, if the matter be so, and our works do not save us, to what end are so many precepts given us, and why doth God require that they be obeyed? The present text of the apostle will give a solution of this question, and upon this occasion we will give an exposition thereof. The Galatians being taught of Paul the faith of Christ, but afterwards seduced by false apostles, thought that our salvation must be finished and made perfect by the works of the law; and that faith alone doth not suffice. These Paul calls back again from works unto faith with great diligence; plainly proving that the works of the law which go before faith, make us only servants, and are of no importance toward godliness and salvation; but that

faith makes us the sons of God, and from thence good works without constraint forthwith plentifully flow.

But here we must observe the words of the apostle; he calls him a servant that is occupied in works without faith, of which we have already treated at large: but he calls him a son which is righteous by faith alone. The reason is this, although the servant apply himself to good works, yet he does it not with the same mind as doth the son; that is, with a mind free, willing, and certain that the inheritance and all the good things of the Father are his; but does it as he that is hired in another man's house, who hopes not that the inheritance shall come to him. The works indeed of the son and the servant are alike; and almost the same in outward appearance; but their minds differ exceedingly: as Christ saith, "The servant abideth not in the house forever, but the son abideth ever." John viii.

Those of Cain's progeny want the faith of sons, which they confess themselves; for they think it most absurd, and wicked arrogancy, to affirm themselves to be the sons of God, and holy; therefore as they believe, even so are they counted before God; they neither become holy or the sons of God, nevertheless they are exercised with the works of the law, wherefore they are and remain servants forever. They receive no reward except temporal things; such as quietness of life, abundance of goods, dignity, honour, &c. which we see to be common among the followers of *popish* religion. But this is their reward, for they are servants, and not sons; wherefore in death they shall be separated from all good things, neither shall any portion of the eternal inheritance be theirs who in this life would believe nothing thereof. We perceive, therefore, that servants and sons are not unlike in works, but in mind and faith they have no resemblance.

The apostle endeavours here to prove that the law with all the works thereof makes us but mere servants, if we have not faith in Christ; for this alone makes us sons of God. It is the word of grace followed by the Holy Ghost, as it is showed in many places, especially in **Acts** x. where we read of the Holy Ghost falling on Cornelius and his family, while hearing the preaching of Peter. Paul teaches, Rom. iii. 7. that no man is justified before God by the works of the law; for sin only cometh by the law. He that trusts in works, condemns faith as the most pernicious arrogancy and error of all others. Here thou seest plainly that such a man is not righteous, being destitute of that faith and belief which is necessary to make him acceptable before God and his Son; yea, he is an enemy to this faith, and therefore to righteousness also. Thus it is easy to understand that which Paul saith, that no man is justified before God by the works of the law.

The **worker** must be justified before God, before he can work any good thing. Men judge the worker by the works; God judges the works by the worker. The first precept requires us to acknowledge and worship one God, that is, to trust in him alone, which is the true faith whereby we become the sons of God. Thou canst not be delivered from the evil of infidelity by thy own power, nor by the power of the law; wherefore all thy works which thou doth to satisfy the law, can be nothing but works of the law; of far less importance than to be able to justify thee before God; who counteth them righteous only, which truly believe in him; for they that acknowledge him the true God, are his sons, and do truly fulfil the law. If thou shouldst even kill thyself by working, thy heart cannot obtain this faith thereby, for thy works are even a hinderance to it, and cause thee to persecute it

He that studieth to fulfil the law without faith, is afflicted for the devil's sake; and continues a persecutor both of faith and the law,

until he come to himself, and cease to trust in his own works; he then gives glory to God who justifies the ungodly, and acknowledges himself to be nothing, and sighs for the grace of God, of which he knows that he has need. Faith and grace now fill his empty mind, and satisfy his hunger; then follow works which are truly good; neither are they works of the law, but of the spirit, of faith and grace: they are called in the scripture, the works of God which he worketh in us.

Whatsoever we do of our own power and strength, that is not wrought in us by his grace, without doubt is a work of the law, and avails nothing toward justification; but is displeasing to God, because of the infidelity wherein it is done. He that trusts in works does nothing freely and with a willing mind; he would do no good work at all if he were not compelled by the fear of hell, or allured by the hope of present good. Whereby it is plainly seen that they strive only for gain, or are moved with fear, showing that they rather hate the law from their hearts, and had rather there were no law at all: an evil heart can do nothing that is good. This evil propensity of the heart, and unwillingness to do good, the law betrays, when it teaches that God does not esteem the works of the hand, but those of the heart.

Thus sin is known by the law, as Paul teaches; for we learn thereby that our affections are not placed on that which is good; this ought to teach us not to trust in ourselves, but to long after the grace of God, whereby the evil of the heart may be taken away, and we become ready to do good works, and love the law voluntarily; not for fear of any punishment, but for the love of righteousness. By this means one is made of a servant, a son; of a slave, an heir.

SERMON II.

Being a continuation of the first.

We shall now come to treat more particularly of the text. Verse 1 “***The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all.***” We see that the children unto whom their parents have left some substance, are brought up no otherwise than if they were servants. They are fed and clothed with their goods, but they are not permitted to do with them, nor use them according to their own minds, but are ruled with fear and discipline of manners, so that even in their own inheritance they live no otherwise than as servants. After the same sort it is in spiritual things. God made with his people a covenant, when he promised that in the seed of Abraham, that is in Christ, all nations of the earth should be blessed; Gen. xxii. That covenant was afterwards confirmed by the death of Christ, and revealed and published abroad by the preaching of the gospel. For the gospel is an open and general preaching of this grace, that in Christ is laid up a blessing for all men that believe.

Before this covenant is truly opened and made manifest to men, the sons of God live after the manner of servants under the law; and are exercised with the works of the law, although they cannot be justified by them; they are true heirs of heavenly things, of this blessing and grace of the covenant; although they do not as yet know or enjoy it. Those that are justified by grace, cease from the works of the law, and come unto the inheritance of justification; they then freely work those things that are good, to the glory of God and benefit of their neighbours. For they have and possess it by the covenant of the father, confirmed by Christ, revealed, published, and as it were

delivered into their hands by the gospel, through the grace and mercy of God.

This covenant, Abraham, and all the fathers which were endued with true faith, had no otherwise than we have: although before Christ was glorified, this grace was not openly preached and published: they lived in like faith, and therefore obtained the like good things. They had the same grace, blessing and covenant that we have; for there is one Father and God over all. Thou seest that Paul here, as in almost all other places, treats much of faith; that we are not justified by works, but by faith alone. There is no good thing which is not contained in this covenant of God; it gives righteousness, salvation, and peace: by faith the whole inheritance of God is at once received. From thence good works come; not meritorious, whereby thou mayest seek salvation, but which with a mind already possessing righteousness, thou must do with great pleasure to the profit of thy neighbours.

Verse 2. ***“But is under tutors and governours until the time appointed of the father.”*** Tutors and governours are they which bring up the heir, and so rule him and order his goods, that he neither waste his inheritance by riotous living, nor his goods perish or be otherwise consumed. They permit him not to use his goods at his own will or pleasure, but suffer him to enjoy them as they shall be needful and profitable to him. They keep him at home, and instruct him whereby he may long and comfortably enjoy his inheritance: but as soon as he arrives to the years of discretion and judgement, it cannot but be grievous to him to live in subjection to the commands and will of another.

In the same manner stands the case of the children of God, which are brought up and instructed under the law, as under a master, in the

liberty of sons. The law profits them in this, that by the fear of it, and the punishment which it threatens, they are driven from sin, at least from the outward work: by it they are brought to a knowledge of themselves, and that they do no good at all with a willing and ready mind as becomes sons; whereby they may easily see what is the root of this evil, and what is especially needful unto salvation; to wit, a new and living spirit to that which is good: which neither the law nor the works of the law is able to give; yea, the more they apply themselves to it, the more unwilling they find themselves to work those things which are good.

Here they learn that they do not satisfy the law, although outwardly they live according to its precepts. They pretend to obey it in works, although in mind they hate it; they pretend themselves righteous, but they remain sinners. These are like unto those of Cain's progeny, and hypocrites; whose hands are compelled to do good, but their hearts consent unto sin and are subject thereto. To know this concerning one's self is not the lowest degree toward salvation. Paul calls such constrained works, the works of the law; for they flow not from a ready and willing heart; howbeit the law does not require works alone, but the heart itself; wherefore it is said in the first Psalm of the blessed man, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord: and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Such a mind the law requires, but it gives it not; neither can it of its own nature: whereby it comes to pass, that while the law continues to exact it of a man, and condemns him as long as he hath not such a mind, as being disobedient to God, he is in anguish on every side; his conscience being grievously terrified.

Then indeed is he most ready to receive the grace of God; this being the time appointed by the Father when his servitude shall end, and he enter into the liberty of the sons of God. For being thus in distress,

and terrified, seeing that by no other means he can avoid the condemnation of the law, he prays to the Father for grace; he acknowledges his frailty, he confesses his sin, he ceases to trust in works, and humbles himself, perceiving that between him and a manifest sinner, there is no difference at all except of works, that he hath a wicked heart even as every other sinner hath. The condition of man's nature is such, that it is able to give to the law, works only, and not the heart: an unequal division, truly, to dedicate the heart, which incomparably excels all other things, to sin, and the hand to the law: which is offering chaff to the law, and the wheat to sin; the shell to God, and the kernel to satan. Whose ungodliness if one reprove, they become enraged, and would even take the life of innocent **Abel**, and persecute all those that follow the truth.

Those that trust in works, seem to defend them to obtain righteousness; they promise to themselves a great reward for this, by persecuting hereticks and blasphemers, as they say, which seduce with error, and entice many from good works. But those that God hath chosen, learn by the law how unwilling the heart is to conform to the works of the law; they fall from their arrogancy, and are by this knowledge of themselves brought to see their own unworthiness. Hereby they receive that covenant of the eternal blessing and the Holy Ghost, which renews the heart: whereby they are delighted with the law, and hate sin; and are willing and ready to do those things which are good. This is the time appointed by the Father, when the heir must no longer remain a servant, but a son; being led by a free spirit, he is no more kept in subjection under tutors and governours after the manner of a servant; which is even that which Paul teaches in the following:

Verse 3. ***“Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.”*** By the word elements, thou mayest here understand the first principles or law written; which is as it were the first exercises and instructions of holy learning; as it is said in Heb. v. “As concerning the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.” And Col. ii. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world.” Again, Gal. iv. “How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage.”

Here Paul calls the law, rudiments; because it is not able to perform that righteousness which it requires. For whereas it earnestly requires a heart and mind given to godliness, nature is not able to satisfy it: herein it makes a man feel his poverty, and acknowledge his infirmity: it requires that of him by right, which he has not, neither is able to have. “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” 2 Cor. iii. Paul calls them the rudiments of the world, which, not being renewed by the spirit, only perform worldly things; to wit, in places, times, apparel, persons, vessels, and such like. But faith rests not in worldly things, but in the grace, word, and mercy of God: counting alike, days, meats, persons, apparel, and all things of the world.

None of these by themselves either help or hinder godliness or salvation. With those of Cain's progeny, faith neither agrees in name or any thing else: one of them eats flesh, another abstains from it; one wears black apparel, another white; one keeps this day holy, and another that: everyone has his rudiments, under which he is in bondage: all of them are addicted to the things of the world, which are frail and perishable. Against these Paul speaks, Col. ii “Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of

the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances: touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”

By this and other places above mentioned, it is evident that **monasteries** and **colleges**, whereby we measure the state of spiritual men as we call them, plainly disagree with the gospel and Christian liberty: and therefore it is much more dangerous to live in this kind of life, than among the most profane men. All their works are nothing but rudiments and ordinances of the world; neither are they Christians but in name, wherefore all their life and holiness are sinful and most detestable hypocrisy. The fair show of feigned holiness which is in those ordinances, does, in a marvellous and secret manner, withdraw from faith, more than those manifest and gross sins of which open sinners are guilty. Now this false and servile opinion, faith alone takes away, and teaches us to trust in, and rest upon, the grace of God, whereby is given freely that which is needful to work all things.

Verse 4. **“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law;**
Verse 5. **To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”** After Paul had taught us that righteousness and faith cannot come to us by the law, neither can we deserve it by nature, he shows us by whom we obtain it; and who is the author of our justification. The apostle saith, “When the fulness of the time was come;” here Paul speaks of the time which was appointed by the Father to the son, wherein he should live under tutors, &c. This time being come to the Jews, and ended, Christ came

in the flesh; so it is daily fulfilled to others, when they come to the knowledge of Christ, and change the servitude of the law for the faith of sons. Christ for this cause came unto us, that believing in him, we may be restored to true liberty; by which faith they of ancient times also obtained the liberty of the spirit

As soon as thou believest in Christ, he comes to thee, a deliverer and Saviour; and now the time of bondage is ended; as the apostle saith, the fulness thereof is come. This surely is very copious, and contains divers things most worthy of notice; so that I greatly fear it will not be handled by us according to the importance of the subject. It teaches that it is not sufficient to believe that Christ has come, but we must believe also that he was sent from God, that he is the Son of God, and also very man; that he was born of a virgin, who hath alone fulfilled the law, and that not for himself, but for us; that is, for our salvation.

Let us weigh and consider these things in order: First, it is sufficiently taught in the gospel of John, that Christ is the Son of God; which he that believeth not, is in a most miserable state; as Christ himself says, John viii. "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins;" and John i. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men!" It is not the will of God that we should believe or put our trust in any other thing, neither doth this honour belong to any other; we must believe that he is the very truth, and that without him we can neither live nor obtain salvation. The apostle saith, "God sent forth his Son;" it is thereby manifest that he existed, before he was made man. If he be the Son, he is more than a man or an angel; and as they are the highest, surely he must be the true God. Again, seeing that he is sent of God, and is his Son, he must needs be another person; so the apostle teaches here,

the Father and the Son are one God, and two persons. Of the Holy Ghost we shall speak hereafter.

The second thing which ought here to be considered, is, that Christ is very man, and the son of man. Thus Paul teaches when he saith, “made of a woman;” for surely that which is made or born of a woman, is man; thus it is necessary that we believe as the Lord himself declares; John vi. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you:” but to eat his flesh and drink his blood, is nothing else than to believe that Christ took these upon him, and did also yield them up to death for our sake. This is that covenant which was promised to Abraham; “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Gen. xxii. Christ is this seed, and therefore the true son of Abraham's flesh and blood. Hereby it appears that those prevail nothing, who make a way unto themselves, to come to God by their own works and godliness; and neglecting Christ, strive to come directly to God, as do the Turks and Jews. But Christ alone is the mediator and blessed seed, by whom thou must receive blessings, otherwise thou shalt continue forever in malediction.

Christ himself saith, John vi. “No man cometh to the Father but by me.” The nature of God is higher than that which we are able to attain unto; wherefore he hath humbled himself, and taken upon him that nature which is best known, and most familiar to us; to wit, even our own. Here he looks for us, here he will receive us; he that will seek him here shall find him; he that asks shall be heard; here is the throne of grace and true mercy seat, from which none are driven that with true faith resort to it. They who neglect him, as though he were made man for nought, and in the meantime pray to God without a mediator, shall pray, but none shall help them; they shall cry, but none shall hear them.

The third thing which is here set forth for us to believe, is, that Mary the mother of Jesus was a virgin. This Paul affirms, when he says that he was made of a woman, and not of a man. The covenant of God promised to Abraham required these two things; that Christ should be the true son of Abraham, that is, his seed, flesh and blood; and that he should also be born free from sin. Thus it was brought to pass, that he should of Mary, being very woman, and the daughter of Abraham, be born very man, and the right offspring of Abraham; and that he should also be born without the commixion of man; a virgin having conceived by means of the Holy Ghost, it came to pass, that Christ became the true seed of Abraham, and yet free from all contagion of Adam; and is also the author of eternal blessing to them that believe.

The fourth thing to be considered in this place, is, that Christ hath satisfied the law for us; which he witnesseth of himself, Mat. v. "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it." This also the condition of the covenant requires; for if by this seed of Abraham all men must be delivered from the curse, it is necessary that by it the law be fulfilled. Men are by nature the children of wrath, and subject to the curse, it must needs be accursed, whatsoever they do; for it is before proved at large, that he which is evil, can work nothing that is good: likewise, that we can do nothing that God will approve, unless we ourselves be approved of him before.

The law requires the heart, which cannot be performed by them that are not as yet regenerated by the spirit; therefore it must needs be that all the sons of Adam are guilty of transgressing the law; and unless Christ perform that which the law requires of them, they must perish by the curse thereof. When Christ went about to show that the law required the heart, and to condemn the works which proceeded not from a heart that is godly and consenting to the

law, he was accused of the Pharisees, of having come to destroy the law. In order to take away this false opinion, he said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, for I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil;" yea, and I will give a spirit unto them that are mine, which shall justify their hearts by faith, and incline them to truly good works.

The same is usual with Paul also; who, when he had rejected the works of the law, and extolled faith, answering such an objection, saith, Rom. iii. "Do we then make the law of no effect? God forbid: yea, we establish the law for we teach that the fulfilling of the law is by Christ. The like objections are frequently made to us, as though we forbid good works, when we disallow of monasteries and their works, and teach that they must first by faith become good and approved of God; whereby they may afterwards do truly good works, by which their flesh may be chastised, and their neighbours benefitted.

As the law stays us with threatenings and promises, we oftentimes abstain from evil, and do those things that are good; howbeit, we do them not for the love of goodness and hatred of evil, but for fear of punishment, and in anticipation of reward: wherefore being left to ourselves, we are servants of the law; neither do we hear it any otherwise than servants do their hard and cruel master. But those that are not under the law, that is, are not against their wills in subjection to it, do good works and abstain from evil, being neither terrified by the threatenings, nor allured with the promises thereof; they voluntarily bear a love to honesty, and hate that which is dishonest; being from their hearts delighted with the law of God, they desire to live no otherwise than the law commands.

Those that are such, are sons; whom, not nature, but that blessed seed of Abraham, that is, Christ, could make such; renewing by his grace and spirit the hearts of them that believe in him: wherefore not to be under the law, is not to be free from it, that they may do those things that are contrary to it, but it is to do good and abstain from evil, not through compulsion, but by free love and with pleasure, even as if the law did not command them. This is the true liberty of a Christian, and the deliverance of him from the law; whereof Paul speaks, 1 Tim. i. "The law is not made for a righteous man," &c. which is as much as if he had said, a righteous man of his own accord doth good, and abstains from evil, having no regard either to rewards or punishments; and Rom. vi. "Ye are not under the law, but under grace;" that is, ye are sons, not servants; and also Rom. viii. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption."

The fifth thing that Paul here commands for us to believe, is, that Christ for our sake was made under the law, that he might deliver us from the bondage of it; and of unwilling servants, make us free sons. Paul saith, speaking of Christ, "He was made under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law;" that is, might deliver them from the law. He delivers them from it, not by abolishing it, but by fulfilling it; giving a free spirit which shall do all things willingly without any respect to its promises or threatenings. This was the condition of Adam and Eve before they had sinned. But by what means is this spirit riven and liberty obtained? no otherwise than by faith; for he that truly believes that Christ came for this cause, that he might deliver us from the law, and that he hath already delivered him, he, I say, hath indeed received the spirit of liberty, and doth verily obtain that which he believeth; for both faith and the spirit come together.

When the angel went into the prison to deliver Peter, both of them were in the prison together: Peter was there, being cast in by Herod, not of his own accord; but the angel went in of his own accord, wherefore it was free for him to go forth whenever he pleased: he was there for Peter's sake, and not for his own; whom when Peter heard and followed, it was free for him also to go forth out of the prison. The prison here represents the law; Peter our conscience; and the angel Christ. Christ being absent, our conscience is held captive by the law; being unwilling of itself, it is moved unto good things by the threatenings and promises thereof. The keepers of the prison are the teachers which declare the force of the law to us. So we, being bound in the prison of the law, Christ comes to us and makes himself subject to the law, and does the works of the law with his own accord; yea, and doth them for our sake, that he may join us unto him.

If now we cleave to him, and follow him, we go forth; but this cleaving to, and following him, is nothing else than to believe in him, and not to doubt that he became man, and was made subject to the law for our salvation; whereby he makes us ready and willing to do with pleasure all things that the law requires. The greater our faith is, the more ready and willing our minds are to do those things that God commands: this is the true deliverance from the law, and from the condemnation of sin and death. By faith we must pass from sin and death, to righteousness and life. Unless we understand the nature of faith, we shall be but little benefitted by the writings of Paul.

Verse 6. ***“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”*** Here we see plainly that the Holy Ghost cometh to the saints, not by works, but by faith alone. Sons believe, while servants only work; sons are free from the law, servants are held under the law; as

appears by those things that have been before spoken. But how comes it to pass that he saith, “because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit,” &c. seeing it is before said, that by the coming of the spirit we are changed from servants to sons: but here, as though we could be sons before the coming of the spirit, he saith, “because ye are sons,” &c. To this question we must answer, that Paul speaks here in the same manner that he did before; that is, before the fulness of the time came, we were in bondage under the rudiments of the world: all that shall become sons, are counted in the place of sons with God: therefore he saith rightly, “because ye are sons;” that is, because the state of sons is appointed to you from everlasting, “God hath sent forth the spirit of his son;” to wit, that he might finish it in you, and make you such as he hath long since of his goodness determined that he would make you.

Now if the Father give unto us his spirit, he will make us his true sons and heirs, that we may with confidence cry with Christ, Abba, Father; being his brethren and fellow heirs. The apostle has well set forth the goodness of God which makes us partakers with Christ, and causes us to have all things common with him, so that we live and are led by the same spirit. These words of the apostle show that the Holy Ghost proceeds from Christ, as he calls him his spirit, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son, that is, of Christ; for he is the spirit of God, and comes from God to us, and not ours; unless one will say after this manner, “my holy spirit,” as we say, “my God,” “my Lord,” &c. As he is said to be the holy spirit of Christ, it proves him to be God of whom that spirit is sent, therefore it is counted his spirit.

Christians may perceive by this, whether they have in themselves the Holy Ghost: to wit, the spirit of sons; whether they hear his voice in their hearts: for Paul saith, he crieth in the hearts which he possesseth, Abba, Father; he saith also, Rom. viii. “We have received

the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.” Thou hearest this voice when thou findest so much faith in thyself, that thou dost assuredly without doubting presume that not only thy sins are forgiven thee, but also that thou art the beloved son of God; which being certain of eternal salvation, durst both call him Father, and he delighted in him with a joyful and confident heart. To doubt these things, brings a reproach upon the death of Christ, as though he had not obtained all things for us.

It may be that thou shalt be so tempted, as to fear and doubt, and think plainly that God is not a favourable Father, but a wrathful revenger of sins; as it happened with **Job** and many other saints: but in such a conflict, this trust and confidence that thou art a son, ought to prevail and overcome. It is said, Rom. viii. “The spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and that he beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” How can it therefore be that our hearts should not hear this cry and testimony of the spirit? But if thou dost not feel this cry, take heed that thou be not slothful and secure; pray constantly, for thou art in an evil state.

Cain saith, Gen. iv. “My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.” This is a dreadful and terrible cry, which is heard from all Cain's progeny; all such as trust to themselves and their own works; who put not their trust in the Son of God, neither consider that he was sent from the Father, made of a woman under the law; much less that all these things were done for their salvation. And while their ungodliness is not herewith content, they begin to persecute even the sons of God; and grow so cruel, that after the example of their father **Cain**, they

cannot rest until they slay their righteous brother **Abel**: wherefore the blood of Christ continually cries out against them nothing but punishment and vengeance; but for the heirs of salvation, it cries by the spirit of Christ for nothing but grace and reconciliation.

The apostle here uses a Syrian and Greek word; saying, Abba, Pater. This word Abba, in the Syrian tongue, signifies a father; by which name the chief of monasteries are still called; and by the same name, Heremites in time past, being holy men, called their presidents: at last, by use, it was also made a Latin word. Therefore that which Paul saith, is as much as, **Father, Father**; or if thou hadst rather, “my Father.”

Verse 7. **“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”** He saith, that after the coming of the spirit, after the knowledge of Christ, “thou art not a servant.” A son is free and willing, a servant is compelled and unwilling: a son liveth and resteth in faith, a servant in works. Therefore it appears that we cannot obtain salvation of God by works; but before thou workest that which is acceptable to him, it is necessary that thou receive salvation; then good works will freely flow, to the honour of thy heavenly Father, and to the profit of thy neighbours; without any fear of punishment, or looking for reward.

If this inheritance of the Father be thine by faith, surely thou art rich in all things, before thou hast wrought any thing. It is said, 1 Peter i, Your salvation is prepared and reserved in heaven, to be showed in the last time; wherefore the works of a Christian ought to have no regard to merit, which is the manner of servants, but only for the use and benefit of our neighbours, whereby we may truly live to the glory of God. Lest that any think that so great an inheritance cometh to us without cost, (although it be given to us without **our** cost or merit,)

yet it cost Christ a dear price; who, that he might purchase it for us, was made under the law, and satisfied it for us, both by life and also by death.

Those benefits which from love we bestow upon our neighbour, come to him freely, without any charges or labour of his; notwithstanding they cost us something; even as Christ hath bestowed those things which are his upon us. Thus hath Paul called back the Galatians from the teachers of works, which preached nothing but the law, perverting the gospel of Christ. Which things are very necessary to be marked of us also: for the *pope*, with his prelates and monks, hath for a long time intruded, urging his laws, which are foolish and pernicious, disagreeing in every respect with the word of God; seducing almost the whole world from the gospel of Christ, and plainly extinguishing the faith of sons; as the scripture hath in divers places manifestly prophesied of his kingdom. Wherefore let every one that desires salvation, diligently take heed of him and his followers, no otherwise than satan himself.

SERMON III.

Luke, Chap. x. From the 23d to the 37th verse, inclusive.

23. And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see.

24. For I tell you, That many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

25. And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26. He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27. And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30. And Jesus answering, said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

34. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37. And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

I hope that you rightly understand this gospel, it being preached every year; notwithstanding, occasion now offers, and we shall treat of it again. First, the evangelist saith that Christ took his disciples aside, and said unto them secretly, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” To see and hear, is to be understood in this place, simply of the outward seeing and hearing; to wit, that they saw Christ come in the flesh, heard his sermons, and were present at those miracles which he did among the Jews. The Jews saw the same according to the flesh, yea, and felt them also; yet did they not truly acknowledge him for Christ, as the apostles did; and especially Peter, who in the name of all the rest did confess him, saying, “Thou art Christ, the son of the living God.” We grant, indeed, that there were some among the Jews which acknowledged him, as did the apostles, but the number of them was very small; wherefore he taketh his apostles severally unto himself.

Many prophets and kings have seen Christ, howbeit, in the spirit; as the Lord himself saith to the Jews, of Abraham; John viii. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." The Jews thought that he had spoken of the bodily seeing; but he spake of the spiritual seeing, whereby all Christian hearts did behold him before he was born; for if Abraham saw him, undoubtedly many other prophets in whom the Holy Ghost was, saw him also. And although this seeing saved the holy fathers and prophets, yet did they always with most inward and hearty affection desire to see Christ in the flesh, as is plainly showed in the prophets; wherefore the Lord saith unto his disciples, which saw him both in the flesh and in the spirit, "Blessed are the eyes which see those things which you see;" as if he had said, now is the acceptable year and time of grace; the matter is so weighty and precious, that the eyes are said to be blessed which see it; for now was the gospel preached openly and manifestly both by Christ and also by his apostles; whereupon he here calleth them all blessed which see and hear such grace: which I have preached much, and a long time to you; I would to God that ye keep that which I have spoken fresh in memory.

When the Lord spake these things, a certain lawyer stood up, showing himself, as he thought, to be some great one; who tempting the Lord, saith, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? This lawyer was endued with wisdom, and not unskilful in the scriptures, which even his answer declares; yet in this place he is proved a fool; yea, he is brought to shame and ignominy; for Christ taketh away all his glorying in one word; believing that he had observed the whole law, and that he was chief one, with respect to others, as undoubtedly he was, he thought himself sufficiently worthy by reason of his godliness and learning, to be conversant with the Lord. But what doth the Lord in this case? the following text declares: "And he said unto him, what is written in the law? how readest thou? he answered

and said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. Then he said unto him, thou hast answered right; do this and thou shalt live.” Methinks the Lord gave this good man a hard lesson; he deals very plainly with him, and puts him to shame openly, before all. He proves that he had done nothing; who, notwithstanding, thought that he had done all things.

If I had time, many things might be spoken of the two commandments: for they are the chief and greatest commandments in **Moses**; on which the whole law, and all the prophets hang; as Christ himself saith in Matthew. If we consider the commandments of Moses, they have respect altogether unto love: for this commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me;” we cannot otherwise declare or interpret, than this, thou shalt love God alone; so Moses expounded, where he saith, Deut. vi. 4 and 5, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;” from whence the lawyer took his answer. But the Jews think that this commandment extends no farther, than that they should not set up, or worship idols. And if they can say and witness that they have one God only, and worship none but him, they think they have observed this commandment: after the same sort did this lawyer understand it; but that was an evil and wrong understanding thereof.

We must otherwise consider and understand this precept, thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou, it saith, with all that thou art, but especially it requireth all thine heart, soul and strength. It speaketh not of the tongue, not of the hand, or the knees; but of the whole man, whatsoever thou art and hast. That no other god may be worshipped by me, it is necessary that I have the true and only God in my heart; that is, I must love him from my heart, so that

I always depend upon him, trust in him, repose my hope in him, have my pleasure, love and joy in him, and daily remember him. If we take pleasure in any thing, we say, it doth me good inwardly at the heart; and if any speak or laugh, and do it not in good earnest, neither from his heart, we are apt to say, he speaks or laughs, indeed, but it comes not from the heart. The love of the heart in the scriptures, signifies a vehement and special love, which we ought to bear toward God. They who serve God with mouth, hands, and knees only, are hypocrites; neither hath God any care of them, for he will not have part, but the whole.

The Jews outwardly abstained from idolatry, and served God alone in mouth, but their hearts were far removed from him; being full of diffidence and unbelief. Outwardly they seemed to be very earnest in serving God, but within they were full of idolatry; whereupon the Lord said unto them, Mat xxiii. "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men; but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." These are those wicked ones, who glory in the outward thing, which go about to justify, and make themselves good by their own works, after the manner of this lawyer. Consider how great the pride of this man was; he cometh forth as though he could not be blessed, or rebuked of the Lord. He thought, yea, it seemed to him, that the Lord would commend and praise his life before the people. He thought not to learn any thing of the Lord, but sought only his own commendation; he would willingly have had Christ set forth his praise, toward whom the eyes of all were bent; and who was an admiration to all. So all hypocrites outwardly pretend to excellent, great and weighty works.

They say that they have respect neither to glory or praise; but in their hearts they are full of ambition, and wish that their holiness were known to the whole world. Like unto this lawyer are all they which most grievously offend against the first commandment, and think that God is to be loved no more than the sound of the words, and that thereby it is fulfilled: the commandment therefore remains in their mouth, and doth as it were float above the heart, and pierceth it not. But I must go farther; I must so love God that I can be content to forsake all creatures for his sake, and if required, my body and life: I must love him above all things, for he is jealous, and cannot suffer any thing to be loved above him, but under him he permits us to love any thing. Even as the husband suffers his wife to love her maids, the house, household things, and such like, howbeit he suffers her not to love any thing with that love wherewith she is bound to him; but will have her leave all such things for his sake. Again, the wife requireth the same of her husband. In the same manner, God suffers us to love his creatures; yea, therefore are they created, and are good.

The sun, gold and silver, and whatsoever by nature is fair, procures our love; which makes it dear to us, neither is God offended thereat. But that I should cleave to the creature, and love it equally with him, he will not suffer; yea, he will have me both deny and forsake all these things when he requires it of me, and will have me to be content, although I never see the sun, money or riches. The love of the creature must be far inferiour to the love of the Creator. As he is the Sovereign, he requires that I love him above all other things; if he will not suffer me to love any thing equally with him, much less will he suffer me to love any thing above him. You see now what I think it is to love God with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind. To love God with all the heart, is to love him above all creatures; that is, although creatures are very amiable and dear to

me, and that I take great delight in them, yet must I so love them, that I contemn and forsake them when my Lord requires it of me.

To love God with all the soul, is to bestow our whole life and body at his pleasure; so that if the love of the creature, or any temptation assail us, or would overcome us, we may say, I had rather part with all these than forsake my God; whether he cast me off, or destroy me, or whatsoever through his permission shall come upon me, I had rather leave all things than him. Whatsoever I have and am, I will bestow, but him I will not forsake. The soul, in the scriptures, signifies the life of the body, and whatsoever is done by the five senses; as eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, seeing, hearings smelling, tasting, and whatsoever the soul worketh by the body. To love God with all the strength, is, for his cause to renounce all the members and limbs of the body, so that one will expose to peril both flesh and body, before he will commit that which is unjust against God. To love God with all the mind, is to do nothing but what will please him.

You perceive now what is contained in this commandment of God. Thou, thou, saith he, and that wholly; not thy hands, not thy mouth, not thy knees alone, but every part of thee. They who do these things, as it is said, do truly fulfil it: but no man lives on earth that doth so: yea, we all do otherwise. Wherefore the law doth make us all sinners; not so much as the least jot or point thereof is fulfilled by them that are most holy in this world. No man cleaves with all his heart to God, and leaves all things for his sake. How can it be that we should love God when his will is not settled in our mind? if I love God, I cannot but love his will also. If God send sickness, poverty, shame and ignominy, it is his will: at which we murmur; our minds are carried hither and thither; we bear it very impatiently; We, like this pharisee and lawyer, lead an honest life outwardly; we worship God, we serve

him, we fast, we pray, we behave ourselves in outward appearance justly and holy. But God doth not require that of us, but that we should bend ourselves to do his will with pleasure and love, cheerfully and lovingly. Whatsoever the Lord saith to the lawyer, he saith to us all; to wit, that we have yet done nothing, but that all things remain yet to be done. All men are therefore guilty of death, and subject to satan. All men are liars, vain and filthy, and to whatsoever they pretend, it is worth nothing. We are wise in worldly matters, we scrape together money and goods, we speak fairly before men, and cunningly propound and set forth our case. What doth God care for these things? He requires us to love him with our whole heart, which no man living is able to perform of himself; therefore it is inferred that we are all sinners, but especially those whose life hath a goodly outward show only.

Having discussed the former part of the text, namely, the preaching of the law, now follows the other part, which is the preaching of the gospel; which declares how we may fulfil the law, and from whence that fulfilling is taken; which we shall learn of the Samaritan.

What doth the lawyer after the Lord had thus dealt with him? He, says the evangelist, willing to justify himself, spake unto the Lord, and asked him, ***Who is my neighbour?*** He asked not who is my God! as if he said, I owe nothing to God; neither do I want any thing of him: yea, it seems to me that I do not owe any thing to man; nevertheless I would be willing to know who is my neighbour. The Lord answering him, brings forth a good similitude, whereby he declares that we are all neighbours one to another; as well he that giveth a benefit, as he that receiveth or needeth one: although by the text it seems to appear, that he only is a neighbour who bestows a benefit upon another. But the scripture makes no difference;

sometimes calling him our neighbour who bestows a benefit, and sometimes him that receives it.

By this similitude the Lord inferreth, ***Go and do thou likewise:*** so that the lawyer had offended not only against God, but also against man; and was destitute of love both to God and his neighbour. This wretched man is brought into such a situation that he is found to be altogether evil, even from the head to the feet.

How came it to pass that he being so skilful in the scripture, was not aware of this? He led a pharisaical, hypocritical, and counterfeit life, which had no regard to his neighbour, or to succour and help others; but sought thereby only glory and honour before men, and thought by negligent and dissolute living to get to heaven. But ye have heard very often that a Christian life consisteth in this, that we deal with faith and the heart in things that pertain to God; but use our life and works towards our neighbours. But we must not wait until our neighbour seeks a benefit, and requires something of us, but according to our duty must prevent his asking, and of our own accord offer our liberality to him.

We will now see what is contained in the parable. The Samaritan, in this place, is without doubt our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath declared his love toward God and man. Toward God, in descending from heaven, being made incarnate, and fulfilling the will of his father; toward man, wherein after baptism, he began to preach, to work miracles, to heal the sick; neither was there any work that he did, which concerned himself only, but all were directed to his neighbours; being made our minister, when notwithstanding he is above all, and equal with God. But he did all these things knowing that they pleased God, and that it was the will of his Father; When he had fulfilled the commandment, that he loved God with all his heart,

he committed his life and whatsoever he had, to the will of his Father; saying, Father, behold all that I have is thine; I leave for thy sake the glory and honour which I have had among men, yea, and all things, that the world may know how much I love thee.

This is that Samaritan, who, without being desired by prayers, came and fulfilled the law; he alone hath fulfilled it; which praise none can take from him: he alone hath deserved it, and to him only it appertaineth. He, being touched with pity, has compassion on the wounded man, binds up his wounds, brings him to an Inn, and provides for him. This pertaineth to us: the man which lieth wounded, beaten, spoiled, and half dead, is **Adam**; yea, and we also. The thieves which wounded and left us in this deplorable situation, are the devils. We are not able to help ourselves, and should we be left in this situation, we should die through anguish and distress; our wounds would become festered, and our afflictions exceedingly great.

This excellent parable is set before us to show us what we are, and what is the strength of our reason and free will. If that wretched man had attempted to help himself his case would have been made worse; he would have hurt himself, he would have opened his wounds anew by exertion, and so would have fallen into greater calamity. Again, if he had been left lying, without assistance, his case would have been the same. So it is when we are left to ourselves; our studies and endeavours amount to nothing. Sundry ways and divers means have been invented to amend our lives, and get to heaven: this man found out this way, another that; whereby innumerable sorts of **orders** have increased; letters of **indulgences**, **pilgrimages to Saints**, &c. which have always made the state of Christianity worse. This is the world, which is represented by this wounded man; he being laden

with sins, fainting under a heavy burden, and not able to help himself.

But the ***Samaritan*** who hath fulfilled the law, is perfectly sound and whole; he doth more than either the Priest or Levite; he binds up his wounds, pours in oil and wine, sets him upon his own beast, brings him to an Inn, makes provision for him, and when he departs, diligently commends him to the host, and leaves with him sufficient to pay his expenses; none of which either the Priest or Levite did. By the Priest, is signified the holy fathers which flourished before Moses: the Levite is a representation of the priesthood of the Old Testament. All these could do nothing by their works, but passed by like unto this Priest and Levite: wherefore, though I had all the good works of Noah, Abraham, and all the faithful fathers, they would profit me nothing.

The Priest and Levite saw the miserable man lie wounded, but they could not help him; they saw him lie half dead, but could not give him any remedy. The holy fathers saw men drowned and plunged all over in sin; they also felt the sting and anguish thereof, but they could make the case no better. These were the preachers of the law; which shews what the world is, namely, that it is full of sin, and lieth half dead, and cannot help itself with its utmost strength and reason. But Christ is that true Samaritan, who is moved with the case of the miserable man; he binds up his wounds, and having great care of him, pours in oil and wine, which is the pure gospel. He pours in oil when grace is preached; when it is said, O miserable man, this is thy incredulity, this is thy condemnation; thus art thou wounded and sick: but I will show thee a remedy; join thyself to this Samaritan, Christ the Saviour; he will help and succour thee.

The nature of oil, as we know, is to make soft and mollify; so the sweet and gentle preaching of the gospel, makes the heart soft and tender toward God and our neighbours. Sharp wine signifieth the cross of affliction, which forthwith follows: there is no cause for a Christian to seek the cross, for it sooner hangs over his head than he is aware of; as Paul witnesseth, 2 Tim. iii. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." This is the cognizance and badge of this King; and he that is ashamed of it, pertaineth not to him. Moreover, the Samaritan puts the wounded man upon his own beast: this is the Lord Jesus Christ, who supports us, and carries us upon his shoulders. There is scarce a more amiable and comfortable passage in the whole scripture, than that where Christ compares himself to a shepherd, who carrieth again the lost sheep upon his shoulders to the flock.

The Inn is the state of Christianity in this world, wherein we must abide for a short time: the host is the ministers and preachers of the gospel, whose charge is to have care of us. This therefore is the sum of the text; the kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of mercy and grace: Christ beareth our defects and infirmities; he taketh our sins upon himself, and bears our fall willingly; we daily lie upon his neck, neither is he weary with bearing us. It is the duty of the preachers of this kingdom, to comfort consciences, to handle them gently, to feed them with the gospel, to bear the weak, to heal the sick; they ought fitly to apply the word according to the need of every one.

This is the duty of a true bishop and preacher, not to proceed by violence, as is the custom of some bishops at the present day, which vex, torment, and cry out, he that will not willingly, shall be compelled to do it. We must in no wise proceed in this manner; but a bishop or preacher ought to behave himself as a healer of the sick, who dealeth very tenderly with them, uttering very loving

words, talking gently, and bestowing all his endeavours to do them good. A bishop or minister ought to consider his parish as a hospital, wherein are such as are afflicted with divers kinds of disease. If Christ be thus preached, faith and love come together, which fulfil the commandment of love.

As a knowledge of the law and the gospel, and the difference between them, are very necessary, I will treat of them somewhat more at large. I have often informed you that the whole scripture divideth itself into two parts; namely, the law, and the gospel. The law teaches us our duty, and what the will of God requires of us: the gospel teaches how that is to be received which the law commandeth; as if I take medicine, one thing is to tell what the disease is, and another to administer that which is good and wholesome to remedy it. So stands the case here; the law reveals the disease, and the gospel administers the medicine; which is manifest even by the text whereof we have already treated.

The lawyer comes, and being desirous of eternal life, asketh what he must do; the law declareth it unto him, saying, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. He that reads these words in a careless manner, as did the lawyer, understandeth them not. We must pierce into the law; God must be loved by me from the bottom of my heart; I must love him with all the soul; that is, from the depth of the soul, so that I thoroughly feel in myself that I love him: I must likewise love him with all my strength; that is, with all my members; also with all my mind; that is, with all my senses, cogitations and thoughts; all must be directed to God.

I find in myself that I do none of these things: for if I must love God with all my heart, soul, strength, and mind, it is requisite that my eyes show no angry twinkling or motion, that my tongue speak no angry word, that my feet, hands, ears, &c. show no sign of wrath; that my whole body, even from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, and all things belonging thereto, walk in charity, and be, as it were, ravished with love and pleasure toward God, and always worship and serve him. Who is he that by the pleasure and love of virtue is pure and righteous? there cannot be one such found on earth; for we always find ourselves more ready to wrath, envy, worldly pleasure, &c. than to meekness and other virtues. I find in myself not only a spark, but even a fiery furnace of wicked lusts: for my heart and all my members are void of love.

Wherefore here in the law, I see as it were in a glass, whatsoever is in me to be damnable and cursed: for not one jot of the law must perish, but all must be fulfilled; as Christ saith, Mat. v. 18. "Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Now thou findest not this in thee, to do with all thy soul and heart, with cheerfulness and pleasure, whatsoever the law requires of thee; therefore thou art condemned and under the dominion of satan. The law serves to teach us that we are condemned; for by it we find ourselves filled with wicked desires; and yet not a spark of them ought to be in us: howbeit, our schoolmen, not marking this, have taught, that if one do according to his ability, God gives to him his grace. They are blind guides; they admit that a man has no pleasure or cheerfulness in doing that which is good, and yet if one work, although it be with grief, difficulty and slothfulness, that it is well with him before God. But Christ hath taught otherwise; that we should perform good works with pleasure and love, readiness and facility.

Whom therefore shall we believe, Christ or the schoolmen? I leave that to your judgment. Of such corrupt and evil understanding of the law, monasteries came into use; whereby the opinion originated, that it was sufficient to salvation to live therein and follow the orders thereof; although it may be done even with grief of mind. But Christ will have us to work with pleasure and cheerfulness; if any thing be done with burden or grief of conscience, it is sin; therefore remove quickly from such works.

The gospel, which showeth comfort and salvation, declares how the law is to be fulfilled. When I know by the law that I am a condemned man, then I lie as it were among thieves, half dead; satan hath spoiled my soul, and hath in **Adam** taken away all faith and righteousness, and left nothing but bodily life, which is also quickly extinguished. Then comes **Levites** and **Priests**, which teach this and that, but cannot help, and so pass by. But when the **Samaritan** which is Christ, cometh, he showeth his mercy to me; saying, behold thou oughtest indeed to love God with all thine heart, but thou doest it not; now believe only in me, and thou shalt enjoy my obedience as thine own; this alone will help me.

He then carries me to the **inn**, that is, to the church of the faithful; he then pours in the oil, that is, his grace; that I may feel the need of his support, and likewise feel cheerful and quiet. Afterwards he poureth in wine also, that with its sharpness it may abate and tame the force of old **Adam**. And yet I am not wholly restored to health; health begins to improve, but it is not yet finished. Christ hath the care of me, and by his grace doth purify me; that from day to day I may become more chaste, meek, gentle and faithful; that when we shall come before God the Father, and be asked whether we believed in him, and loved him, &c. this Samaritan, which is Christ the Lord, who hath had compassion on us, will come forth and say, Father,

although they have not altogether fulfilled thy law, yet have I fulfilled it; suffer thou that to turn to the benefit of them that believe in me. Thus it is needful that all the saints lean upon Christ. If so it be that the Priests and Levites could not satisfy the law, how shall we with our works fulfil the same! O wretched and miserable calamity.

SERMON IV.

Matthew, Chap. i. From the 1st to the 16th verse, inclusive.

1. The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.
2. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;
3. And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;
4. And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;
5. And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;
6. And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

7. And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

8. And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

9. And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias,

10. And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;

11. And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

12. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel:

13. And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;

14. And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Ehud;

15. And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;

16. And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

This is the book of the generation of Jesus Christ. The sum of this text is, first, Matthew begins his book with a title or inscription by which the believer is enticed with greater pleasure to hear and read it: for he saith this much in effect; whom the law and prophets have

hitherto promised and preached, Jesus, that is, a Saviour; and Christ, that is, an eternal King; that he, according to the promise of God, should come forth from the seed of Abraham and David: even him do I describe in this book; to wit, that he is now born and made man, and already come into the world. Secondly, three lines or degrees are here rehearsed; in the first, is contained the stock of the fathers; in the second, of the kings; and in the third, the decaying stock of David. After the decay, it was necessary that Christ should come; for in this manner we often witness the goodness of God; when all things seem past hope and recovery, then comes relief.

We shall now attend to the exposition of the text. When Adam our first father had fallen by a notable offence, and became guilty of death, with all his children, both in body and soul, there was notwithstanding a promise made to him, although obscurely, that both he and his posterity should be delivered; this promise is contained in those words which God spake to the serpent; Gen. iii. 15. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Of these words Adam took comfort, that a woman should come, by whose fruit, this guile and subtlety of the serpent should be amended, and himself redeemed. This comfort upheld him and his posterity until Noah. Then the promise was renewed; when God made a covenant with the sons of Noah, and set a rainbow for a sign of the covenant, whereby man might conceive a trust and confidence, that God is yet favourable unto them, and doth not purpose their destruction: whereby man was again upheld and comforted until Abraham.

In the time of Abraham, God showed his mercy, by declaring that he would send a Saviour who should again deliver us from death, both body and soul: for although the body must die, yet it will not always

remain in death, but will rise again with the Lord Christ. God spake thus to Abraham, Gen. xxii. "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Here miserable men had a cause to hope and look for a Saviour that should deliver them. From that time did all the prophets foretell of this fountain of all mercy, the Lord Christ; how that he should come, and that all who believed in him might obtain salvation by that promise which cannot be revoked.

If men will open their eyes, they must needs confess that something strange has taken place; that man being in a state of damnation, under a desperate curse, should be restored by the nativity of one man. "Wherefore the prophets cried out with ardent prayers and unspeakable groanings, that God would vouchsafe to send the Saviour whom he had promised. By faith in this Saviour the Israelites obtained the law, and this honour before all people; that they were called the chosen people of God: and by this faith, all obtained salvation from Abraham to David, even as many as were saved.

In the time of David, God made the coming of the Messiah to be more manifestly declared; that it might with certainty be known of what stock he should come: namely, of the stock of David. God said unto David, 2 Samuel vii. 12, "When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son." He likewise saith, Psalm cxxxii. 11, "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." Here Christ is described, that he shall be a king; and an eternal king, as is mentioned of him in Psalm xlv. 6. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre."

This is a spiritual king, who rules the world by his word; and whosoever receiveth his word, pertaineth to his kingdom. But he that is not subject to this sceptre, neither heareth his word, is not of God, neither pertaineth to his kingdom; but is subject to the kingdom of satan; under whose tyranny we all are, until the Lord delivers us from it, and defends us with his sceptre; which is done when we believe in him. Therefore, as our salvation comes merely by the promise of God, let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind, that he will never obtain salvation without this promise. Should he do the works of all the saints, they would profit him nothing: but, on the contrary, if we lay hold on the sceptre of this king, that is, the promise of God, we shall not perish, though the sins of the whole world should lie upon us; they shall all be swallowed up in him.

We have an example of this in the thief, who was hung by the side of our Lord on the cross; he laid hold on the word of God, and believed in Christ, and therefore obtained the promised paradise. Here is no doubt left; let us only believe that it is so, and it is so indeed: all things which we have done or can do, being set aside. All things must give place, at the coming of this new king, that he alone may rule and reign in us. Let a man think of these things which are written of this new king, as being his own matters, and as pertaining all to himself. For whatsoever is written of Christ, is written for our comfort, that we may thereby feed and cherish our faith. To the establishing of this faith, God hath mercifully left us his written promise, and suffered it to be published; and therefore he will surely perform that which he hath promised.

Let us now come more particularly to. our present text, which pierced the heart by force, and poureth into it love, pleasure, joy. and gladness: as if an angel should come from heaven, and say unto us miserable and condemned wretches, “Behold, O man, thou hast

sinned, wherefore thou hast deserved condemnation forever. (This being heard, the heart must needs tremble.) Although all this be true, nevertheless God of his grace hath mercy upon us, and sendeth us a Saviour, as he promised to Abraham and his seed. Be of good cheer, and give thanks to God! Lo, here is “the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, who is the son of David, the son of Abraham. This is not only done, but also written, that we maybe certain thereof. He will not deceive; only believe, and thou shalt have all things.”

Matthew setteth David before Abraham, although the promise was first made to Abraham, and came afterwards to David, The promise made to David, the prophets afterwards published more abroad, and by it comforted the people. The prophet saith, Isa. xi. “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots.” And likewise it is said, Jer. xxiii. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth.” And many other such prophecies are to be found in the writings of the prophets. The angel likewise declared to Mary; saying, Luke i. 32, “The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Wherefore Matthew thought proper to set David first, as being better known; and next Abraham, unto whom the promise was first made: as Mary in her song saith, Luke i. 54. “He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever.” That promise is now performed, and in our text described, as we shall see hereafter.

St. Matthew maketh a triple difference of **fathers**, of whom Christ came; fourteen **patriarchs**, fourteen **kings**, and fourteen **princes**. It was necessary that the sceptre and kingdom should be taken from

Judah, according to the prophecy of Jacob; which is thus; Gen. xlix. 10. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." There are thrice fourteen generations, as Matthew rehearsed them: from Abraham to David, fourteen generations; from David till they were carried away into Babylon, fourteen generations; there is a person omitted in Matthew; that is, **Jakim**: it ought to be written thus, Josias begat Jakim, and Jakim begat Jechonias and his brethren; this the Chronicles witness. And after they were carried away into Babylon, until Christ, fourteen generations: which triple distinction hath a great mystery, as we shall notice.

The Jews among other laws were commanded to observe these three precepts; namely, to worship that God whom their fathers worshipped; to choose no priest of any other stock but their own, that is, of the tribe of Levi; and to choose no king but of their own people. These three precepts did very well agree in our Lord Christ; to wit, that he is the one God; that he is an eternal priest, who continually maketh intercession for us; and a king, our brother, who hath taken our nature upon him, who by his divine power is able to help and save us; he is king also that he may defend and preserve us. If this priest did not stand before God, who would be able to stand in the sight of his Creator and not be terrified? who would defend us if he were not king? who would save us if he were not God? how could he have care of us if he were not man, and our brother? O most gracious Saviour, how wisely hast thou done all things; I know that thou art my brother; as it is said in Psalm xxii. 22." "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." And again in the epistle to the Hebrews, although thou art God, the Lord Jesus Christ, King of heaven and earth, yet I cannot be afraid of thee; for thou art my friend and brother.

It is no hinderance to us, because we are sinners, and Christ holy; for if we had not been sinners, there would be no need that Christ should suffer for us. We see in his genealogy that both good and evil are rehearsed, of whose posterity he should come; that weak and timorous consciences might be comforted, that they might confidently and cheerfully put their trust in him who has taken away our sins. That we may be certain of this, he has left us his word, which assuredly declares it to us. Among the kings and princes that Matthew rehearsed, some were exceedingly evil, as we may read in the books of the kings; yet God suffereth them to be rehearsed in his genealogy, as if they were worthy that he should come to them.

Likewise four women are named, all of whom had an evil report. As Tamar, of whom Judah the father of her husband begat Pharez and Zarah. Gen. xxxviii. Rahab is called a harlot in the book of Joshua; Ruth was a heathen woman, of whom, although no evil was written, yet she was despised and detested by the Jews. Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, was an adulteress before she was married to David, and of her he begat Solomon. These women are undoubtedly rehearsed, that we may see how God hath set forth, as it were, a looking glass to sinners; that they may see that he would be born of the posterity of sinners; that the chief of sinners might trust in him, and flee to him for refuge. He is our God, priest, and king; in whom only we are able to fulfil the law, and obtain the grace of God.

Christ requires us to believe that he came down from heaven, that he is our God, priest, and king. By him alone we become the sons of God, and heirs of the heavenly kingdom; as St Paul saith, Gal. iii. 26. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Here the hearts of all sinners may leap for joy, that they are counted worthy of such a Saviour. Must not he needs be regenerate, whose heart understandeth and feeleth this? yea, he is enticed by an ardent desire

and love to lead a new life? for he is inspired with the grace of God, and layeth hold of the promise of the remission of all his sins.

The number of persons rehearsed in this text, is forty-two; which is the number of mansion places occupied by the children of Israel, before they entered into the promised land; as written in the fourth book of Moses. If we also will come into the promised land, which our Lord Jesus Christ hath prepared for us by his nativity, we must also occupy two and forty mansion places; that is, we must cease from our own purpose, and be regenerate man by man, and thereby come to Jesus where we shall find rest to our souls. But this nativity is hard, as our evil and corrupt nature is loath to leave its own will and purpose. The case of nature is such, that no nativity can take place without grief; yet one hath more grief, temptation and affliction than another. The thief on the cross came suddenly to Christ; so did many martyrs, and other holy men.

We must go faithfully from Abraham to Isaac, from Isaac to Jacob, &c. We must begin at Abraham that we may be found endued with like faith, and obtain the blessing promised to him: then we shall more easily and cheerfully go from one patriarch to another; that is, we shall pass over one affliction after another, until we end the journey of life, and are called unto our rest. For a man must be exercised with afflictions, and renounce his own will, until he be brought under, and his flesh subdued; that it may obey the spirit, and walk joyfully in the will and obedience of God.

Wherefore let no man think, of himself, to get to heaven by leading a quiet life, and following pleasure. Christ saith, Luke xviii. 25. "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." And in the Acts of the Apostles, Paul teacheth, that through great tribulation we enter into the kingdom of

God. Again, Abraham saith to the rich man, Luke xvi. 25. "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." It was also necessary that Christ should suffer, and by the cross enter into his glory. And St. Paul saith, 2 Tim. iii. 12. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." Here we may learn that all is poison which is according to the lusts of the flesh: wherefore Paul saith to the Romans, viii. 13. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." The spirit which is of God, is ready to suffer, but the flesh resisteth.

This Jesus signified by his answer to Peter: when he showed to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the Jews, and be slain also. When Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee; Jesus turned, and said unto Peter, get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. It is here manifest that the reason of man strives against the will of God. God will have us enter into glory by the cross and persecution; but the flesh resisteth, and is troubled in affliction. Moreover, they that are endued with the spirit of God, rejoice if they be afflicted for his sake; as it is written of the apostles; Acts v. 41. "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

James saith in his epistle, chap. i. 2. "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations: knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." O how necessary is patience for a Christian! We must enter into a new kind of life; and if calamity comes, we must not burst forth into evil

speeches, and take it impatiently, but we must lift our hearts to God, and bear affliction with a patient mind; he will deliver us when it seemeth good to him. We must always think that he bears a fatherly affection toward us; even when he sends persecution, anguish, affliction, and adversity; as Hebrews xii. 5. “Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children: my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.” God give us his divine grace that we may courageously pass through all afflictions and temptations, and with the Lord Christ be regenerate into a new life. Amen.

SERMON V.

Matthew, Chap. ii. From the 1st to the 11th verse, inclusive.

1. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,
2. Saying, Where is he that was born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet,

6. And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governour, that shall rule my people Israel.

7. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go, and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9. When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

We celebrate this day, concerning the appearing of our Lord Jesus; who appeared a special comfort to all who sought him with a strong faith. First, to the wise men who came from the East: Secondly, to John the Baptist; when being about thirty years of age, he was baptized of him in Jordan; when the Holy Ghost, and voice of the Father, gave testimony of him, that he was the son of God: Thirdly, when he showed his glory and power in a miracle; where he turned water into wine at a marriage; by which he would procure reverence and estimation to matrimony; which now in a shameful manner is contemned and rejected by the pope and his adherents, as a miserable and wretched state.

The wise men, who undoubtedly were the governours of the country, when they had seen the star in the East, without delay made haste to Jerusalem, diligently seeking for the new born king of the Jews. They could neither seek nor find out this king, the Lord Christ, but by the star going before them, which led them to the place where he was to be found. So it is with us, we cannot find Christ without the gospel: that must show him to us, and bring us where we may find him. This only is done when we receive the gospel by faith: otherwise, although we may have it, hear it, and know it, it profiteth us nothing; we shall be as the scribes, who had the scriptures, and showed the way to others, not coming into it themselves, for the subject did not touch their hearts.

It is not enough that we have the gospel, or that we hear it: but we must believe it, and lay it up in the secrets of our hearts, or we shall not find Christ. God respecteth not the person; it matters not whether one be learned or unlearned; instructed in many places of scripture, or in few; unto whom God giveth grace, he it is that enjoys Christ. After the wise men had found the child Christ, at Bethlehem, together with Joseph and Mary, by the help of

the scripture and guiding of the star, they were not offended at the low condition of him, but being taught by the word, acknowledged him to be the Messiah, the king of the Jews; for whom they had looked so many years: they then opened their treasures, and offered him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The wise men do not disdain him because he is without pomp and splendour, neither do they turn back because they find him and his parents in poverty and misery; but undoubtedly acknowledge him as king, as they had learned concerning him out of the scripture. Moreover they give him the honour due to a king; they offer him most precious gifts, which they had brought out of their own country.

Now the world would have done none of these things; but according to the custom thereof, would have looked for garments of purple, and a retinue of servants and hand-maidens: Thus it bestows its gifts where there was great plenty and abundance before; yea, it deprives the poor and afflicted of those things they need, and takes bread from the mouth of the hungry. If we will honour Christ with those wise men, we must shut our eyes, and turn them from all which seems fair and goodly to the world. If any thing seem contemptible and ridiculous to the world, let us not be offended, or abhor it; but let this suffice us, that we know it pleaseth God who is in heaven. Let us take heed to ourselves concerning these things; that we may help the needy, comfort the afflicted, and count the calamity of our neighbour as our own.

Whatsoever God hath commanded concerning these things, should be observed; as to do good to our neighbour, to bear a friendly and willing mind toward him, and assist him in adversity. Christ saith, Mat v. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then

come and offer thy gift.” Here we plainly see that God will not be served, unless we first become reconciled to our neighbour. For the same cause also God rejecteth the sacrifices of the Jews; as it is said in the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. i. “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats”

“When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new-moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgement; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless, plead for the widow,” &c.

Thus we see what God requireth, and what he allows. When we neglect those works by which our neighbour is served, he will neglect us: for whatsoever benefit we bestow upon our neighbour, that we bestow upon God, and Christ himself; as he shall pronounce in the last judgement: Mat. xxv. 40. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” When this is heard, ye will not glory in the temples which have been built by you, or *masses* which ye have founded. For then he will say, what have I to do with thy temples and masses? what with thy altar and bells? Thinkest thou that I am delighted with stones and wood, with bells and banners? were not all things mine at first? heaven is my seat, and earth my footstool.

Who commanded thee to build temples? I have set living temples before thee; these are to be edified, nourished, and relieved; but thou hast been occupied with other trifles, which I have not commanded. Ye ought to have put your trust in me only: but whatsoever I have commanded, that of you hath been neglected; and that which I have detested and abhorred, that ye have done. The wise men did not abhor the miserable appearance of this infant and his parents; neither should we detest the pitiful estate of our neighbours; but be persuaded that we find Christ in them, and that whatsoever is bestowed upon them, Christ will acknowledge as being bestowed upon himself.

His kingdom consisteth of the poor, despised, and abject; yea, we must bear the cross; we must suffer contempt, persecution, affliction, and misery; as Paul saith out of the Psalm, xlv. 22. "For thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." In another place he saith, 2 Cor. iv. "We are made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things." Christ said to his disciples, when he sent them to preach in Judea, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves;" Mat. x. 16. The wise men found Christ, not in *Herod's court*, not among the *princes* and *priests*, nor at the famous city of *Jerusalem*; but at *Bethlehem*, in a *stable*.

We must now consider what these wise men signified by their gifts. They show by it that this child was a king; and not a king only, but also God and man. In offering gold, they acknowledge him king; as if they should say, we bring thee gold, not that we would thereby enrich thee; for gold and silver, and whatsoever is, was thine before; but hereby we acknowledge thee to be a mighty king over all things; so we offer gold to Christ, when we acknowledge him for our king and Lord; but in this is required a strong faith. If I ought to acknowledge him for my king and Lord my will ought also to be extinguished, that

Christ only might reign and rule in me; and that all things which pleaseth him might be done concerning me. The leper said unto Christ, Mat. “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.”

My will must be utterly extinguished, if I will have Christ to reign in me. Christ suffered not his own will to rule, but always submitted himself to the will of his Father; as he saith, John vi. “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” Yea, he obeyed his Father even unto death, and submitted himself wholly to his will. We should imitate this example, which is written for our consolation, and rest our hope confidently on him, who brings all things to pass after the counsel of his own will; as it is said in Psalm xxxvii. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.”

Blessed is he that believeth those things from his heart: such a man, whether he be burned, or drowned, or cast into prison, or otherwise grievously dealt with, taketh it all in good part; for he knoweth that these things shall turn to his benefit. After this sort we offer gold with the wise men, when we suffer not our own will to rule, but suffer Christ to work in us according to his will and pleasure. Wherefore those are hypocrites, who know not how to suffer the will of God, but always complain of his dealings with them. If things go not according to their wishes, they are angry; they do not patiently suffer persecution and contempt; they murmur and find fault. By resisting, they force the kingdom of Christ from themselves.

By frankincense the wise men represented divine honour, which we offer to Christ when we confess that whatsoever we have comes from God; and that we have it freely without any merit of our own. All things are to be ascribed to him as the true Lord; neither must we glory in the things received, but the glory of God is to be sought in

them: and if he take them from us again, we ought to suffer it with quiet minds, and to bless him with the beloved Job in these words: “Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Chap. i. 21. We ought to suffer misfortune and adversity, as if God himself cast them upon us; so that none may be able to offend us; for not so much as a hair of our heads shall perish; as Christ saith to his disciples, Luke xxi.

Whatsoever shall molest us, whatsoever adversity shall come upon us, we ought never to seek any other God, neither should we seek help and comfort from any but Christ alone. This is he which is made unto us of God the Father, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We offer unto Christ frankincense of Arabia, when we fly to him in calamity, affliction, and anguish. But those that seek comfort from other sources, as from sorcerers, witches, &c. they do not offer frankincense to Christ, but loathsome brimstone, wherein they shall be burned forever; for they have not believed and trusted in Christ.

By myrrh they signified mortal man: for with myrrh dead bodies were anointed which preserved them from putrefaction. Myrrh is a strong and bitter juice, distilled from trees which grow in Arabia; somewhat like the gum of the pine, or fir tree. We offer myrrh to Christ, when we firmly believe that he by his death hath overcome sin, satan, and hell. This is a special faith. If we believe from the heart that sin and death, the devil and hell, are swallowed up in and by the death of Christ, we shall not be afraid of them all: we shall be preserved from that rottenness which death bringeth, if we have this myrrh, this faith in the death of our Lord Christ in our bodies and souls; this will not suffer us to perish.

So strong and valiant a thing is faith, that by it all things are possible. Christ saith in *Mark*, we must learn daily with our Lord Christ to bring under our old *Adam*, and mortify the deeds of the body by the cross; not that cross which we choose, but that which Christ layeth upon us; let us bear it with a patient and willing mind, that our bodies may be subdued and made subject to the spirit; that being buried with Christ in baptism, we may be raised with him, and he alone may reign and live in us.

This baptism signifies no other thing than that the old *Adam* be mortified and buried; which we ought always to bear in mind, seeing that sin remains in us as long as we live in this world. Wherefore St. Paul treats in very good words, which ought to be diligently considered by us; Rom. vi. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."

"Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Thus much concerning the first appearance.

Now we will speak somewhat of the second; that is, of the baptism of Christ. In the baptism of Christ, three things are to be considered: the first, the heavens were opened when he was baptized; the second, the Holy Ghost was seen in the likeness of a dove; and the third, the voice of the Father was heard, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Christ vouchsafed to be baptized with water, by which he hath hallowed baptism, and made the water thereof holy, that he which is baptized in his name, might likewise become holy and cleansed from sin.

Christ was not baptized for himself, for he was not infected with the least spot of sin. He acted like a good physician, who first drinks of the bitter portion, and then offers it to the sick, that they may the more gladly and boldly drink of it afterwards: for we in baptism drink a bitter portion; namely, the mortification of the old **Adam**: for dipping into the water, or sprinkling with it, signifies nothing else, than that the old **Adam** should perish and die. This is greatly furthered by the cross, which God by his divine will layeth upon us; which we ought not to cast off, but bear willingly with a patient mind.

But that this might be easier for us to do, Christ hath taken it upon himself; he suffered himself to be baptized, he took his cross and carried it without resistance or gainsaying, and was obedient to his Father unto death, even the death of the cross: as Paul saith, Phil. ii. that he might deliver us from our sins, and might appease his heavenly Father, which surely he did of his mere grace without any desert of ours; whereof baptism is a sign and pledge; as Paul saith to **Titus**: "But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by

his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Secondly, when Christ was baptized, the Holy Ghost appeared in the likeness of a dove, whereby is signified that we also receive the Holy Ghost in baptism, which ruleth and guideth us according to the will of God; which is present with us, and helpeth us in bearing the burden of the holy cross, which exhorteth us, enforceth us, and when we yield to the burden of the cross, it is present and helpeth us; if we fall it raiseth us up again, and is always a faithful companion in our journey. He maketh the burden of the cross light, which we should otherwise be unable to bear. If we fall into sin, we must remember to go back to baptism, for this is the ship wherein we pass over the sea of sin; for baptism is the beginning of repentance. After such a renewing of the life, followeth the praise of God, and thanksgiving unto him for the grace received. Then the person behaveth himself friendly towards his neighbour, and doth good to him in all things. This is signified by the Holy Ghost appearing upon Christ in the likeness of a dove. The dove hath no gall: such they also become which receive the Holy Ghost in baptism; to wit, they are gentle and without bitterness toward all men.

Thirdly, the voice of the Father is heard in the baptism of Christ, which saith, “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.” This is that Saviour which delivereth us from the tyranny of sin, death, satan, and hell. Here we may learn how we must come to God: he that desireth to become a child of God the Father, must attain to it through Christ, and through him alone, the beloved Son, who sitteth in the bosom of the Father; unto whom alone the Father looketh; without whom be alloweth nothing; but whatsoever pleaseth the Father, it pleaseth him with respect to the Son: therefore he that desireth to go to the Father, must cleave to

this his beloved Son: nothing is of value or estimation with the Father, except his beloved Son.

He that desireth to be in favour with the Father, and to be beloved by him, let him flee to the bosom of the Son, by whom he findeth access to the Father; as Paul saith, Eph. "Through Christ we are adopted;" and, "Without Christ we are the enemies of God." Therefore, whosoever cleaveth to Christ through faith, abideth in the favour of God; he also shall be made beloved and acceptable, as Christ is; and shall have fellowship with the Father and Son. This is a mighty and excellent voice! This is my beloved Son, in whom all things consist and are comprehended, which are extant in the whole scripture.

As all things are delivered into the hands of Christ, and gathered into one, that they may obey him, God saith, "this is my beloved Son by shewing Christ only, and naming no other, he maketh it plain that none is his beloved Son beside him. If others are not his beloved sons, it is certain that they are the children of wrath and indignation. If there were more beloved sons, he would not have used this saying; neither would he turn his eyes to him only as though he knew no other. Paul saith in his epistle to the Hebrews, "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" and again, "I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son."

It is most certain that Christ, in these words, is declared to be the true and only Son of God; seeing that these words were never said to any other creature. Howbeit, he was as much the Son of God, and would have remained so forever, even as he hath been from everlasting, if this had not been spoken to us from heaven: neither is any thing added or taken away from him by this name; but we must think that this praise and honour of Christ was spoken for our sakes; as it is said in John xii. 30. "Jesus answered and said, this voice came

not because of me, but for your sakes.” He hath no need that it should be said unto him, that he is the Son of God; for he knew this before; and hath had from everlasting by his nature, that which he heareth.

This word teacheth us to know Christ, in which knowledge our salvation consisteth, as witnessed by *Isaiah*, *Paul*, and *Peter*. But how does it teach us to know him? it teacheth us to know him as the Son of God, who pleaseth the Father; by which the Father cheereth the hearts of all the faithful, and greatly delighteth them with comfort and heavenly love. When Christ speaketh, or doth any thing for me, I remember these words of the Father, that he is the beloved Son; then I am forced to think, that all which Christ speaketh and suffereth for my sake, doth well please the Father. How can God show himself more liberal and loving, than by being pleased that Christ his Son doth deal so kindly and tenderly with us; that he looks upon us with so much affection, and with such unusual love, as to suffer and die for our sakes.

But we are cold, and sluggish, and unthankful wretches; we pass over such precious words as things of no importance; as if uttered by man; as being contained in a book, or written on paper, as things utterly decayed; as if grown out of use by long custom; as if they pertained to Christ, and not to us. Being dull and senseless, we do not perceive that they belong not to Christ, but were committed to writing and are extant for our sakes only. Christ being in so great favour with God in all things, and at the same time serving us, as he himself witnesseth, we are without doubt in the same favour with God, as Christ himself. “If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John xiv. 23. Also, xii. 26. “Where I am, there shall

also my servant be.” Again; I pray that they may be one, even as we are one; I in thee, and thou in me, and they in me.

But where is Christ? In the favour of God; in the depth of his heart: there also are we, if we know and love Christ; there our refuge is placed, where no evil can come. But in this, faith is required; the works of the law, and our own merits will not prevail. Christ is here declared the only Son of God; which at once overthrows whatsoever maketh itself God. Men and satan, who please themselves, and love themselves only, seek not after God, but strive to become gods themselves: but God will say unto these very different things from what he said unto Christ. Christ is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, seeing that he glorifieth not himself, although he be God: but ye are wretches, in whom I allow nothing, seeing that ye glorify yourselves, being but creatures and men.

This sentence given of Christ, humbleth the world, and showeth them all to be void of divinity; and ascribeth it to Christ, all for our benefit, if we believe and admit this sentence; or to our condemnation, if we contemn it. Then we may say at once, without Christ there is no favour, nor any beloved Son; but the wrath and sore displeasure of God.

We shall now quote certain sentences out of the scripture concerning Christ, whereby is declared that through him we are loved by the Father, and without him are refused. Thus it is said, John i. 16, 17. “Of his fulness, (to wit, Christ's,) have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” John iii. 13. “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” John iii. 16,17, 18. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not

perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

John iii. 35, 36. “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” John vi. 40. “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” John vii. 37, 38. “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Titus iii. 4, 5, 6, 7. “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Many other such sentences occur, particularly in the epistles of Paul, which any one may gather for himself.

SERMON VI.

The fruit and virtue of Christs Resurrection.

We have heard in the treatise of the Lord's passion, that it is not sufficient merely to know the history thereof; neither is it sufficient to know how and when Christ rose; but both the use and profit of his passion, as well as his resurrection, should be preached and known; to wit, what Christ obtained by them for us. Where only the deed of the history is preached, it is frivolous preaching, and without fruit; which both satan and wicked men as well know, read and understand, as we do. But when the use of them are preached, wherein they profit, that indeed is a fruitful and wholesome sermon, and full of sweet consolation.

Christ hath declared the use and profit of his passion and resurrection, when he talked with the women: Mat. xxviii. 10. "Be not afraid; go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." These are the first words which they hear of Christ after his resurrection from the dead; whereby he confirmeth all his sayings, also all his benefits showed to them before; and that they should come unto those who should believe thereafter. Here he calleth not only his apostles his brethren, but also all them that believe in him; although they do not see him visibly as the apostles did.

Shall any one come forth and boast of his merit, or of the strength whereby he is able to merit any thing? What had the apostles merited? Peter denied Christ thrice: and all the rest of the apostles fled from him: he might have called them runaways, and forsakers of their standing in the midst of their conflicts; yea, traitors and wicked men, rather than brethren. Wherefore of mere mercy and grace this word was brought unto them by the matrons, which the apostles themselves did perceive. This word is full of all consolation and comfort; that Christ careth for such wretched men as we are; yea,

and that he doth call us his brethren. If Christ be our brother, I would fain know what good things we shall want?

They that are brethren by consanguinity, use goods common among themselves, having the same father, and the same inheritance; otherwise they would not be brethren. So we also possess good things in common with Christ; enjoying the same father, and the same inheritance; which inheritance is not diminished by parting it, as worldly inheritances are, but is always made abundant; for it is a spiritual inheritance. A corporal inheritance, when distributed into divers parts, is made smaller; but in the spirit, the case is such, that he who hath received part thereof, hath obtained the whole. What is the inheritance of Christ? In his power are life and death, sin and grace, and whatsoever is contained in heaven and earth; his are eternal verity; strength, wisdom, and righteousness.

All power is given unto him; he hath rule over all things; over hunger, thirst, prosperity, adversity, &c. He reigneth over all things, whether they be in heaven or in earth, spiritual or corporal; all things are in his power, as well eternal as temporal. Now if I cleave unto him by faith, I shall be made partaker of all his good things: I shall not obtain part of the inheritance only, but I shall possess with him everlasting wisdom, and eternal strength. I shall not be grieved with hunger, sin shall not oppress me, neither shall I be afraid of death. Hereby we may easily understand the sayings frequently uttered by the prophets, especially in the Psalms; as where David saith, Ps. xxxiv. "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." He saith in another place, "The Lord knoweth the ways of the righteous, and their inheritance shall endure forever. They shall not be confounded in the perilous time, and in the days of dearth they shall have enough." And again; "I

have been young and now am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”

All these things Christ bringeth with him; for we are, and are called his brethren, not because of any merit in us, but of mere grace. If we would print these things in our hearts, and thoroughly feel them, it would go well with us; but they go in at one ear, and out the other. St. Paul glorieth in these things, as he saith, Rom. viii. “As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For 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 itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and jointheirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”

This title ascendeth so high, that the mind of man is not able to comprehend it. For unless the spirit, the comforter, imparted this grace to us, no man would be able to say, Christ is my brother. Those who cry out without faith, “Christ is my brother,” are fanatical spirits, who vainly pronounce words without fruit. The case standeth very differently, and more marvelously with a true Christian; he is amazed, and hardly dareth to confess any thing sufficiently thereof. Wherefore we must endeavour to hear this, not only with fleshly ears, but to feel it in our hearts; then we shall not be rash, but be carried into an admiration thereof. A true Christian views these things with fear; and cries out, am I, a wretched and defiled creature, drowned in sin, worthy that the Son of God should be called my brother How do I, a miserable wretch, attain to such a thing? Thus he is astonished, and can hardly comprehend these things.

These things cannot be understood according to flesh and blood; the heart of man in a natural state is not able to comprehend them. Christ more plainly declares unto Mary Magdalene the use and fruit of his death and resurrection; when he saith, John xx. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." This is one of the most comfortable places of which we can glory and boast. As though Christ should say, Mary, go hence and declare unto my disciples, (which fled from me, which have deserved punishment and eternal condemnation,) that this resurrection of mine is for their good; that is, I have by my resurrection brought the matter to pass, that my Father is their Father, and my God their God.

These are but few words, but they contain much matter in them; namely, that we have as great hope and confidence in God, as his own Son. Who can comprehend such exceeding joy! I will not say, utter it; that a wretched and defiled sinner may be bold to call God his Father; even as Christ himself. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, well remembered the words of the Psalm, how it speaketh of Christ; who, as he saith, is not ashamed to call the believers brethren; saying, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." If any worldly prince or nobleman should humble himself so low, as to say to a thief or robber, thou art my brother, it would be a notable thing which every one would marvel at: but this king who sitteth in glory at the right hand of his Father, saith to poor mortal man, thou art my brother.

In this king is our confidence and comfort. He arms us against sin and death, the devils and hell; and against all sinister success of things, as well of body as mind. As we are flesh and blood, and therefore subject to all kinds of adversity, it follows that the

case should so stand with him; otherwise he would not be like unto us in all things. Wherefore, that he might be made conformable, and like unto us, he had experience in all things, even as we have, sin only excepted; that he might be our true brother, and exhibit himself openly unto us.

The epistle to the Hebrews doth set this forth in a lively manner, chap, ii “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” The profit, use, and fruit of the Lord's passion and resurrection, St. Paul hath summed up in a very brief manner; when he saith, Rom. iv. “Christ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

SERMON VII.

John, Chap. x. From the 11th to the 16th verses, inclusive.

11. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

12. But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

15. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

This text is full of consolation; which in a precious parable setteth forth Christ our Lord, and teacheth what manner of person he is, what his works are, and what affection he has toward man. Nevertheless, it cannot be distinctly understood, by comparing together light and darkness, day and night; that is, a good and evil shepherd, as the Lord doth in this place. Ye have oftentimes heard that God hath instituted and ordained two sorts of preaching in the world: One is, when the word of God is preached, which

saith, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal,” &c. Ex. xx. It also threatens that he who doth not keep these precepts, shall die.

But that preaching doth justify no man. Although a man be thereby compelled to show himself godly outwardly, before men, yet notwithstanding, he is offended at the law in his heart, and had much rather there were no law. The other ministry of the word, is the gospel; which shows where is to be received that which the law requireth. It neither urgeth nor threateneth; but allureth men gently. It showeth them what they must receive and take, whereby they may become righteous: Behold, here is Jesus Christ! he directeth them. These disagree one with another, as much as to receive and give, to exact and reward.

This difference should be well understood and explained. To hardened and untractable men, who feel not the gospel, the law is to be preached; and they are to be urged till they begin to feel mollified and humbled, and acknowledge their disease; then is the time to begin to preach the gospel. These two sorts of preaching were instituted and ordained by the Almighty: besides these there are others which were not ordained of God, but are traditions invented by men; ordained by the *pope* and his *prelates*, wherewith they have perverted the gospel. These are not worthy to be called shepherds or hirelings; but they are those whom Christ calleth thieves, robbers, and wolves.

If we would guide men in the right way, it must be done by the word of God: if it be not done, we surely labour in vain. Christ treateth here of the second ministry of the word, and describeth of what sort it is: he maketh himself the chief, yea, the only shepherd: for he whom he doth not feed, remains unfed. Ye have heard that our Lord

Jesus Christ, after his passion and death, was raised from the dead, and entered into immortality: not that he might sit idle in heaven, and rejoice with himself, but that he might receive a kingdom, and execute the functions of a governour and king; of which all the prophets, yea, and the whole scripture, treats at large.

We must continually acknowledge him to be our governour and ruler; neither must we think that he is idle in heaven, but that he doth from above govern and direct all things; who hath an especial care of his kingdom, which is the Christian faith; therefore it must needs be that his kingdom will flourish among us here on earth. Of this kingdom, we have elsewhere said, that it is so ordained, that we increase every day and become purer; and that it is not governed by any force or power, but by preaching alone; that is, by the gospel. This gospel cometh not from man, but it was brought by Jesus Christ himself; and afterwards put into the hearts of the apostles and their successors, that they might comprehend it, and speak and publish it.

Hereby is his kingdom governed, wherein he so reigneth, that all the power thereof consisteth in the word of God. Now whosoever shall hear and believe this, pertaineth to this kingdom. Moreover, this word is made so effectual, that it bringeth an abundance of all the good things which are necessary to man. For it is the power of God which is able to save every one that believeth; as Paul saith to the Romans; if thou believe that Christ died for thee, to deliver thee from evil, and cleave unto the word, it is certain that no creature is able to overthrow thee. For as none are able to overthrow the word, neither shall any be able to hurt thee if thou trust in it. By the word thou shalt overcome sin, death, satan, and hell; and to that thou must flee, for in it thou shalt find peace, joy, and eternal life; and be made partaker of all the good things that are promised in the word.

Wherefore the government of this kingdom is marvellous. The word is published and preached through the whole world; but the power thereof is secret; it must be felt and tasted in the heart. We therefore of the ministry are able to perform nothing more, than to become the instruments through which our Lord Christ openly preacheth the word; for he suffereth the word to be published abroad, that every one may hear it. But faith maketh us to feel it inwardly, in the heart; yea, it is the secret work of Christ, when one knoweth what is his duty, and is willing to do according to his divine will and pleasure.

That these things may be better, understood, we will now treat of our text, wherein Christ saith, "I am the good shepherd:" What is a good shepherd? A good shepherd, saith Christ, giveth his life for his sheep: and I leave my life for my sheep. Here the Lord declareth what his kingdom is, by the parable of the sheep. The sheep is of that nature, that it quickly knoweth the voice of its shepherd; neither followeth it the voice of another; but always cleaveth to its own, and seeketh help of him, not being able to help itself. The sheep cannot feed itself, nor preserve itself from the wolves; but is altogether dependent upon the shepherd.

Christ therefore bringeth the quality and nature of the sheep as a parable; and transformeth himself into a shepherd: whereby he showeth what his kingdom is: which consisteth in feeding his sheep; that is, miserable, needy, and wretched men, that have no help or counsel but in him alone. That we may declare this more plainly, we will quote a passage from Ezekiel: chap, xxxiv. "Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? why therefore do ye feed yourselves? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have

ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth.”

What he here saith should be particularly noticed. The meaning is, that he will have the weak, sick, broken, abject, and lost, to be strengthened, healed, cured, and sought after; not spoiled and destroyed. These things, saith he to the shepherds, ye ought to do; but ye have done none of them. Wherefore I myself, (as he afterwards saith,) will deal thus with my sheep: “That which is lost, will I seek again; that which is driven away, will I bring again; and to that which is not well, will I prepare a remedy, and heal it.” Here we see that the kingdom of Christ is such as pertaineth to the weak, diseased, and feeble; the preaching whereof is full of comfort; although we do not thoroughly feel our misery and weakness: if we did, we should forthwith run to him.

But how did those shepherds behave themselves? they ruled in rigour, and strictly exacted obedience to the law. Moreover, they added their own traditions; as they do also at this day; and if they be not kept, they cry out and condemn him that transgresseth them, so that they do nothing but urge more and more their own inventions. But this is not the way to feed and govern souls; Christ is not such a shepherd: for by such manner of feeding, none are helped, but the sheep are utterly lost. We shall now make some remarks upon the preceding passage of the prophet. First, he saith that the weak sheep are to be strengthened; that is, the consciences which are weak in faith, and have a sorrowful spirit, and

are of faint courage, are not to be enforced. It must not be said unto them, thou must do this, thou must be strong; for if thou art weak thou art ordained to eternal punishment! This is not the way to strengthen the weak.

Paul saith, Rom. xiv. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." He likewise adds, Rom. xv. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." Wherefore they are not to be severely compelled, but comforted; that although they be weak, they may not despair, for they shall become stronger. Isaiah the prophet, spake of Christ in the following words: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." chap. xlii. The bruised reed signifieth miserable, weak, and bruised consciences; which are so easily shaken, that they tremble, and sometimes lose their confidence in God. With these God doth not deal rigorously, but in a gentle manner; lest he break them.

The smoking flax, which as yet burns a little, and emits more smoke than fire, are the same consciences: they ought not to despair, for he will not utterly extinguish them; but will always kindle them, and more and more strengthen them. This, to him that truly knoweth it, is a great comfort. He that doth not gently handle weak consciences after this sort, doth not execute the office of a true shepherd. Afterwards the prophet saith, "That which was diseased, ye ought to have succoured." Who are those diseased ones? they who in their manner of living, and their outward works, have certain diseases and vices. The first pertaineth to the conscience when it is weak; the other to the manners or condition of life; as when one is carried with a wilful mind, and a wayward disposition; and by wrath and evil doings offend; as even the apostles sometimes did.

Such as are so vicious in the sight of men, that they are even an offence to others, God will not have rejected and despaired of; for his kingdom is not of such a nature that the strong and whole only should live therein, but Christ is placed in it that he may take care of such as are weak and helpless. Sometimes we are so weak and sick, that we almost despair of being subjects of this kingdom: but the more we feel our disease, so much the more we must strive to come to him; for he is always ready to heal us. If we are weak and oppressed, and in great affliction, we have more reason to go to Christ; acknowledging ourselves sinners, that he may help and justify us: for the greater our disease is, the more needful it is for us to be healed.

Christ requireth these things of us, and allureth us to come to him boldly and cheerfully. Others who are not such shepherds, think they make men righteous, if they exact much of them, and urge them much; whereby they only make those who are evil, worse: as the prophet saith, "The broken have ye not bound together." To be broken, is, as when one has a leg broken, or a wound inflicted somewhere else; that is, when a Christian is not only so diseased and weak that he stumbleth, but also runneth into such great temptations that he breaketh some part, and even denieth the gospel, after the manner of *Peter*; who forswore Christ.

Now if any one should so stumble, that he was compelled to go back, and be utterly cast down in mind, we must not yet cast him off; as though he would never more pertain to the kingdom of Christ. We must leave Christ's property to himself; that his kingdom may remain mere mercy and grace; whose desire is to help them only that are grieved with their calamity and misery, and greatly desire to be delivered from it: that his kingdom may altogether abound with comfort, and he be the gentle shepherd that provoketh and allureth

all who come to him. And all this is done by the gospel; whereby the weak are to be strengthened, and the sick healed.

This word is sufficient for all the distresses of conscience; giving abundant comfort to all, though they be ever so great sinners. Christ therefore alone is the good shepherd; who healeth all sorts of diseases, and helpeth them that are fallen. He that doth not, is not a shepherd. The prophet thus remarks: “Ye have not brought again that which was driven away.” What is that which was driven away? The despised soul that is so scorned and contemned, that whatsoever Christian doctrine is bestowed upon it, is thought to be in vain. Yet Christ will not suffer it to be dealt with in a harsh manner: his kingdom is not compassed with so straight bounds, that only the strong, whole and perfect, flourish therein; for this pertaineth to the heavenly life to come; but in this kingdom, only grace and mercy must abound.

As God promised to the children of Israel; Ex. iii. That he would bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey. The prophet concludeth; “The lost have ye not sought.” That is lost which seemeth to be condemned; of the return whereof there is scarcely any hope: of which sort in the gospel were publicans and harlots; and at this day, they who have not a spark of godliness, but are untractable and unruly. Notwithstanding, these are not to be left, but means should be used, that at the last they may be reclaimed and brought into the right way. Which Saint Paul oftentimes did; as when he delivered two of this sort to satan: 1 Tim. i. “I have delivered them unto satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.” And again he saith, 1 Cor. v. “To deliver such a one unto satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

These he cast off as condemned; yet he did not despair of them. Christ should be preached, as rejecting no man, although he be weak; but that he willingly receiveth, comforteth, and strengtheneth every one; so that he always appeareth to be the good shepherd. Therefore it comes to pass, that men willingly resort to him, and that there is no need to compel them. The gospel so allureth and maketh them willing, that they come with love and pleasure, and with all boldness; whereby their love to Christ is increased, so that they do every thing willingly, who before were to be urged and compelled. If we be compelled, we act grudgingly and unwillingly, which God abhorreth.

When we perceive that God dealeth so lovingly and gently with us, our hearts become ravished, so that we cannot stay ourselves, but are constrained to run unto him, leaving all other things for his sake. Consider how great an evil it is, when one judgeth another. The kingdom of Christ, as we have heard, is so ordained, that it healeth and justifieth only sick and miserable consciences; wherefore those who have regard only to the strong and whole are much deceived. It is great and effectual knowledge whereby Christ is known. It is grafted in us by nature, to be altogether evil and wicked; yet notwithstanding we would have every one honest: we earnestly regard strong Christians; not looking to the sick and weak, thinking them not to be Christians; though we ourselves at the same time exceed them in wickedness.

The cause of this is our corrupt nature, and our blind reason; which would measure the kingdom of God by our own judgement: whereby we think those things unclean before God, which seem unclean to us; but this opinion must be removed from our minds. It will be said, alas! what will become of me if all Christians must be whole, strong, and godly? When shall I attain those things? In this manner thou wilt bring thyself into such a perplexity, that thou shalt not attain

unto true comfort and joy. Thou must be so affected, that thou wilt say, most gracious Saviour, although I find myself altogether weak, and diseased, and in a wretched state. yet I will not cast off my hope, but will flee unto thee, that thou mayst succour me; for thou only art the true shepherd; wherefore I will not despair, nor be discouraged, although I come void of works.

We must be diligent, that we may become wise and know Christ. In his kingdom only the weak and diseased are conversant; it being, as it were, a mere hospital, in which only the sick and feeble lie, of whom a care must be taken. But few men have this knowledge, for it is not easily attained; it is even sometimes wanting in them who have the gospel and spirit. Some men look into the scripture, which setteth forth the kingdom of Christ, affirming it to be precious; nevertheless they pay but little attention to the signification of the words therein contained, neither do they perceive that true wisdom is hidden therein, which far excelleth our wisdom.

Christian wisdom does not consist in seeking the company of those that are accounted wise and skilful, and to make mention, and talk of them; but to be occupied among the unwise, and those that lack understanding, that they may forsake sin and foolishness, and embrace righteousness, and sound understanding. Therefore it appeareth that Christian wisdom doth not consist in lofty looks, and seeing ourselves in things high and wise, as in a glass, but that we look to those things which are below, and mark that which is humble. He that knoweth these things, let him give thanks to God; for by this knowledge he is able to prepare and apply himself to every thing that shall take place in the world. But ye shall find many, yea, even among those that preach the gospel, who are not thus far enlightened.

Heretofore we have been taught that none must come to Christ, till he be altogether clean; thou must therefore forsake this opinion, that thou mayst attain to true understanding, and know Christ aright; as the true and good shepherd. He compareth the good shepherd with the evil, or hireling, in the following passage: “The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.”

It is true, indeed, that Christ is the only shepherd: the name of Christ belongs to him alone; yet he communicates the same to us, that we may be called Christians. In the same manner, although he be the only shepherd, yet he imparteth the same name to those that be of the ministry. Matthew likewise forbiddeth our calling any man father on earth; for one is our Father, which is in heaven. (Chap, xxiii.) Notwithstanding, Paul calleth himself the father of the Corinthians, when he saith; “In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” (1 Cor. iv.) Therefore it seemeth as though God alone would have the name of father; and at the same time granteth the same name to men, that they also may be fathers; howbeit, not of themselves, but by Christ: even as we are called Christians; not that we have any thing of ourselves, but that all things are given us through Christ.

Christ saith, moreover, “He that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth,” &c. This surely is a hard saying; that they which preach the gospel, and strengthen and heal the sheep, should at last suffer them to be caught and torn, in pieces: while they themselves flee away, when the sheep have the most need of help. As long as the

wolves do not appear, they do their duty carefully and diligently; but as soon as the wolf appears, they immediately leave the sheep. If they have fed them well and made them fat, strong and whole, they are the better liked by the wolves.

But what is the hidden meaning of this parable? The meaning of Christ is this; in my kingdom, (which consisteth in nothing else, but strengthening the weak, healing the sick, and encouraging the faint hearted,) the holy cross shall not be wanting. When it is preached that Christ only, whose silly sheep we are, hath the care of us, strengtheneth, healeth, and helpeth us, that our own strength and works are of no importance, the world cannot abide it: so that it is a natural consequence for the gospel to bring the cross with it; inseparably accompanying it; and he that will unfeignedly profess it before the world, must expect to bear persecution. This being the case, it is not difficult to perceive the difference between the true shepherds and the hirelings.

The hireling preacheth the gospel as long as he is reported among men to be learned, godly, and holy. But when he is reproved, or called a heretick and wicked man, or requested to make a recantation, he either recanteth or leaveth the flock without a shepherd: their case then becomes worse than it was before. What doth it avail the sheep, even if they were well fed before? If they were true shepherds, they would lose their lives rather than leave the sheep to the jaws of the wolves; and would be ready to offer their neck to the axe for the sake of the gospel.

They therefore are not good shepherds, who preach the gospel that they may thereby obtain honour and riches; without doubt

these are hirelings, who seek their own glory even in sound doctrine, and in the word of God. Wherefore they abide no longer than they

receive honour, praise, and benefit thereby. As soon as the wolf cometh, they go back, deny the word, and flee away; leaving the sheep, earnestly seeking for pasture and their shepherd, that he may keep them from injury: but the good shepherd never leaveth his sheep in time of danger, but always remains with them to strengthen and defend them.

These things may happen to us in some future time; we may be beset in the same manner. Then the preachers will shut their mouths and provide for their safety by fleeing away; the sheep shall be dispersed; one will be carried this way, and another that; God grant that some of them may stand valiantly in defence of the gospel, and spend their blood, if the case so require, in delivering their sheep! Thus Christ hath described the hirelings in their true colours; who thus saith; "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." He speaketh here of the peculiar duty that belongs to himself: I know my sheep, saith he, and they likewise know me. Christ knoweth us to be his sheep, and we know him to be our shepherd.

He knoweth us to be weak and diseased; but even those that are he doth not cast off, but taketh care of them, and healeth them; though they be so diseased that all the world think they are not his sheep; and indeed this is the knowledge of the world. But Christ doth not know them after this manner; neither doth he greatly regard what manner of sheep they are, but considereth whether they belong to his fold. Those therefore are true shepherds, who, following Christ, know their sheep, and protect them from danger.

My Father knoweth me, saith Christ, but the world knoweth me not. Therefore, when the hour shall come that I shall die an ignominious death upon the cross, all with one voice will cry out, was this the Son of God? he must needs be a condemned man, and given up to satan

both soul and body. But my Father will say after this sort; this is my well beloved Son, the King and Saviour of mankind. If I were in the midst of hell, or in the jaws of satan, I should come out again, for the Father will not forsake me. Likewise I know my sheep, and they know me: they are certain that I am a good shepherd; therefore they come to me for succour. They cleave to me, knowing that they are subject to manifold infirmities and diseases; and knowing that I would have such resort to me.

“Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one-fold, and one shepherd.” Some, in explaining this passage, say, before the latter days, the whole world shall become Christians; this is a falsehood forged by satan, that he might darken sound doctrine; that we might not rightly understand it. Beware therefore of this delusion. As soon as the gospel was published, it was preached to the Jews; and they were the sheepfold. But he saith that he hath other sheep also, which are not of this fold, which he must gather together; whereby he showeth that the gospel must be preached to the Gentiles, that they also may believe in Christ; that of the Jews and Gentiles may be made one church. This was performed by the apostles, who preached the gospel to the Gentiles, and brought them to the true faith.

Thus there is one body, one church, one faith, one hope, one love, and one baptism; which continueth at this day, and shall continue to the end of the world. Therefore do not believe that all men shall have faith in Christ; for the cross must always be borne by us; the greater part being of the class that persecute Christians. The gospel must be continually preached, that always some may be brought to Christianity. Thus we close, having given a compendious exposition of the text.

SERMON VIII.

John, chap. vi. From the 44th to the 51st verses, inclusive.

44. No man can come to me, except the Father, which has sent me, draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

46. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48. I am that bread of life.

49. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.

51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The sole object of this text is, to teach us the nature of Christian faith, and to stimulate us to the exercise of it: and, indeed, the general

tenor of the Gospel of John, goes but little farther than to instruct us, how we must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and that such a faith as is grounded on the true promise of God made to Christ, will save us; as the text under consideration plainly declares. Those, therefore, who teach any other way or means to obtain righteousness, are here considered as ignorant of the true way. For whatsoever is the invention of men, can avail them nothing towards obtaining salvation. Although a man may exercise the duties of godliness, although his external works may appear holy before men, yet he will not be able to attain unto heaven, unless God, through his word, proffer him his divine grace, and enlighten his understanding, that he may walk in the way of life.

Now the way of life, is the Lord Jesus Christ; and he that seeketh another way, as those most certainly do, who trust in their own works, erreth from the right and true way; for Paul saith, Gal. ii. "If righteousness be by the law," (that is, by the works of the law,) "then Christ died without a cause." Therefore, I say, a man must be, as it were, bruised and broken by the Gospel; he must be humbled from the bottom of his heart; he must feel himself weak and frail, and wholly unable to do any thing of himself. He must fall prostrate before God, and cry, Help me, O omnipotent God, merciful Father, I am not able to help myself! Help, O Lord Christ, mine own help is nothing!

Christ, in Luke xx. 18. speaking of the chief corner stone, which was rejected of the builders, saith: "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Now this stone is Christ; therefore, we must either fall upon him through a sense of our imbecility and weakness, and so be broken, or he will fall upon us in his righteous judgement, and we shall be crushed under the weight of our own sins.

Christ saith in the text, “No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” The conclusion therefore is, that he whom the Father draweth not, and who cometh not to the Son, shall surely perish; for he is the only name given unto us whereby we can be saved; and without him there is no salvation: if he help not, our case is most miserable. Of him Peter also speaketh in the Acts of the Apostles, chap. iv. “This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Where then is the doctrine of those divines and schoolmen, who have taught, that by many works we must attain unto righteousness! How is the doctrine of that great master, Aristotle, confounded, who taught that reason instructeth men to do the best things, and is always ready to direct them in the right way? For this doctrine Christ doth here disprove; and doth positively assert, that unless the Father draw us to him, we shall perish forever. Hence all men must confess their imbecility and slowness to good things; for if any man persuade himself that he is able to do any good work by his own strength, truly he accuseth Christ of falsehood; and with great arrogance, presumeth to come to heaven, although he is not drawn of the Father.

The word of God, wherever it is soundly preached, casteth down whatsoever things are high and great; it maketh mountains even with vallies, and overthroweth all hills; as the prophet Esaias saith, “that all hearts hearing the word may despair of themselves, otherwise they cannot come unto Christ.” The works of God are such, that while they kill, they make alive; while they condemn they save; as Hannah, the mother of Samuel, singeth of the Lord: “The Lord killeth and maketh alive; bringeth down to the grave, and setteth up again. The

Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; bringeth low, and heaveth up on high.”

Wherefore, if a man be so stricken of God in his heart, that he acknowledgeth himself such a one as ought for his sins to be condemned, he surely is that very man whom God by his word has stricken, and by this stroke hath fastened upon him the bond of his divine grace, whereby he draweth him, that he may provide for his soul, and take care of him. At first, he could find within himself no help nor support, neither did he desire any; but now he hath found the special consolation and promise of God, which is this: “He that asketh receiveth, he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it is opened.”

By such a promise, man is more and more comforted in mind, and conceiveth a greater trust and confidence in God: for as soon as he heareth that this is the work of God alone, he desireth of him, as at the hand of his merciful father, that he will vouchsafe to draw him. He is also encouraged to lay hold on the promises of God, he trusteth in his word, and hereby he obtaineth a certain testimony, that he is one whom God hath drawn: as John saith in his first. Epistle, v. 10. “He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.”

He that is thus taught of God, he that hath this witness in himself, will find God no other than a helper, a comforter, and a Saviour. It therefore follows, that if we believe aright, God will ever be to us a comforter, and a giver of every good and perfect gift: he will require nothing of us, but will freely bestow upon us whatsoever things may be for our good; as he himself saith, in Psalms viii. “I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.” Who would not love such a God; a God who is so

loving and kind to us, and who so readily offereth us his divine grace and goodness?

They who do unadvisedly neglect so great grace as is offered to them by God, shall in no wise escape his severe and eternal judgement; as is said in the epistle to the Hebrews: “If they that transgressed the law of Moses escaped not unpunished, but died without mercy, how much more grievously shall God punish them who count the blood of the testament as an unholy thing, and tread underfoot the Son of God.”

How diligent is Paul in all his epistles to teach how the true knowledge of God may be obtained! How ardently doth he wish that men may possess this knowledge! the language of his soul is, if ye only knew and understood what God is, ye would then be safe: then ye would love him, and do all things that are approved of him. How desirous is he also that those who have obtained this knowledge should increase in it! Thus he saith, Col. i. “We cease not to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, pleasing unto all, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light”

Thus we learn from the first part of the text, that the knowledge of God cometh from the Father:—that it is necessary he should lay the foundation of our building, in order that our labour may not be in vain. This God effecteth through the preaching of his word, by those ministers whom he hath taught and sent forth to make known unto us the way of salvation. For St. Paul saith, Rom. x. “Faith cometh by

hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” And first, we have preached unto us the law; whereby we learn that all the deeds and actions of our lives, although they may have appeared righteous before men, are of no estimation before God; nay, that they are even abhorred and loathed of him; and that it is utterly impossible for us to obtain salvation thereby. Afterwards, we have the preaching of grace, which teacheth us, that although we cannot be saved by our own works of righteousness, yet it has pleased God to make provision for us, in order that we may not be utterly condemned and cast off; that he will receive us in the name of his beloved Son, whom he has given unto us as a mediator and Saviour: and that he will even make us heirs in his kingdom; yea, and lords over all things in heaven and earth.

When the preaching of the law taketh hold on our hearts, when we find ourselves condemned with all our works, our mind is made exceedingly sorrowful, we sigh unto God and know not what to do; our conscience is evil and fearful, we can see no way to escape from the justice of God; and thus we are brought to the very brink of despair. If, when in this situation, we hear the preaching of the gospel of grace, if the way to Christ be shown us, if we be made sensible that we must be saved through him alone, by mere grace and mercy without any of our own works and merits, then is the heart made joyful, and hasteth to lay hold on this grace, as the thirsty hart runneth unto the water. Thus David saith, “As the hart desireth the water brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O my God: my soul thirsteth for God, yea, even for the living God.”

When a man is thus taught of God, and cometh to Christ through the gospel, he heareth the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ, which strengtheneth the knowledge that God hath taught him. He findeth God to be none other than a Saviour abounding with grace, and that

he will be favourable and merciful to all who will call upon him in the name of his Son. For the Lord saith, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is that bread that cometh down from heaven, that he who eateth of it shall not die. I am that living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

In these words the soul findeth a table daintily furnished, whereat it may satiate its hunger. This is that supper, to the preparing of which our Lord hath killed his oxen and his fatlings; and he hath bidden us all to partake of it. Therefore, if we commit ourselves confidently unto him, and cleave to his word, his spirit will dwell in us, and we shall continue at this goodly table forever. The living bread of which the Lord here speaketh is Christ himself, who was slain for us, and by whom we are fed. If we receive but a morsel of this bread in our hearts, and retain it, we shall be forever satisfied. It will furnish us a repast at which we may banquet continually, without ever being cloyed.

Now to enjoy this repast, we have only to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; that he is made unto us of God, as Paul saith, 1 Cor. i. "Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." He that partaketh of this repast shall live forever: for when the Jews were in contention about the words of Christ, he saith, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." The manna which the fathers did eat in the desert, could not save from death; but this food maketh us immortal. If we believe in Christ, death hath no power to hurt us; nay, there is

no more death: for Christ saith unto the Jews, John viii. 51. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." Here it is evident he speaketh of the word of faith and the gospel.

But it may be said that the righteous die notwithstanding: that Abraham and the holy prophets are dead; as the Jews said unto Christ. I answer: The death of Christians is only a sleep, and it is commonly thus called in scripture. For a Christian tasteth and seeth no death; that is, it hath no pangs to him, nor doth he fear it. It is to him only a passage and gate to life; for the Saviour Christ Jesus, in whom he believeth, hath overcome death. Christ saith, John v. 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Not only is the death of a Christian free from terror, but his life also is happy and joyful. To him the yoke of Christ is easy and pleasant; and that it seemeth grievous to others, is because the Father hath not yet drawn them: therefore, they can take no pleasure in doing his will, nor doth the gospel afford them any comfort. But to those whom he hath drawn, and hath taught by his spirit, the gospel of Christ is a source of exceeding joy and consolation.

Thus ye have heard how ye must feed by faith on this bread which cometh down from heaven; that is, on the Lord Jesus Christ; which ye do when ye believe on him and acknowledge him as your Saviour; and throughout the chapter from which our text is taken, the necessity of such a belief is strongly enforced. For when the multitude followed Christ, that they might eat and drink, he taketh occasion to recommend unto them this spiritual meat;

and signified that he fed them with bodily meat, in order that they might believe on him, and thus feed on that also which is spiritual.

In this manner doth Christ, throughout his discourse, endeavour to persuade men to lay hold on this bread of life. In what familiar and plain language doth he here offer himself unto us! How gently and graciously doth he apply himself to our hearts, in order that we may do the will of our heavenly Father! which is nothing else than to believe on his Son; that he suffered death for our sakes; that although he was without sin, he took upon him the sins of the world, and suffered as though he had committed them himself; that he did the same willingly, to make atonement for our transgressions, in order that he might receive us as brethren and sisters;—if we believe these things, we do the will of our heavenly Father; for Christ saith, in the chapter from which the text is taken, “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.” It therefore appeareth, that he who hath faith doth the will of God, and eateth of the heavenly bread of which we have been speaking.

The bread and wine whereof we partake in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, are designed to represent the body and blood of Christ. This supper was instituted for the purpose of reminding us of the sufferings of our Saviour, and to strengthen our faith, in order that we may be assured that his body and blood deliver us from sin, death, satan, and all evil. But it may be asked, how shall a man know that he partaketh of this heavenly bread, and is called to this spiritual supper? Answer:—Let him consider the matter in his own mind, and if he find that he hath comfort in the promises of God, and is persuaded that he is of that choice company, he is assuredly such a one indeed; for as we believe, so cometh it

unto us. Such a man, moreover, will have a regard for his neighbour; he will assist him as his brother; he will deal justly with him; he will comfort, support, and encourage him—in short, he will do unto him no otherwise than he desireth to be done unto himself.

The reason why the mind of such a man is thus disposed, is, because his heart is filled with the love of God, and he therefore delighteth to do his will. It is now a pleasure to him to do good to his neighbour, and he is even grieved if there be none to whom he may be serviceable. He also deporteth himself with humility towards all men; he doth not esteem the temporal pleasures and vanities of life; he judgeth no man; he defameth no man; he interpreteth all things in the most favourable manner. When such a person seeth that matters go not well with his neighbour; if he fainteth in faith, if he waxeth cold in love, if his life is not every way approvable, he prayeth for him, and expostulateth with him as a brother. He is likewise sorely grieved if he chance to commit a fault: he imploreth pardon of God, and is ever ready to make restitution to his neighbour.

But he that is destitute of faith, he that is not taught of God, doth not feed on this heavenly bread, neither bringeth be forth these fruits; for where a right faith is not found, such fruits are always wanting. Peter therefore teacheth us to make our calling unto salvation sure, by good works; namely, by works of love to our neighbour, doing toward him as toward our own flesh and blood. Thus much shall suffice, concerning this text.

SERMON IX.

Romans, Chap. xiii. From, the 11th to the 14th verses inclusive,

11. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13. Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying

14. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

The apostle, in this text, treateth not of faith, but of works, the fruits of faith; and showeth how the life of a Christian should be regulated, as respects his outward conduct before men. For faith teacheth only how we must live in the spirit before God; which subject is also treated at large in this same epistle: for Paul, (Rom. xii.) divideth the office of preaching into two parts, doctrine and exhortation; and he applieth himself with earnestness to both, as every one should do who would faithfully discharge the duties of a Christian minister. Doctrine is that part of preaching by which men are taught something that was not known before. Exhortation implieth the inciting by words to the practice of what is already known. If we carefully examine the text before us, we shall find that it is not so much the design of the apostle to teach, as to exhort and excite men to the performance of those duties wherein they have already been taught; and in order that his exhortation may be the more effectual, and that it may the more readily find its way to the hearts of those to whom he addresseth himself, he employeth certain elegant and

figurative forms of speech. Thus, the words, sleep, darkness, light, waking, armour, works, the day, the night, which he here useth, are all figuratively applied; that is, they represent certain spiritual things, which bear some resemblance to the natural things signified by these terms.

By **sleep**, the apostle signifieth a certain spiritual torpor wherein we are dead to good works; and **by works of darkness**, he signifieth evil works; for the night is a season in which men are often drunken, and do many foul deeds. On the contrary, **to awake out of sleep**, denoteth spiritual activity: for when the morning cometh, we cast off sleep, and go about the labours of the day; so when we receive faith, we arise from our spiritual inactivity, and do good works. The same words which are used figuratively in the text, are also applied in a similar manner in other parts of scripture: thus, 1 Thes. v. we have these words: “But ye brethren are not in **darkness**, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of **light**, and the children of the **day**: we are not of the **night**, nor of **darkness**. Therefore let us not **sleep**, as do others, but let us watch and be sober. For they that **sleep**, sleep in the **night**; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the **night**. But let us, who are of the **day**, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.”

Let us now see what similitude there is between natural and spiritual sleep. He that is asleep, observeth nothing that is passing in the world, but lieth insensible to every thing around him: he neither seeth, heareth, nor feeleth, for all his senses are, as it were, closed up. Instead of realities, his mind is occupied with dreams, false images, and evanescent forms. But when he awaketh, those delusive visions are dissipated, and his mind is again occupied with realities. So it is with him that is swallowed up of ungodliness; he is spiritually asleep;

for he perceiveth none of those spiritual good things which are offered and promised him by the gospel, although they be near at hand; for these things, being discerned only by the eye of faith, are removed from natural vision.

So long as we continue in this sleep of unbelief we have no sense of those comforts which are to be derived from the gospel. Our minds are totally occupied with the imaginary good things of this world, such as riches, promotions, and sensual pleasures; which, contrasted with the sublime enjoyments of those who are made alive by faith, are as dreams and vain visions, compared to substantial realities. But when we awake from this sleep, and receive faith, all desires of those worldly honours and pleasures vanish and fade away; even as dreams and visions of the night disappear, when we awake from our natural sleep. We perceive them to be nothing but vanities and idle delusions, incapable of affording permanent satisfaction. Thus David saith, Psalm lxx. "They have slept their sleep, and they whose hands were mighty have found nothing." And again, Psalm lxxiii. "As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest thou shall despise their image." Thus also the prophet Isaiah, chap. xxix. "It shall be even as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or, as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against mount Zion." Thus we see in what low estimation, those hold the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, who have tasted the spiritual comforts which come to us through the Gospel.

Thus far we have spoken of the spiritual application of the words, **sleep, darkness, the day**, &c. which occur in the text; and endeavoured to show what the apostle signifieth, when he

saith, "It is high time to awake out of sleep." Let us now attend to the words contained in the latter clause of the same verse: "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Here the apostle hath reference to a belief in the promise of God made to Abraham; Gen. xxii. "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." This blessing promised to Abraham and his seed, is nothing more than that grace and salvation through Christ, which are offered to the world by the gospel; and so Paul interpreted it in Rom. iv. and Gal. iii. For Christ is that seed of Abraham, in whom the nations, or as many as believe on him, are blessed. This promise was continually declared and held forth by the prophets; for they all wrote of the coming of Christ, and of the salvation he should bring by his sufferings. This promise all the faithful believed, who died before the birth of Christ; and by this faith they obtained salvation. But what they believed would in time be fulfilled, we believe is fulfilled; namely, that Christ is come; that the Gospel is revealed and published; and, that the blessing which was looked for, is spread over the world. Now, as we believe those things are fulfilled, which the fathers once believed should come, our faith is made stronger, and our redemption more certain: and therefore, ***our salvation is now nearer than when we believed.***

Here it may be necessary to observe, that as the fathers had the same faith in Christ, who they believed would come, as those have who believe that he has come, therefore, in many places in the scriptures, those who were before the incarnation of Christ, took upon themselves the person of those who came after it; and those who came after it, often assumed the person of those who were before it? hence Paul saith, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we (that is, the Fathers) believed." We must not, however, understand this as referring to nearness of possession; for as the Fathers had the same faith, and the same Saviour as we have, salvation was as near to them

as it is to us. But Paul hath reference to the nearness of revelation; those things being fulfilled which were promised, the Gospel being proclaimed and preached to all, and salvation is said to be nearer, than when those things were hidden, or known only to few.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: The meaning of this passage is, that the night of spiritual darkness, which had hitherto enwrapt the world, is passed away, and that the glorious gospel day has dawned upon us; that the salvation which was promised to Abraham through Christ, hath shone forth, by the preaching of the Gospel, throughout the whole world; giving light unto all men, and raising all out of sleep; showing forth true and eternal things, and enabling us to walk safely, as those who walk in the light. Of this spiritual day, David speaketh, Psalm cxviii. “This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

The sun that causeth this day, is the Saviour Jesus Christ; for as many as believe in him, receive the beams of his divine grace and righteousness; as God saith, Mal. iv. “Unto them that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” And again, Christ saith, John ix. 5, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” The scriptures do also in many other places beautifully set forth the glory of that light which should come into the world by the Gospel.

The ***Gospel***, or ***glad tidings***, is so called, because it is a gracious message of God's good will to man. It is that which quickeneth, maketh joyful, willing, obedient, and ready to do good works. It maketh known all things that are necessary for our good. It teacheth us what God is, what we are ourselves, whence we came, and whither we go. It bringeth to view the past, and openeth to

us the future. By this light we are shown how we ought to conduct ourselves in all things, and toward all men.

But notwithstanding so great light come into the world by the Gospel, satan has deceived us, miserable creatures. We have neglected to search for truth by this light, whereby all things would have been made clear and manifest to us, and have sought for it in the speculations of philosophers and heathen men, who have not so much as by a dream known aught of these things; and thus we have suffered ourselves to be blinded by the traditions of men, and have fallen back again into darkness!

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. As Christ is the sun, and the Gospel the day, so faith is the light by which we ought to see and watch in that day: for although the sun should shine and make it day, yet it would profit us nothing if our eyes did not perceive the light. And although the Gospel is to be preached throughout the whole world, yet none will be enlightened, except those that by the sight of faith perceive its divine radiance, and arise out of sleep. But to those that continue to slumber, this sun, and this day, can bring no profit; they can receive no more light therefrom, than if no sun or day had shone.

It was observed in the beginning of this discourse, that the apostle in this text treateth not of faith, but of works, the fruits of faith: and that he doth not speak to those that are destitute of faith, but to such as have already believed, is evident from what he saith in the text: “And that ***knowing*** the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation ***nearer*** than when we believed.” Now those that are destitute of faith, cannot know these things; neither can it be said that salvation is near unto them.

But it may be asked, what reason, or what necessity there was, that the apostle should write these things to the faithful, inasmuch as they were already known to them? Here let me remind you of what was said in the beginning of the exposition of this text; that the office of preaching consists of two parts, doctrine and exhortation. Now a man cannot attain to such a state of perfection, that it will not be necessary that he should be reminded of those things which he has been taught by faith; for the devil, the world, and the flesh, (enemies which never grant truce, nor slack their assaults,) are continually besieging him; and unless he be encouraged to watch and stand at his post, he will become slothful and negligent, he will fall into sleep, and thus be taken unawares.

The life of a Christian is represented as a warfare; and as men when they engage in battle have need of drums and trumpets to dispel their fears, and inspire them with courage, so those who engage in this spiritual warfare against satan, the world, and the flesh, have need of continual exhortations and admonitions; in order that their courage may not flag, and that they may persevere valiantly in the fight. The apostle, therefore, exhorteth his brethren to cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light.

As the Gospel is the day, Christ the sun, and faith the light by which we see, so ***the armour of light***, implieth good works; or those that come of faith. Such are the works of prayer, of meditation, of searching the scriptures, of love toward the brethren, and of charity and honest dealing toward all mankind. On the contrary, ***the works of darkness***, are those which come of man's own reason; such as infidelity, unbelief and the many evil deeds which men do, by reason of the absence of the light of faith.

Over this darkness, the devil doth preside; for Paul, in the epistle to the Ephesians, calleth satan ***the prince of darkness***; and signifieth that he exerciseth rule over those that are without faith, and refuse to be obedient to God. The same apostle saith, 2 Cor. iv. “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world (that is, satan) hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Let us walk honestly as in the day. It is a common saying, that the night is without shame; and this is in a measure true: for men often do those things in the night which they fear to do in the day, lest their acts should be discovered, and they brought to shame or punishment. The Apostle therefore saith, ***Let us walk honestly as in the day.*** And after this manner should every Christian walk; doing nothing of which he may be ashamed, although the whole world should witness his deeds. He that so liveth, that he is unwilling his works should be known to men, goeth contrary to the light of faith, and is unworthy of Christ; for Christ saith, John iii. “Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”

Thus ye see how necessary it is, that we be admonished and exhorted to watch, lest we fall into temptation, and do the works of darkness; for how few there are among Christians at the present day, who live so circumspectly, that they can consent to have all their works published openly to the world! Yet if we do not so live, we are no better than hypocrites; for although we may conceal our works from men, we cannot conceal them from God; and at the last day, they will be disclosed before both men and angels.

It therefore behooveth a Christian so to live, as he desireth to appear in this last great day; when he shall be summoned to give an account of the deeds done in the flesh. Paul saith, "Walk as the children of the light: the fruit of the spirit is goodness, righteousness, and truth." And again, Rom. xii. "Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." And also 2 Cor. i. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

Such a life as the apostle describeth is never found in those who are destitute of faith; but where there is a lively, a steadfast, and a strong faith, such a life cannot be wanting; for such a faith sleepeth not, neither is wearied with well doing. But in order that we may continue in this faith, we must be frequently reminded of these things; lest we be overcome by our carnal propensities, the pleasures of the world, and the subtlety of satan. Therefore, it is no less necessary to preach to them who have received the doctrine of faith, and to exhort and encourage them to persevere in the good cause they have embraced, than it is to preach the doctrine of repentance to those that are as yet ignorant of Christ.

Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. Here the apostle enumerates the works of darkness, six in number; these, with the one before mentioned, namely, sleep or unbelief, include or give rise to all the evil deeds which men are guilty of. Many others are indeed spoken of in different parts of the scriptures, as in Gal. v. and Col. iii. But they all proceed from, or are connected with, those here mentioned. Under the denominations of rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, are included

lusts, lasciviousness, and excesses of different kinds. From strife and envying, proceed hatred, debates, emulations, seditions, murders, and other vices and crimes without number. Thus we see, that under these six general heads, nearly all the works of darkness are comprehended, which men fall into through the want of a true and steadfast faith.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. In these words the apostle summeth up, as it were, all the armour of light; for whosoever putteth on Christ receiveth faith, and therefore casteth off the works of darkness. Now we may put on Christ in two ways: first, when through faith we believe that he died to make atonement for us, we become clothed with his righteousness, and thus are reconciled to the Father; for it is not our own righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ, which reconcileth to the Father. In this sense, the putting on of Christ, pertaineth to the doctrine of faith and repentance; for Paul saith, Gal. iii. “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.”

In the second place, those who have received faith, may be said to put on Christ, when they take him for an example, and endeavour to regulate their lives as much as possible by his; and it is in this sense that we are to understand the apostle in the passage under consideration. Paul also speaketh to the same effect, 1 Cor. xv. when he saith, “As we have borne the image of the earthly, we should also bear the image of the heavenly.” And again, Eph. iv. “Put ye off concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

Now in the life of Christ, we see no rioting, no drunkenness, no wantonness; but an uncommon sobriety, abstemiousness, and chastity. In him was found neither strife nor envying, but a remarkable meekness, patience, and forbearance. He spent his time in travelling, preaching, praying, healing the sick, and doing good to all men. He did not indulge in superfluous sleep, nor in luxurious living, but accustomed himself to watch, to arise early, to lie on the ground, and to partake of the most homely fare.

If, then, we would put on the Lord Jesus Christ, in the sense of the text, we must take him for our example, and endeavour to imitate him in all things as much as in us lieth; we must be meek, patient, forbearing, forgiving, and above all we must have charity one towards another. This doctrine Paul also inculcates at some length in the epistle to the Colossians: “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” In short, ***to put on the Lord Jesus Christ*** implieth the same things as ***to put on the armour of light***; to do the works of faith, and to walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit; for Paul saith, Gal. v. “The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

And make not provisions for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. The apostle doth not here forbid us to provide food and clothing, and such things as are necessary to the sustenance and preservation of our bodies. It is indeed expedient and lawful, that we make such provision, provided we do not suffer our minds

to be engrossed therewith, to the exclusion of spiritual things. But what the apostle here forbiddeth is, the making provision to gratify the lusts of the body; such provision is always connected with sin, and engendereth the works of darkness. Our bodies are to be sustained—not pampered, but rather chastened and kept in subjection, that they may be obedient to the spirit.

But so prone are we to indulge our sensual appetites, that many, professing to be Christians, do, under a pretence of necessity, pamper their bodies, and gratify every inordinate craving thereof, to the manifest injury of both their temporal and spiritual welfare. We cannot therefore, be too much upon our guard against yielding to the dictates of our carnal propensities.

There is, however, another class of men, who as widely err on the contrary extreme. These are those blind devotees, who, as if the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, consisted in meat and drink, do often fast until their bodies become infirm and emaciated; and then they think they have been marvellously holy, and have wrought exceeding good works. But Paul saith, “Meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat are we the better; neither if we eat not are we the worse.” And again, Col. ii. he saith; “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the sabbath-days: which are a shadow of things to come.”

Thus we see that the popish ordinances, which forbid the eating of flesh, and enjoin the observance of certain days wherein to fast to certain saints, are quite contrary to the Gospel. But that such things should come, Paul hath plainly foretold in 1 Tim. iv. Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” It is sufficiently evident, that the doctrine which Paul taught, is in direct opposition to that of the order of monks and sacrificing priests, who command the abstaining from meats, the observance of particular days of fasting, and prohibit marriage to certain orders of men. True religion has no respect to meats and days: but the whole life of a Christian, should be a life of temperance, sobriety, and Godliness. But these doting holy ones, eat one day nothing but bread and water, and for three whole months afterwards they will eat to excess, and drink every day until they be drunken. Now the cause of these abominations is, that men have regard to the work, and not to the use of the work. Hence they are like unto him who carried a sword, merely to look upon it, without knowing how to use it when he was assaulted. Thus much may suffice for the exposition of this text.

SERMON X.

Luke, Chap. vi. From the 36th to the 42d verses, inclusive.

36. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

37. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

38. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete, withal it shall be measured to you again.

39. And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40. The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall, be as his master.

41. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42. Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

In this text, we have described the works of forgiveness, charity, and forbearance; which we should exercise one toward another. To this point the Lord hath also spoken before, in the same chapter: "Love your enemies, do good unto them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you;" all of which he hath, briefly comprehended in these words: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Here we have set before us, in a very brief manner. the rule of conduct which should govern us in our dealings toward our neighbour, and toward our fellow creatures in general; which if we carefully observe, and endeavour to follow, we shall do well.

Ye have often been taught, that God needeth not our good works, as he can neither be strengthened nor enriched thereby; but that they are to be directed toward our neighbour, who alone can be benefited by them. This therefore ye should bear in mind; to exercise your good works toward man, and to deal with God by faith alone. We should place our trust and confidence in him alone, for whatsoever things we need; for we enjoy no blessing, either temporal or spiritual, that doth not proceed from his bounteous grace and goodness.

But there are some who place confidence in themselves, and in other men; who rest upon their traditions, and put their trust in things that some great man hath invented. Of such God speaketh in Jeremiah ii. 13: “For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water; and have hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” In the same manner, the papists of the present time, forsaking the way of life, which is faith in Christ, look for salvation through their own works, such as their fastings and formal prayers, and the celebration of masses which they have instituted.

This religion of rites and forms, though it may appear to them a living fountain, is nevertheless a broken cistern, capable of holding no water. Of such as these, God hath elsewhere said, “They presume to contend with me, bringing their own works into account, and pleading therefrom their own justification. Behold, they go about to defend their own works, which is another sin.” Whereupon the Lord again saith: “I will contend with thee in judgement: I will show how thou goest hither and thither to change thy ways.”

Thus we see, that we must place our trust in God alone; that we must apply to him in faith for whatever things we need, whether they be

temporal or spiritual; and that we must ask them as the gift of his divine grace, and not as a recompense which our works have merited. And so likewise, when we do a benevolent work toward our neighbour, it should be done with humility, as a duty we ought to discharge without expecting a reward. When we go to God for his blessings, we must not bring our good deeds into account; but as Abraham, when in the country of Moriah, left his servants and asses at the foot of the mountain, and took only Isaac with him; so must we, if we will ascend to God, leave behind us those servants and asses, our own works, and take with us only the Isaac of faith.

Thus far we have endeavoured to explain the true offices of faith, and works. We have shown that true faith worketh inwardly, and is directed toward God; but that works proceed outwardly, and are wrought toward our neighbours; and if we attend to what is here inculcated, we shall be accounted righteous, not only before God, but also before the world. Thus much may suffice for the introduction of this sermon: we will now attend to the words of the text in order.

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

Let us then inquire, how, or wherein our heavenly Father is merciful? The answer will be, that he bestoweth upon us all things of which we stand in need: that he giveth us rest if we be weary; that he clothes us when we are naked; that he provideth us food if we be hungry, and affordeth us drink if we be thirsty. If we are sick and in trouble, he healeth, and giveth us consolation. And, what is still more important, when we are on the brink of death and damnation, he giveth us life and salvation.

In order, therefore, to imitate the mercy of our heavenly Father, we must bestow our alms upon such as are necessitated, and

show kindness to all mankind indiscriminately, whether they be friends or enemies: for if we give only to the great and wealthy, thinking to receive from them again, this is not charity; but rather a clandestine manner of lending for the sake of profit: and if we love only our friends, we act from motives entirely selfish. Of this sort of charity and love, Christ speaketh in the chapter from which our text is taken, verses 32, 33, and 34; “For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners do also even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.”

Take heed, therefore, what distinctions ye make in your deeds of love and charity; for if ye act from pure love to God, ye will make no difference between friends and enemies; but if ye show partiality to your friends, of whom ye expect a recompense, ye act from impure and selfish motives. Christ saith, Luke vi. 35. “But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.”

The passage just quoted, as also some parts of the text under consideration, such as, “judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven,” may appear to some to contain a doctrine at variance with what we have before taught. These passages seem to indicate that we must secure the mercy and pardon of God by our work, notwithstanding you have frequently been told that we are saved by faith alone. But let it be understood, that good works are only the fruits of faith, whereby it is set forth and manifested to

the world; for if I have faith, I shall be merciful, I shall not judge nor condemn, but shall forgive my neighbour, and be kind to him.

Of the office of works, we have an illustration in Genesis, chap. xx. When Abraham was commanded to offer up his son Isaac, he obeyed the command of the Lord, and drew forth his sword to slay him: whereupon the angel of the Lord stayed him, saying unto him, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Thus Abraham manifested his faith by the work of obedience which he performed in not withholding his darling child when he was required of him.

Our works do not produce faith, but faith produces good works. We do not lay the foundation; neither do we give before we receive. The sheep do not seek the shepherd, but the shepherd seeketh the sheep. God also findeth us before we seek him, and answereth us before we call upon him; as he declared, Isaiah lxxv. 1. "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not." And also in the end of the same chapter he saith, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear." St. Paul likewise saith, Romans iv. "Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justified the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." And again, in the eleventh chapter: "There is a remnant according to the election of grace; and if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace, is no more grace." We should therefore do good works without requiring any thing for them; for we receive every thing from God without merit or desert.

Our works may also serve as a testimony to ourselves, whereby we may know if our faith is sincere; for if I am assured that my works proceed from love, and that my heart is inclined to mercy and forgiveness toward my neighbour, it is a testimony that my faith is of the right kind, and that God has pardoned my sins. And such testimony should every man possess; for though I have a strong and well-grounded faith, if I am ignorant of it, it profiteth me no more than a chest of gold buried in the earth, which I knew not of till someone discovereth it to me, who would then do me as great a favour as if he had made me a present thereof. God knew, indeed, that Abraham had faith, but it was necessary that Abraham should also know it, and that he should manifest his faith; which things were accomplished by the readiness with which he obeyed the command of the Lord.

Thus we see, that although we are to be saved by faith, yet good works are necessary, as an evidence and confirmation of it: as Peter also signified in his second epistle, chap. i. After exhorting his brethren to add to their faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, and brotherly love, he concludes with these words: “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an inheritance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Christ hath also said that he will require works in the last day, and will say to the condemned, “I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in;” &c. (Mat. xxv.)

Now, ignorant and bigoted men have inferred from these and similar texts, that we must be saved by our works; than which, no doctrine is more contrary to the whole tenour of scripture. These passages do

indeed enforce the necessity of good works, but they by no means encourage us to rely upon them for justification. It must be remembered that we are composed of two principles; the spirit and the flesh; and as these two principles are essentially different from each other, some texts are adapted only to the former, teaching us how we must live in the spirit, and deal with God by faith alone; other passages teach us only how we should live in the flesh, and regulate our outward conduct in the world; of which sort are the texts above quoted.

If it be asked, why we should be perplexed in reading the word of God, with passages that appear contradictory to each other, as those we have mentioned may seem to some? I answer, that they only appear so on slight examination; which is an advantage rather than a hinderance; as it will lead men to reflect and examine more attentively, and likewise prevent them from imagining that they are perfectly acquainted with the scriptures, while as yet they are almost wholly ignorant of their true import. Ye should therefore endeavour to become well acquainted with the language of scripture, that ye may not apply to the spirit, that which is spoken only of the flesh; and thus confound the office of faith with that of works: for works are only commendable when they benefit our neighbours, and are the fruits and evidence of faith; but we must by no means rely upon them for justification.

I have made this digression in order to show the proper office of works, lest I should seem to confirm the doctrine of the papists, who think they shall be saved thereby. We will now resume the subject of the text.

We have already briefly considered the words, ***Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful;*** and on this part of

the text little more need be said at present, as Christ himself hath given the interpretation thereof in the words which follow: to which I shall now direct your attention.

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given you. Here the Lord maketh three divisions of mercy, in order that we may know what kind of mercy we are required to exercise toward our neighbour. In the first place, we are forbidden to judge or condemn; secondly, we are commanded to forgive our neighbour if he hath committed aught against us: and lastly, it is enjoined upon us to assist the needy. If we carefully observe, we shall discover that the word ***mercy***, wherever it is found in the scripture, includeth these three offices; all of which should proceed from a sincere heart, without ostentation, hypocrisy, or respect of persons.

At present, we will attend to the first of these divisions of mercy: viz. that which forbiddeth us to judge or condemn. Christ hath no reference here to the judging of public crimes, for this belongs to the civil magistrate, who is appointed for that purpose, and is amenable to God, and to the laws of his country, if he judge unjustly. All judgements of this kind pertaineth not to the kingdom of Christ, but to earthly government; for God hath left the worldly affairs of men to be decided by worldly judges: as is evinced by his answer to him who desired that he would command his brother to divide the inheritance with him: “Man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you.” Luke xii. 14.

But that which Christ hath forbidden in the text, is the judging of the righteousness or unrighteousness of our neighbour; which judgement belongeth only to God. The Lord knoweth all

things, even the most secret thoughts of our hearts, and is therefore capable of judging righteously. But the knowledge of man is extremely limited, and confined to external appearances; which are oftentimes a very improper criterion. Besides, we are extremely liable to be blinded by prejudice, and to endeavour to pluck the mote out of our brother's eye, while there is a beam in our own. Although a man may have committed many faults, it is possible that he hath repented; and surely, we have no right to impute sin to any whom God hath forgiven. Let no man, therefore, presume to judge of the righteousness or unrighteousness of his neighbour; for in so doing, he assumeth the office of God, and is accounted more guilty than the thief or adulterer.

Many persons delight in publishing the faults of their neighbours, and in putting the worst construction upon their conduct. Such persons will often misrepresent circumstances, and magnify a trifling error into an enormous crime. Although they may not do the same things themselves, yet they rejoice that others are guilty of them, that they may be esteemed more righteous than their neighbours. However, it often happeneth that they do secretly commit far greater offences than those of which they accuse others. But a truly good man will endeavour to hide the failings of his neighbour, while he examines with the closest scrutiny into his own motives and actions. He will cast the mantle of charity over the frailties of human nature, and interpret every thing in the most favourable manner. If his brother commit sin, instead of rejoicing at it, and publishing it to the world, he will endeavour to reclaim him; and will pray to God for him, that he may repent, and receive forgiveness. This is true Christianity; This is that mercy which the gospel inculcateth, and which it is our indispensable duty to show to our neighbour: for it is certain, be we ever so merciful, we shall never equal the mercy which God has manifested toward us, miserable and wretched sinners.

Of those that judge others, Christ speaketh thus in the text: “Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?”

Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.”

The meaning of this parable is, that men who are wicked and ignorant themselves, will often attempt to instruct and direct others; whom they will make like unto themselves; for as Christ saith, “the disciple is not above his master.” It is, moreover, a common proverb, that a pupil cannot learn more of a tutor, than he knoweth himself; wherefore, those who are led by such blind guides, will most certainly fall into the ditch. It however commonly happeneth that those who have the least godliness, and are most ignorant of the truths of the gospel, are the most forward to judge and instruct others. For those who are best acquainted with the doctrine of the scriptures, know that there are many things of difficult interpretation; and if they are sincere, they will be diffident and cautious, lest they should teach that which is contrary to the word of God. But those who are wicked themselves, care not how bad they make others, if they can, obtain honour and emolument thereby. As ignorance and confidence are always companions, such persons esteem themselves better and wiser than the rest of mankind, and therefore assume the province of judging and directing others.

Of such ignorant and blind guides, who exalt themselves above others, and even think their counsel ought to be followed rather than the word of God, Paul thus speaketh, Romans ii. “Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law: thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest, a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest, a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God?”

In this passage, the apostle very justly reproveth those boasting hypocrites, who being themselves ignorant of the way, presume to lead others, that they may destroy them also. In the beginning of the same chapter, he denounceth those who judge their neighbours: and especially those that condemn others for the same faults which they commit themselves: “Therefore, thou, art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest, doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgement of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgement of God?”

From what hath been said of mercy on the first part, the conclusion is, that we must not judge our neighbour, whether he be good or evil; for God only knoweth the heart, and to him belongeth the office of

judging both our neighbour and ourselves. Let us not, therefore, assume the office of the Almighty, lest he should bring us also into judgement: who will be able to stand before his tribunal, by his own righteousness? But let us endeavour to imitate the mercy of our heavenly Father, for this we are commanded to do, in order that we may also obtain mercy: let us ***forgive***, that we may be ***forgiven***.

The second part of mercy is forgiveness; and is enjoined upon us in the words, “forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.” A Christian can never be so injured but that he ought to forgive his injurer, not only seven times, but seventy times seven: as Christ said unto Peter, Mat. xviii. 22. I have said before that we do not give before we receive. And indeed, God forgiveth us our sins, that we may also forgive those who have offended us; as he declareth in an instructive parable, which he concludeth with these words: “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” And in the Lord's prayer, we also pray to God that he will forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us.

Ought we, who are miserable and wretched sinners, to think it a hard matter to forgive our neighbour a small injury, when God forgiveth us all our manifold transgressions? We have lived from our youth in the violation of his divine laws, and were he strict to mark our iniquities against us, we could in no way escape condemnation. So greatly have we sinned against him, that if one should kill our parents, we should have less cause to be angry with him than the Lord hath to be so with us. Nevertheless, if we repent, God freely forgiveth us all our sins, receiveth us as heirs into his kingdom, and permitteth us to enjoy his presence forever. What can equal the mercy of our heavenly Father? or what return can we make for such grace and goodness? Surely we cannot be so ungrateful as to be

unwilling to forgive our neighbour, how much soever he may have sinned against us.

The third office of mercy, is the bestowing of alms; or what is commonly called charity. The practice of this kind of mercy is certainly a duty of Christians; and it is inculcated in various other passages of scripture, besides the one now under consideration. Thus John saith; “But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him!” 1 John iii. 17. Wherever the love of God is, it will always show itself in the outward conduct of those who possess it; and in nothing will it be sooner manifested, than in their readiness to assist the needy. Christ hath also promised rich rewards to the liberal in heart, in these words: “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.” And he addeth in conclusion, “For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.”

All these different kinds of mercy God exerciseth toward us, if we repent of our sins, and come to him through our Saviour Jesus Christ. He doth not judge nor condemn; he forgiveth all our transgressions, and bestoweth upon us all things that we need; and therefore he requireth that we do the same by our neighbour; as he saith in Mat vii. 12. “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that man should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.” Christ also pronounceth blessings on the merciful: Mat v. 7. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

Thus much shall suffice concerning the different kinds of mercy which we ought to show to our neighbour: let us conclude by calling

to mind the precept which Christ gave to his disciples at his last supper: “A new commandment I give unto you: That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” Let us endeavour to obey this precept, and to exercise mercy, and do good to each other; for hereby are Christians known, when they show love to the brethren. Thus ye have the meaning of the text.

SERMON XI.

1 Timothy, Chap. i. verses 5, 6, and 7.

5. Now, the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

6. From which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling;

7. Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

It is well known to you, beloved brethren, how earnestly God hath enjoined upon us the duty of reading and hearing his word. He esteemeth it of immense value to mankind, and hath therefore manifested his love and goodness by disseminating it among us at a very great expense. His holy prophets encountered perils and dangers in establishing it, and at last he sent his beloved Son to proclaim it to the whole world, and to confirm it by suffering

the death of crucifixion. The apostles also suffered martyrdom, and christens in all ages have experienced innumerable persecutions in the same cause. Surely if the word of God was a thing of small consequence, he would not have promulgated it at such a cost.

Had we no other inducement, the knowledge that it is God's will and pleasure that we attend to the reading and preaching of his word, ought to be sufficient. He is the Lord and Sovereign of the universe, and we, as his dependent creatures, owe him implicit obedience. God hath not only commanded us to attend to his word, but he hath also promised that great benefits shall redound to us thereby; so that it is made our interest as well as our duty, and therefore we can have no excuse whatever for neglecting it. It then behooves us to give it our diligent attention, and to treasure it up in our hearts, as a thing of inestimable value; for in so doing we render an acceptable service to God, and it may also be a means of promoting our own eternal welfare.

There are indeed many other ways of serving God, which are also acceptable. If a prince or king rule justly, and with moderation; if a father faithfully discharge his duty to his family; or if a child or servant be obedient and faithful to his parent or master—all these may render acceptable service to God, by discharging the duties of their respective stations with fidelity. There is therefore no excuse for neglecting to serve God at all; neither is there any reason or necessity for inventing new modes of worship, as hath been practised by the papists; for every person may serve him acceptably in the station and sphere in which he is placed.

But of all other kinds of worship, the Lord most esteemeth that which we render him by attending to his word; whether as preachers or as hearers. He hath for this purpose ordained a particular day in

each week, on which he hath forbidden us to attend to any other labour or business. This day he hath specially chosen and commanded to be kept, in order that we might have time to perform this service, and that no one might make excuse, that he had no leisure, by reason of the multiplicity of his labours and business. He hath also caused certain edifices to be erected, wherein we may assemble for the performance of this duty: as our temples, churches, and chapels. He hath moreover called and instructed certain persons to minister in this service, and hath bestowed upon them various gifts, proper for the discharge of their offices. In short, he hath, by a special precept, commanded the whole world to attend to this duty, as the most acceptable worship they can render him: and that he highly esteemeth it, is farther evident from the delight which all true Christians take therein.

This service as far excelleth all other kinds of worship, as the brightness of the sun exceedeth that of the stars; as the sabbath is above the other days of the week; yea, as far as the heavenly kingdom surpasseth in glory the kingdoms of this world! In the house of God all things are holy, and specially chosen; the time, place, and person who ministers therein: because the word, which is holy, sanctifieth them. Let us, therefore, take heed to ourselves, that we fall not into slothfulness and inattention in performing this duty, for in showing contempt for the word of God, we also contemn its author.

Many persons soon become weary of attending to this service, and complain that they only hear a continual repetition of the same things. But those persons have bestowed upon it only a small share of their attention, and are utterly ignorant of the marvellous beauties, and divine excellencies, which the word of God contains. Though they imagine that they are perfectly acquainted

with the scripture, they are as destitute of true knowledge as the most benighted heathens.

But admitting that we were perfectly acquainted with the scripture, and needed no instruction in the mysteries of the gospel, (which I fear, however, is not the case with any of us,) still we ought to attend to the word of God from inclination; for a true Christian will never be weary with hearing it, how oft soever it be repeated. There is need, moreover, that we should be frequently reminded of the things we have learned; lest, forgetting them, our hearts should wax cold in love, and we become negligent of good works. Although our Saviour was perfect in all things, yet we see that he continued preaching and praying until the last hour of his earthly mission. St. Paul, likewise, the chief of the apostles, although instructed while a Pharisee in all things relative to the law, and afterwards inspired by the Holy Ghost, still continued to preach, and exhort, travelling through many countries and kingdoms. How much more then ought we, who are blind and ignorant, to read the word of God, and attend to the preaching of the gospel.

This service which God hath enjoined upon us, is not laborious, but easy. It requireth nothing but our time and attention: and if it can afford a person pleasure to sit during whole days and evenings at an ale-house or tavern, engaged in revelry and mirth with lewd and wicked companions, it should give him little pain to sit, during a few hours, in the house of God; for he would not only spend his time more profitably to himself, but would also render an acceptable service to his Maker.

If this duty seem burthensome, how should we endure to go from temple to temple, and from altar to altar, to attend to rites and ceremonies, as we did among the papists? Or how should

we sustain those laborious services, such as carrying stones from quarries, and going armed on pilgrimages, which those blind bigots imposed upon us? These services were performed willingly when we were deluded by false doctrine. So doth the devil blind the eyes of men; he then prompted them to action in the execution of his own work, and he now inclineth them to be slothful and weary with hearing the word of God; so that forgetting its value, they may grow negligent in the practice of its precepts;

But let us endeavour to delight in hearing the word of God, remembering that in so doing we render him an acceptable service. Let us listen to it with prayerful attention, that the grace of God may accompany his word, and the seed may not be sown in vain. Whenever the word is rightly preached, and attentively heard, it never fails to bring forth fruit. We may indeed perceive no immediate effects from it, but in process of time, the fruit will most certainly appear. But it would consume too much time to rehearse all the benefits which proceed from hearing the word of God; indeed, it were a task far beyond our capacity.

Thus much we have said by way of preface to the discourse; or rather as an exhortation to stir up your minds to more diligent attention: and certainly, there is much need of such an exhortation in every sermon; for it is greatly to be feared, that many who appear to hear, pay very little attention to what is said, and never reflect upon it afterwards. What we have thus far said, is also in some degree pertinent to the text; for Paul, in this place, reproveth those curious spirits, who, endeavouring to become masters of the word of God by their own wisdom, do at length falsely persuade themselves that they perfectly understand it; and that they need no farther instruction.

It is from this cause that numerous congregations disappear, and churches become desolate: for these vain babblers, imagining that they are perfect and well instructed in all things, give themselves to trifling and vain jangling. They are continually endeavouring to bring forward some new thing, which the curious multitude may be desirous to hear, while they totally neglect to teach the doctrine of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and never so much as attempt to impress upon their hearers the importance of a Christian life. They do indeed sometimes tell us that we must do good works, that we must serve God, &c. but they are totally ignorant of the meaning of these words. If they be asked, how are good works to be done? how is God to be served? they will point out this particular work to be done now, and at another time, that they will direct us to offer so much sacrifice at this altar; to go into this or that monastery; run to this saint; here erect a chapel to the honour of such a saint: in another place, found a mass, light tapers, buy indulgences, &c.

These idle talkers use such a confused multiplicity of words, that they confound, instead of instructing their hearers; while they advance nothing calculated to render any one better; and were any thing good contained in their discourses, it would be lost from the tedious prolixity of their harangues. Of such teachers, we have seen enough in the papacy, among our preachers of dreams.

St. Paul, in the beginning of his epistle to his disciple Timothy, thought proper to admonish him, that such teachers should arise; “giving heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying, which is in faith:” after which, he introduceth the words of our text: “***Now, the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.***” These words contain the sum of that doctrine which we should teach. Here we

have the duties of a Christian life briefly and comprehensively set before us; and we cannot imprint these words too strongly upon our memories. If we desire not to deviate from the law, but to attain to the ultimate end thereof, we must endeavour to have charity, proceeding out of a pure heart, from a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. If our charity be of this sort, then is it right; otherwise we mistake the meaning of the whole law.

Now these words are profound, and contain much matter in them; therefore, we shall endeavour to expound them in part, that they may be the better understood, and that we may become acquainted with Paul's manner of speaking. First, we may observe that the apostle signifieth that charity comprehendeth the sum of the whole law. But we are not here to understand by *charity*, simply the bestowing of alms upon the needy, but that universal good will which embraceth all mankind; which speaketh evil of none; which condemneth no one; which judgeth the motives of none, but putteth the most favourable construction upon the actions of others—in short, it signifieth that love to all our fellow beings, which the grace of God implanteth in our hearts; for in the scripture, the words *charity and love* are frequently synonymous, and the one is often substituted for the other.

Now those jangling divines, do indeed talk much of charity and love; they make great pretensions to Godliness, and boast much of their deeds of benevolence. But their love is only the love of hereticks, wicked men, and ungracious wretches: it is extended only to themselves, and to those of the same sort with them; while at the same time, they hate and persecute all good Christians, and would willingly accuse them of the most vicious acts. This certainly does not deserve the name of love; for if I choose a few individuals, whom I favour and embrace, because they also favour me, I act from selfish

impure motives. But that true love which floweth from a pure heart, hath no respect of persons: it is poured forth to all mankind indiscriminately, whether they be friends or enemies; even as doth our heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and upon the unjust.

But some may say, such a one who is my enemy, is also an enemy to God; for he doth many things that are more displeasing to God, than they are injurious to me; must I love him who is a transgressor, and an evil person? I answer, we are all transgressors, and do many things displeasing to God; but because my neighbour is evil, it is no reason that my love should be extinguished toward him. If he be evil, he will in the end receive punishment according to his deeds: but I must not suffer his wickedness to overcome me. It is my duty to pray for him, and I may rebuke and admonish him through love, that he may repent and escape punishment. But I must not be an enemy to him, nor do him evil in any manner; for no profit would redound to me thereby; I should certainly be made no better, but should make him worse.

It cannot, indeed, be denied, that a good man is more worthy of love than a bad one. It is also to be expected that good men will delight in the company of other good men, more than in that of evil men. But pure Christian love is not derived from the merit of the object. This is the source from which the world draweth its love; as a young man falleth in love with a maid, because of her comeliness and beauty; a covetous man delighteth in riches, because they will add to his consideration and importance in the world; and an ambitious man esteemeth preferment, because of the honour he shall receive, and the power he will possess thereby: all such love is derived from external objects; from the beauty or good qualities of the person, or the desirableness of the thing.

On the contrary, true Christian love is not derived from things without, but floweth from the heart, as from a spring; which, while it draweth its supply from the depths of the earth, floweth over the ground without requiring any thing in return; and not as from a stagnant pool, which requireth to be swollen by a shower, before it can water the earth. This spirit saith thus: “I love thee not for thy virtue or comeliness, for I do not derive my love from thy merit, but from the grace of God which is implanted in my heart, and which teacheth me to love my neighbour as myself; this is the source from which I derive my love; and it floweth plentifully to all, whether they be friends or enemies; but more especially to my enemies, as I consider there is more need that I should pray for them, and endeavour through love to win them from the evil of their ways, that they may repent of their sins, be delivered from the snares of the devil, and become my friends.”

This may be called love flowing from a pure heart; for one who is thus affected, doth not love because he findeth any thing worthy in those whom he loveth, but because the grace of God, which is itself pure, hath cleansed his heart, and replenished it with true and holy affections. Such love will manifest itself in whatsoever condition or circumstances in life men may be placed. If a servant be not thus affected, he will say thus to himself: “I serve my master because he giveth me food and clothing, or payeth me wages!” or perhaps, “because it is in his power to punish me if I do not faithfully serve him.” But if he have this love in his heart, he will say thus: “I will serve my master, not because he is kind or unkind; not for the hope of reward, or the dread of punishment; but because the word of God commandeth me as a servant, to be obedient to my master; therefore will I serve him faithfully, for in serving him, I also serve God, who hath placed me in the state and condition of a servant.”

And so likewise, if a prince or ruler say, “I am placed in the condition of a ruler, I will therefore enjoy my dignity, my riches, and my power; and I will have respect unto these things only;” although such a one may so rule that the world shall have no cause to find fault, yet, as the honour and glory of God are not regarded in the discharge of his office, his heart is not pure; for he seeketh only his own glory, riches, and power.

And also in spiritual offices; if I preach because some good benefice is offered me, when otherwise I would never engage in this calling, I may indeed preach, but I shall not do it from a pure heart; for my heart would be most plainly polluted. And though I should be ever so diligent, and should ever so much affirm that the work is good, and the office responsible, I should not discharge the duties thereof aright; inasmuch as I did not engage in it from pure motives. He only can rightly fill the clerical office, whose heart is so affected that he can say thus; “I do indeed get my living by the ministry, yet it is not for this reason that I engage in it; but because the Lord hath called me to it, and hath committed this trust to me, that I should discharge the duties thereof with fidelity, not seeking my own honor or profit. I must therefore diligently labour therein, to the glory of God, and the salvation of souls.” If I be thus affected, then is my heart pure; because I do not engage in the work for the sake of honour or emolument: and if these follow, I may receive them without sin.

Thus ye see, that charity (or love) which proceedeth from a pure heart, is not derived from things without, but floweth from within, and extendeth to all without distinction. But how is the heart purified? As we have already said, by the grace of God, which cometh through his word. This grace in the heart is the spring whence good works flow; and no works are acceptable to God unless they come from a pure heart.

God hath caused his word to be preached, that our hearts may be purified thereby, and our lives ordered according to the prescript thereof. Let us therefore not suffer ourselves to be discouraged or hindered by any difficulties we may encounter. Let us continue firm, and persevere unto the end, although we meet with persecutions and contempt, and suffer losses thereby. Let us break through all obstacles with boldness and manly courage; and as we began not for man's sake, let us not be prevented by man from doing that which is acceptable to God. Let us be ready and willing at all times to discharge the duties which God requireth of us; and let us serve him with a pure heart, and with faith unfeigned.

Thus much I have thought proper to say concerning charity's proceeding out of a pure heart; and how the heart is purified, that it may produce this kind of charity. We will now briefly attend to the second thing to be considered; viz. **a good conscience**; for the text saith, "The end of the commandment is charity, and of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

By a good conscience is here meant, a conscience void of offence, not only before men, but also before God. To have a conscience void of offence before men, we must be able to glory as Paul did; that he so lived that he offended no man, troubled no man, was an evil example or burthen to no man; but that all who witnessed his conduct, must needs say, that he indifferently served all, helped all, counselled all, and dealt honestly and friendly with all. Of such a conscience, Moses also glorieth: Num. xvi. "I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them." And also Samuel; 1 Kings, xviii "I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. Behold here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I

defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe?”

Such a conscience must every Christian possess, that he shall be conscious of having discharged his duty in all respects, and to all men; so that no one can have any just cause to complain of him; but that all who will speak the truth, must confess, that he has been an example worthy to be followed by all who would live well. Let no Christian therefore do any thing that shall deprive him of such a confidence; for he that liveth in such a manner, as to give just occasion to the world to reprove his conduct, is not yet a Christian: as his heart cannot be pure. For we must not presume on the doctrine of faith, as though that being once obtained, we may live as we list; as it would thence be inferred that this doctrine giveth license and liberty to commit sin with impunity. But we must so conduct ourselves, that we have love flowing out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and that no man can justly accuse us of any sin.

Although such a conscience may render us just before men, yet it is another thing to be just before God: for good works, as we have elsewhere said, will not justify us before him. And still, in order to fulfil the commandment, we must be justified also before God. But how shall we attain unto this? By faith; and here we may bring in the last thing to be considered in our text; ***and of faith unfeigned.*** As we have already said, although I may have a good conscience before men, and so live that none can have occasion to censure my conduct, yet the old ***Adam***, that is, flesh and blood, still remain in me, and render me subject to sin. For as Paul saith, Gal. v. “The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” And also Romans vii. “I am carnal,

sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.”

The spirit would indeed live perfectly and purely, according to the word of God, but the rebellious flesh resisteth the desire thereof by tempting us to seek honour, riches, and pleasures; and to be remiss in our religious duties. Thus, on account of our carnal nature, we have to maintain a continual warfare against the many temptations that are constantly besetting us. Although we may discharge a clear conscience before men, we do many things that are not right in the sight of God, and neglect many duties which he requireth of us: so that the most righteous among men have much need of mercy and forgiveness. No one can so acquit himself that he shall be able to contend with God in judgement, but all must acknowledge that they have not merited salvation by their works, and that if justice were executed toward them, they would be consigned to punishment

But we have before said, that we must also be justified before God, and that this must be done by faith. The text not only implieth that we must have a pure heart, and a good conscience, but also ***faith unfeigned***; and this is the principal part, and chief precept contained therein; and that which embraceth all the rest. We shall therefore examine this part of the subject a little more closely, and endeavour to explain the nature of this faith.

All men being condemned by the law, it was necessary that an atonement should be made, in order that we might be justified; and therefore God, through his infinite mercy and goodness, sent his Son Jesus Christ, to suffer and die for us; that the justice of the Father being satisfied, we might obtain salvation through his merits. He, having fulfilled the whole law, suffered the ignominious death of crucifixion; after which he rose and

ascended up to heaven, where he still remaineth, making continual intercession for us, as for those that cannot obtain salvation by their own righteousness.

It therefore appeareth, that although we should be condemned before the judgement seat, we may obtain pardon by appealing to the mercy seat, which is Christ: whom God hath set before us as a refuge to which we may flee, when we find ourselves unable to stand before the judgement seat by our own righteousness. Thus, as Paul saith, Romans iii. we may be “justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” Thus God may be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Christ.

But if we will come to this mercy seat, we must not bring with us any of our own works to plead in extenuation of our guilt; but we must rely solely upon the merits and righteousness of Christ. Our language must be, “Lord, I deserve thy wrath, and thy judgements. I have nothing of my own to offer, but I plead the merits of thy blessed Son, of whom it is said, he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” If we have this faith in Christ, we shall receive remission of our sins; for Christ himself saith, John iii. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

God having thus provided a mercy seat to which we may flee, let us leave at the judgement seat those proud, self-righteous contemners, and despisers of the word of God, who seek justification by their own works: let them remain there until they shall be humbled, or receive sentence according to their deeds. But let us depart therefrom as far

as we are able, and appeal unto the mercy seat: for God hath threatened terrible judgements to those who, coming with their own righteousness, and trusting therein, presume to stand before him, the sovereign judge, and neglect to come to the mercy seat of Christ. Such are already condemned, as Christ himself hath said, John iii. 18. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." But at the mercy seat there is no wrath, severity, or condemnation; but only grace, mercy, and forgiveness. All sins are there remitted, yea, blotted out and consumed, as a drop of water is consumed by the heat of the sun.

SERMON XII.

Matthew, Chap, xviii. From, the 23d to the 35th verses, inclusive.

23. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants.

24. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents.

25. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28. But the same servant went out, and found one of his servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant? even as I had pity on thee?

34. And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Our Saviour introduced this parable, as an answer, or rather as an illustration of his answer to Peter, when he inquired how often he should forgive his brother. Peter asked if it were sufficient to forgive

his brother until seven times? whereupon Christ answered; “I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven;” he then introduced this parable, whereby he signified that if we forgive not our brother, God will deal with us as the king did with this servant; who would not forgive his fellow-servant a small debt, when his lord had forgiven him so much.

Ye have before been taught, that in the kingdom of God, where he reigneth by his gospel, there is no exacting of the law, neither any dealing by it, but only grace, mercy, and forgiveness. That there is no wrath, revenge, or punishment; but charity, brotherly love, and well-doing one toward another. We are not however to understand by this, that the civil law is abrogated by the preaching of the gospel: for many being yet far from the kingdom of God, the civil law, whereby crimes are punished, is necessary for the safety of our lives and property, against the assaults and encroachments of the wicked, who have no respect for the laws of God.

The ruler, therefore, who governs his people well, and the magistrate who takes care that justice is equally and impartially administered to all, so that offenders are punished, crimes prevented, and the peace and good order of the community preserved, do well, and are worthy of commendation. It is also the duty of every one, to pay due reverence to the laws of the country wherein he may reside; provided he can do so without disobeying the commands of God, or the dictates of his own conscience. Were it not for the civil law, the rights of citizens would not be respected, the tranquillity of the state would not be maintained, but every thing would be turmoil and confusion. This, then, though an institution of man, is a wise and salutary one; which in the depraved condition wherein mankind are by nature, can in no wise be dispensed with.

But this law was not ordained for those that are in the kingdom of grace; and though we observe this law ever so strictly, we have no cause to glory, neither must we imagine that we are therefore just before God; for we may still be unrighteous in his sight. He that is governed only by the laws of men, who doth good only through restraint or compulsion, and who exacteth the law of his brother, is yet far from the kingdom of heaven. For as in this kingdom all our sins and transgressions are forgiven us, we are also required to forgive our brother, or our neighbour, if we have aught against him.

Let us see how this subject is illustrated in the parable. In the first place, the lord, having compassion on his servant, forgiveth him all the debt: but the servant, instead of extending the same charity to his fellow-servant, taketh him, and casteth him into prison: whereupon the lord was wroth, and cast this servant into prison also, till he should pay all that was due to him. After having spoken this parable, Christ addeth in conclusion, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto, you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Hence it appears, that if we belong to the kingdom of God, and have been made partakers of his divine grace, we must harbour no malice, hatred, or revenge; but freely forgive all who have trespassed against us. And as it is taught in this same chapter, a little before the text, though our neighbour should sin against us even seventy times seven, we must willingly forgive him all; because God hath forgiven us, although we have committed more and greater sins against him, than it is possible for our neighbour to have committed against us.

The kingdom of Christ is so constituted, that the grace which reigneth therein must at no time cease, but abide continually; so that how low soever we may fall, if we sincerely repent, we may rise again

and be restored; provided we are willing to forgive all who have offended against us. But if our hearts are not thus affected, if we are not willing to forgive our neighbour, we belong not to this kingdom, neither are we partakers of that grace which cometh through the gospel of Christ

Although the preaching of the gospel is heard by many, yet it reacheth not the heart of every one, neither is it profitable to all that hear it. It may therefore be necessary to state, who they are that receive it, and are benefitted thereby. It is not received by those who deal lightly with it, and esteem it as a thing of little consequence, and only worthy a small share of their attention; it doth not profit those false professors, who presume upon it as giving license to live in lust and licentiousness: and who think that because the gospel holds forth nothing but mercy and forgiveness, they can commit sin with impunity. The gospel hath reached none of these; for they belong to the kingdom of the world, and require the restraint of civil law to prevent them from doing what they list. The gospel is received by such only as feel their necessity and dependence; which was the case with the servant in the parable: wherefore, if we examine the text attentively, we shall find this subject fully illustrated.

In this parable, the kingdom of heaven is compared to a certain king who determined to take account of his servants: and when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents, but had nothing to pay. The king therefore ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children, and all his effects. The servant is hereupon brought into great perplexity and distress: he falleth down and worshipped his master, craveth his mercy, and promiseth more than he will ever be able to perform; saying, "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."

Thus it also cometh to pass between God and us. When the Lord would reckon with us, he sendeth forth the preaching of his law, whereby we learn what we ought to have done. This is the book of accounts, in which is written what we owe: this he taketh in his hand, and reading it before us, saith, “These things thou oughtest to have done; thou oughtest to have feared, loved, and worshipped me alone: thou oughtest to have trusted only in me, and to have placed thy confidence in none other. But thou hast done otherwise; thou art therefore mine enemy: thou hast not believed in me, but hast reposed thy trust in others; and in short, thou hast not even observed one single point of the law.”

When the preaching of the law hath taken hold on the conscience, we then see what we ought to have done, and what we have not done. We are convinced that we have not kept the law in any respect, and that we have totally neglected to perform that duty and obedience which God justly requireth of us. When the sinner is brought to this state, he is greatly distressed in mind, and knoweth not what to do. He is sensible that he hath merited eternal punishment, and is brought to the very brink of despair. The law bringeth no consolation, but indignation, wrath, and punishment: it delivereth the sinner to satan, it casteth him down to hell, and leaveth him no hope of escape.

This condition in which the law placeth the sinner, is the same as that of the servant when his master commanded him and all that he had to be sold, to satisfy the demand. And as the servant, when he heareth this sentence, falleth down and prayeth his master that he will have patience with him; thinking that he shall yet be able to pay the debt, so also doth the sinner. When he is brought to a sense of his own wretched and miserable condition, his heart is indeed contrite and humble; but instead of depending entirely upon the merits of a

Saviour, and praying to God for mercy and free pardon, he runneth hither and thither, seeking to be delivered from his sins by his own works, and promising even more than the angels in heaven could perform.

When the sinner is thus oppressed by the burden of sin, it is an easy matter to persuade him to do any thing whereby he thinketh to be delivered. And hence the cause of so many pilgrimages; the founding of so many monasteries; the institution of masses, and such like trifles. When we were among the papists, we were commanded thus; go on such a pilgrimage, give so much toward the building of a church, get thyself admitted into a holy monastery, and thy sins shall be forgiven thee. We pined under fastings, we scourged ourselves with whips, we were made monks and nuns, thinking that God, having respect to our good works, would therewith be satisfied: and our consciences relieved from the burden of guilt and sin. But, miserable and deluded men that we were! notwithstanding we thus afflicted our bodies, and performed such rigorous penances, we still remained in doubt as before; so that we knew not how we stood before God. Or if our consciences were lulled into security, we were still in a worse condition; as it was a false security, derived from a belief that God would have respect to our works.

Let us now observe how it was with the servant in the parable. When his lord saw him thus sorrowful, and imploring his clemency, he, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. He did not give him a certain time wherein he should pay the debt, neither did he compound with him for a certain part thereof: but he forgave him the whole sum. Thus also it is with us; when we find ourselves overwhelmed with sin, when we have endeavoured in vain to release ourselves therefrom, and when we have despaired of being saved by our own works; then are we willing to accept of

salvation through the merits of Christ alone, as a gracious and merciful gift. When the Lord seeth us thus contrite and humble, he taketh the burden of sin from us, and freely forgiveth us all we owe.

Let it be remembered, however, that God doth not forgive us on account of any merit which he findeth in us, but because he hath respect to an humble and contrite heart; as David saith, Psalm li. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." He therefore that is truly humble and penitent, who is sensible that he is not able to help himself but desireth help of the Lord, is in the right way to heaven. But he that trusteth either wholly or in part to his own works, is not in the right way: for the gospel plainly declareth that we must be saved by grace alone.

Thus much may suffice concerning the first part of the text, which treats of the dealings of the lord with his servant: we will now attend to the second part, which relates to the conduct of the servant toward his fellow-servant.

We are told in the parable, that the servant, after his lord had forgiven him the debt, went out, and finding one of his fellowservants who owed him a small sum, he laid hands on him, dealt rigorously with him, and demanded payment of his debt; and though his fellow-servant fell at his feet, and implored his forbearance, yet he showed him no mercy, but cast him into prison.

I have elsewhere said, that although God needeth not our good works, yet he requireth them of us, in order that our faith may be made manifest thereby. And surely, if we love God, we shall also love our neighbour; and if our hearts be filled with gratitude to him who hath been so merciful to us, that he hath forgiven us all

our transgressions, we shall certainly show mercy to our fellowcreatures. But many who profess to have received faith, do even as this servant did. They are haughty and imperious, tyrannical and oppressive, exacting of others whatever the law requireth, even to the last farthing. They think they have a right to do what they please with their own, provided they do not transgress the laws of justice. They do not consider, that if God had exacted justice of them, they would have been delivered to Satan, and cast down to hell forever.

Such persons can indeed talk and dispute much about the gospel; they have perhaps laid aside, in some degree, their vicious habits; they may have been so far enlightened that they can discern what they ought to do, and what they ought not to do; but they have not the love of God abiding in their hearts, for if they had, we should see it manifested by their works.

The condition of such persons is worse than it would have been, if they had never heard the gospel; because they sin against great light. Peter, speaking of those who had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Saviour Jesus Christ, but had become again entangled therein, declareth, that “the latter end is worse with them than the beginning and that “it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.” Christ also saith, Mat. xii. “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.” Thus we see that although God needeth

not our good works, yet he requireth them to be directed toward our neighbour; and that when he hath enlightened our minds by the preaching of his word, and shown us the way wherein we should walk, if we depart therefrom, he will visit us with heavy and severe chastisements.

In the same manner God dealeth with cities and with kingdoms. When he hath given them great light and understanding of his ways, if they still continue in wickedness, he sendeth terrible judgments upon them. Before the Jews were carried captive to Babylon, God warned them by his holy prophets, and also sent the good king Josiah to reign over them; but when they continued in wickedness, he punished them according to their deserts. Before he destroyed the Egyptians, he preached to them by Moses and Aaron. Likewise, before the deluge, he sent the patriarch Noah, a preacher of righteousness; but as men did not repent, but increased in wickedness, God determined to destroy the whole world, save righteous Noah and his family. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were likewise destroyed, because they would not hearken to Lot, a righteous man, and one that feared God.

Thus we see, that although God is very merciful and long-suffering toward those that offend him, yet, when they resist all his gracious methods to recover them from their sins, and bring them back to their duty, he executeth terrible vengeance upon them, as happened in the case of these cities and nations. Let us therefore take heed to ourselves, that we obey the gospel which we have received, and live according to its precepts: for if we do not, God will execute his vengeance against us, and deal with us even as the lord did with the servant in the parable, he will deliver us to Satan to be tormented forever.

SERMON XIII.

Luke, Chap. i. From the 68th to the 78th verses inclusive.

68. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

69. And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David:

70. As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

71. That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

73. The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74. That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear,

75. In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

76. And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways:

77. To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins,

78. Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us,

79. To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

These are the words of that godly man Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. In the preceding part of this chapter, the evangelist informs us, that as Zacharias was executing the priest's office in the temple, being then advanced in years, and as yet without issue, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and announced to him that his wife Elisabeth should conceive and bear a son, and that he should call his name John. That he should be great in the sight of the Lord, and filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb; and that he should go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

But Zacharias, doubting of what the angel had informed him, because both he and his wife were well stricken in years, required a sign by which he should know that these things should come to pass; whereupon the angel said unto him, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings: And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season." Accordingly, Zacharias was dumb until his son was born; and when they made signs to him to know how he should be called, he asked for a writing table, and wrote according to the words of the angel, that his name should be John. Immediately after this, the tongue of

Zacharias was loosed, and being filled with the Holy Ghost, he prophesied in the words of the text.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, (verse 68.) These words require but little exposition: for I think it is well known to every one what is meant by this visitation and redemption. The word of God which is preached unto us, is indeed a glorious visitation; it bringeth us glad tidings of redemption: it delivereth from sin, death, and hell, and filleth us with joy and sweet consolation. This redemption was not accomplished by the sword, or by violence, but by the word alone; and in this it consisteth more than in the death of Christ; for it was on account of the word that our Saviour shed his blood on the cross. It was this word that John preached; and to them that first hear the gospel, it is the same as if John did preach it now; for it saith unto them, as John also did cry in the wilderness of Judea, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Although Zacharias speaketh here of things that are to come, yet he speaketh of them as if they had already happened; because he knew by the revelation of God, that these things would assuredly come to pass. In the child that was born unto him, he beheld a messenger sent from God, to declare his word, and to make known his will to mankind; and who should be the herald of the long-expected Messiah.

Although Zacharias undoubtedly conceived great joy because a son was born unto him in his old age, whereby whatever ignominy and contempt he and his wife Elisabeth had suffered, on account of their being without children, was taken away; yet this was not the chief cause of his rejoicing. His greatest joy was, that this son was to be a preacher of the word of God, and a prophet of the Most High. He

rejoiced, moreover, that he should himself be, as it were, transformed from an old to a young man, and should become a pupil of his infant, then in the cradle; who, he foresaw, would become a far greater prophet than himself.

Thus we see what great blessings God conferreth upon those that fear him, and patiently await his own time. We also learn that we should never distrust the promises of God, as he is abundantly able to do all things that seem good to him, however impossible they may appear to us.

And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, (verse 69.) These words are not spoken of John, for he was not of the house of David, but of the tribe of Levi. But Zacharias here prophesieth of Christ, who was of the house and royal line of David. Among the Hebrews, the word horn was often used metaphorically, to express power, strength, dominion, or any thing wherein one might trust. Sometimes it also signified, figuratively, kings, emperors, principalities, or dominions: thus, in Daniel, chap. vii. the prophet saw, among other beasts, one which had ten horns; and when the interpretation thereof was given him, these horns were made to signify kingdoms: and such application of this term is frequent in, and peculiar to the Hebrew language.

We must therefore understand by ***the horn of salvation***, Jesus Christ and his kingdom; and it is said to be ***raised up in the house of David***, because Christ was of the stock and lineage of David. It is called a horn of ***salvation***, or ***blessedness***. Some kingdoms are distinguished for their extent; others for the number of their inhabitants, the abundance of their treasures, or their prowess in war. Some kings are renowned for their military

achievements; others for their riches, power, and opulence. But the kingdom of Christ differeth from all other kingdoms, inasmuch as it is a kingdom of grace, of life, of righteousness, of truth, and of every thing that pertaineth to salvation. Christ likewise is distinguished from all other kings, because he is able to confer life and eternal happiness upon his subjects. Other kings may indeed bestow upon their subjects temporal benefits, or may deprive them of existence, but they cannot confer upon them life or immortal felicity: for earthly kings are, like other men, subject to death; they must at last fall and perish, and leave their power, their riches, and their honours, behind them. But Christ is immortal and eternal, and his kingdom is without end.

This kingdom is said to be ***raised up***—by whom is it raised up? Even by the Holy Ghost It is raised up in the ***house of David***.—It is therefore a kingdom in the earth, yet nevertheless, a kingdom of salvation. It is not a kingdom in heaven among the angels, but a spiritual kingdom on the earth, among men clothed with flesh and blood, and subject unto death.

But how cometh it to pass, that in this kingdom which exists among mortals, men are delivered from the power of death? those who were before miserable are made happy, and those who were the subjects of Satan, become the children of God. I think that ye are all sufficiently well acquainted with the reason hereof; yea, that ye understand it as well as I do myself; nevertheless, these things should be frequently repeated. A Christian cannot die, because Christ hath suffered death for him. He overcame death, that we might be delivered therefrom; and he took our sins upon himself, that we might be freed from them. Those therefore who belong to this kingdom, can never die: neither can they be subject to sin or Satan; otherwise, this would not be a kingdom of salvation or blessedness.

But although a Christian is thus exempt from these things, yet God suffereth the appearance of them to remain; so that our consciences are still troubled on account of sin, the judgement of God terrifieth us, death assaileth us, and seemeth ready to devour us; Satan is at hand, and seeketh to overcome us. It is necessary that this appearance of evil continue, that we may not be exalted, but may perceive and feel that we are nothing but miserable and wretched sinners. A Christian is therefore defiled, and at the same time without sin; for under this appearance of sin, lie hid innocence, righteousness, and victory over death, hell, and Satan.

The world esteemeth that a good kingdom, where all things are quiet, peaceable, and prosperous; where there is no fear from enemies without, or seditions within, but all things go forward safely and well. It is, however, not so in the kingdom of Christ; for in this kingdom, the flesh warreth with the spirit, and life and death, sin and righteousness, Christ and Satan, do fight against each other; but the spirit, life, righteousness, and Christ, will at last prevail, and overcome their enemies.

Christ said unto Peter, Mat. xvi. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He doth not say they shall not assail it, or fight against it; for the life of a Christian is a continual warfare against temptations. While he is here, he must sometimes feel the remorse of sin, the fear of punishment, the horreur of death, yea, and even death itself but nevertheless, this is only to outward appearance, for at the same time, the word and the spirit are strengthening, encouraging, and assuring him that God is not angry with him, that his sins are forgiven, and that he shall never die, nor be forsaken.

Concerning sin, I have never known or heard of any in whom it was not. Set whomsoever thou wilt before thee, provided he be a mortal man, and in him thou wilt discover sin. Paul, a very great apostle, affirmeth that he felt sin in his members: for he saith, Rom. vii. 18, 19. "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not: for the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." He wished indeed to be free from sins, but nevertheless he was obliged to live in them. And so every Christian is likewise desirous to be exempted from sin, but this cannot be brought to pass in this life. As long as we are clothed with this flesh, and bear the burden thereof about with us, so long sin will remain in us. We may indeed strive against our carnal propensities, and keep them in some degree under subjection, but we cannot entirely subdue them. The old Adam, which is flesh and blood, still remaineth with us, and as long as these continue, sin cannot be wholly extinguished.

It therefore appeareth, that in Christ's kingdom on the earth, some appearance of sin still remaineth; so that every one may with propriety pray, as Christ taught his disciples, "Our father, &c. forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us." It is not given to any on earth, to say, they are subject to no sin; and if any go thus far, it is Satan that deceiveth them: they are *false*, and not *true* Christians.

I know that some persons imagine, that in the kingdom of Christ there is no unrighteousness; that all things therein are free from sin and uncleanness; and that a Christian should be as pure and as holy as Christ himself. They often say, that if Christians commit all the sins whereof they accuse themselves, they are certainly worse than those who do not profess Christianity. But these know nothing of the nature of this kingdom; and the difference

between them and Christians is, that a Christian is sensible of his sins, whereas their consciences are, as it were, **seared with a hot iron**. He is not a Christian who thinketh he hath no sin, neither feeleth any; for a Christian knoweth his infirmities, is sensible of his sins, is sorry for them, and doth lament over them. It grieveth him to the heart that he must bear the miserable burden of this flesh, and he crieth out in the language of Paul, Rom. vii. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death. " The kingdom of Christ therefore existeth among sins, and is established where he hath set it, that is, in the house of **David**. Yea, set David himself before you, and you will find him to have been a sinner; notwithstanding he is bold to glory, that he is a servant acceptable to his Lord.

Thus, ye perceive that a Christian is both dead and yet alive: that he is undefiled in the midst of sins; that although he is subject unto satan, still he hath dominion over him. For though sin, death, and hell assail, they do not overcome him, inasmuch as this kingdom triumphs over them all. It is therefore called **a horn of salvation**, because it is a strong and powerful kingdom; which, though frequently assailed, doth alway repel the assaults of its enemies.

As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began, (verse 70.) Zacharias here signifieth that the time had arrived wherein God would fulfil the promise he had made by the mouth of his holy prophets; for all the prophets from the time of David did prophesy, that the seed of David should have a kingdom in the earth, and yet a spiritual kingdom. Isaiah and Jeremiah foretold that it should be such a kingdom, that the government thereof should consist in the influence of the spirit, and of the word; and to those prophecies doth Zacharias here

refer. The other prophets do likewise speak of the same kingdom, but not so manifestly.

That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. (verse 71.) The evangelist hath hitherto spoken of this kingdom in general terms; but now he cometh to speak of it more particularly, and declareth what benefits we shall derive therefrom. First, we shall be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. Ye may here perceive and understand, dearly beloved brethren, that this verse doth most plainly witness and declare, that we who are of this kingdom, do live in the midst of enemies, and that we must expect nothing else than to be hated of them; but it also affirmeth that this kingdom was raised up in order that we might be saved from them, and delivered out of their hands. This should give us comfort, and encourage us to serve under the Prince of this kingdom. But if we would secure his favour, we must not serve the world, neither seek to gain its favour, or strive to have no enemies therein; but we should look for nothing else than what is here set forth unto us: for if we be hated of the world, it is an evidence that we belong to this kingdom.

Zacharias declareth in this verse, that this kingdom was established in order that we might be saved from our enemies. Now, if it delivereth from our enemies, and, as it were, wresteth us out of their hands, it cannot be a kingdom of peace; but it must needs abide the hatred and malice of the world. And we see even now, that the enemies thereof bear a deadly hatred and aversion to the light which we trust hath, through the blessing of God, shone forth in some degree in these days. No people are so persecuted, as the Christians. Not only the pope and the furious bishops, with their false apostles, but also the princes of the earth, the self-righteous, and the wise of the world, are all in array against them. They are not even content

with putting them to death, but they would totally extinguish their name, that no trace nor memorial might remain of them among men.

But we are given to understand that Christ is our king, and that he will deliver us out of the hands of our enemies. We shall not therefore be destroyed; for though they be many who do persecute, yet this kingdom is more powerful than the world, and Christ is stronger than the princes thereof; and as he hath promised us deliverance, he will not fail us, if we place our trust and our confidence in him.

To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham. (verses 72, 73.) The apostles often refer to the old Testament, to show that the events which were taking place in their days were foretold by the prophets; and thus doth Zacharias in this place. In Genesis xxii. 18. we read that God promised Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; which promise he confirmed by an oath. This promise referred to Christ, that through him should come peace, blessings, and salvation to all nations. And though the fulfilment of this promise was deferred so long, that many supposed it was abolished, yet we see that it was in process of time most fully accomplished; and that God hath bountifully bestowed upon mankind all things whatsoever that he promised to Abraham and his posterity.

God is merciful and favourable, not because of our merits, as though he owed it to our righteousness, but of his mere grace and mercy. We cannot glory that we have delivered ourselves from sin, or that we have deserved his goodness, and the preaching of the gospel: no, it is not so; here is no place for boasting. But the text saith, that God

promised our fathers that he would give us those things. Upon this promise the prophets stay themselves with boldness, and by it we attain unto true goodness; therefore he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord: for we live in his kingdom, and enjoy his goodness and grace.

There is none at this day unto whom the gospel hath appeared, that can boast of having attained it by their own works; for those which are counted the best works, and most excellent studies, are disallowed and overthrown. This therefore is certain, that all we have, cometh by the mere grace and goodness of God. This is that which Zacharias saith was foretold by the prophets, and promised and confirmed by an oath to the fathers, that he would perform unto us the covenant made to Abraham. By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing, I will bless thee, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Gen. xxii. And now the time is present, the hour is come, wherein he hath sworn that salvation should come unto us; as it is declared, Mark xvi. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

Abraham died long before the fulfilment of the promise; but in spirit and in faith, he was partaker of it. The promise was made unto him, although he looked not for the accomplishment thereof in this life: that is, his life was not prolonged until the preaching of the gospel. The fulfilment of the promise was after his death; we therefore perceive that the promise was not made to Abraham because of his merit. God chasteneth, reproveth, rebuketh, stirreth, allureth, and doth whatsoever is to be done; but the worldlings rob him of his honour, and attribute it to themselves: that is, they will not acknowledge whatsoever they receive to come by his grace. When we

glory of good things, and do not acknowledge God to be the author and giver of them, we make ourselves as God, and treat him as our servant: he being dishonoured, and the honour attributed to us.

Zacharias saith, moreover, ***That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life, (verses 74 and 75.)*** He hath defined the nature and properties of this kingdom; that is, the covenant made with Abraham, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, &c. These words of blessing, saith he, I will interpret to you: “That we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.”

This, to the world and flesh, savoureth not well: for the world murmureth, and saith, “We thought that he would have given us some precious thing; as a purse of gold, a rich wife, fair and beautiful children, goodly houses, and whatsoever things we are delighted in; but now we perceive it to be otherwise; we hear that we must serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, and thus endeavour to please him. We must have spiritual eyes and ears, that we may rightly consider and understand the word. It is said, he will deliver us from all our enemies: by this we understand, that this kingdom is placed in the midst of enemies; and when we are delivered from them, we should always obey him that delivered us, without fear. For God hath bestowed this blessing upon us, that we might hereafter serve him alone.

The words ***without fear***, inferreth that we shall quietly enjoy the good things of this present world, and of the world to come. For a Christian is sure of the forgiveness of his sins, although he may

yet be troubled with them. He is sensible that death hath no power over him; that Satan will not overcome him, and that the world cannot prevail against him. Such a heart is freed from fear. It must not be understood that we do not feel sin at all, but that we are greatly grieved and troubled with it. When we are terrified by death, when we are reproached and slandered by the world, we may be grieved, but they do not prevail, nor overcome us; for the heart, notwithstanding, remaineth safe and quiet in God.

What care I, if the world hate me, if I displease not him that dwelleth in heaven? If this hatred continue daily, if sin rage, if the world talk and prate about me, I will pass over these things as though I heard them not. This is, indeed, to forsake the world; to die unto it, and to live without fear. We must be occupied about no other thing, but that which is according to the will of God; we must speak nothing but what will please him, and which we know to be agreeable to his word. We must do those works which we know to be acceptable before him; whatsoever we do in our whole life, whether outwardly or inwardly, we must have his glory in view, and endeavour to fulfil his will. Then we shall be separated from the world, notwithstanding we may still live in it. If the Lord be on our side, we shall be in safety, ***in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.***

We find that even ***Peter, Paul,*** and ***John,*** lived not without sin. When we desire to be holy before God, we must not trust to our own life and works, but to his mere mercy and grace. We must be so affected that we can say, Lord, if thou shouldest call me to an account, I should be unable by my own works to stand in thy sight: nevertheless, I glory that I am thy servant, for thou dost give me continually; and that thou hast promised to Abraham, that thou wilt for Christ's sake vouchsafe to show thy mercy unto me. If I

of myself be not godly and righteous, Christ is godly and righteous; if I be profane, he is holy; if I be not without fear, he is void of all fear: thus I may, as it were, transfer myself to Christ. He will therefore have us to glory that we are godly and holy, but not by our own works.

When we teach in our sermons that salvation consisteth not in our works or life, but in the gift of God, men are slow to do good; they will not live an honest life, but will be disobedient, and falsely affirm that good works are prohibited. Nevertheless, God requireth us to lead an honest life outwardly; and he that doth not, shall at length receive due punishment. If we preach of an honest and godly life, the world will furiously attempt to build ladders to get to heaven; which God will by no means approve: again, a dishonest and ignominious life doth not become Christians. What, therefore, must we do?

Those who have respect to an honest and fair life only, it were better for them to be swallowed up in wickedness: yet notwithstanding, God will not have us to lead a filthy and dishonest life. If we lead an honest and upright life, we are apt to arrogate to ourselves that which belongs to God. We must therefore lead a quiet and peaceable life before the world, which may also be acceptable to God: but we must not esteem it so highly as to think that we thereby merit any thing from God. Thus, a Christian continueth the holy servant of God without fear, not by his good works and holy life, but by the grace of Christ. But he that affirmeth that he is holy by his works, is blasphemous against God, robbeth him of his honour, and denieth Christ. Wherefore it would be better for him, (as hath been observed,) to be swallowed up in wickedness, than to declare himself to be a Christian, yea, godly and holy; for in this he dishonoureth Christ in such a manner, that it is as much as if he declared that there was no Christ. If we do not acknowledge that God saveth us by his

divine mercy, is it not as much as to say he is neither holy nor blessed? Therefore, if I be a

Christian, I must confess that I am one because Christ himself is holy. And although my conscience doth reprove me of sin, I must still persevere in this, that his holiness is greater than my sins; thus, I must live honestly outwardly, and inwardly rest and trust in Christ alone.

Zacharias turneth his speech to the child, and saith, ***And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, (verse 76.)*** This shall be thy office: thou shalt be the first, and shalt first begin: that is, thou shalt be the prophet of the Highest. But what manner of prophesy shall this be? Thou shalt be the forerunner of the Lord, and shalt prepare his way. When any prince cometh, some one goeth before him to prepare the way. John doing the like, goeth before Christ, saying, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord."

Such things hath no prophet at any time spoken; but they have prophesied of these things, that a prophet should come, who would establish a kingdom that should remain forever. This prophet doth live, even at the time when our Lord maketh his appearance. The gospel was preached, and baptism administered, by the coming and ministry of John; Christ also began, nearly at the same time. Thus we see that the office of John was, to prepare a way for the Lord. Which preparation is, to bring people to the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: for he is the grace, gift, king, and horn of our salvation.

No man can come unto Christ, except in the spirit of humility. John therefore teacheth men that they are sinners; he that acknowledged

himself to be a sinner, and feeleth that he hath nothing whereof to boast, understandeth the voice of John; when he saith, prepare ye the way of the Lord, for he is at hand that followed me, who is greater than I; him ye shall hear and obey. Thus John pointed out the way of salvation, through the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, (verse 77.) That is, thou shalt begin the office, and minister the word, whereby is taught and learned how we are saved. Which salvation or blessedness consisteth in this, how we may obtain remission of sins, and become partakers of the grace of God: not how we may become famous through abundance of riches, glory, and power on earth, as the Jews have hitherto understood it; for where remission of sin is, there is merit, reward, or satisfaction; otherwise it could not be called remission of sin. We are therefore to understand how God forgiveth us our sins without works or merit, and saveth us by mere grace and mercy, by the following verse: ***Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us. (verse 78.)***

Here it appeareth, that those who teach and observe laws, works, and merit, strive against the mercy of God, and knowledge of salvation. For he doth not say that forgiveness of sin hath come by the prayers and works of the ***fathers***, or of any of the ***saints***, but through the tender mercy of God. This forgiveness of sin which cometh to us by mercy, is without our merit: for Christ the Lord, who is our Mediator, hath obtained it for us. God required that satisfaction should be made for our sins, and that his honour might be preserved; here we were able to do nothing; Christ alone was able to make the atonement. Therefore it is said, ***Through the tender mercy of***

our God, the day-spring from on high hath visited us. It is evident that it was not by our merit, but through mere mercy, that Christ came and offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins, that we might obtain eternal salvation. He is called ***the day-spring from on high***, which signifieth his divinity; for he proceedeth from the Father, as the beams do from the sun.

To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace, (verse 79.) These words of Luke, agree with those of Isaiah; where he saith, ***the people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light, &c.*** Here he referreth to Christ, who was to be the light of the world; who, by the gospel, was to enlighten the hearts of those that were held captive by Satan, and bring them to God; yea, and guide our feet into the way of peace. Thus ye have heard how Zacharias hath set forth the gospel and kingdom of Christ, with all the fruits and conditions thereof. It is a kingdom of grace, and of forgiveness of sins; also of peace, joy, quietness, salvation, and goodness. God grant that we may become thoroughly acquainted with this kingdom, and be made the happy partakers thereof. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

Philippians, Chap. iv. verses 4, 5, 6, and 7.

4. Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

6. Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

7. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

This text is but short, nevertheless it abounds with true Christian doctrine. In the first place, we are instructed how we ought to behave ourselves toward God: and in the second place, how we ought to conduct ourselves toward our neighbours. ***Rejoice in the Lord always.*** This joy is the fruit of faith; as witnessed by St. Paul, when he saith, Gal. v. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” &c. It cannot be that a person rejoiceth in the Lord, who hath not yet believed in him! Therefore, where there is no faith, there can be nothing but fear, trembling, horror, and sadness, as often as they think on God, or hear his name mentioned. Yea, hatred and enmity toward God remaineth in such hearts; being void of faith, they find themselves defiled with sin, and therefore remain in unbelief.

The wicked are troubled, cast down, fearful, and greatly terrified, thinking that the vengeance of God every moment hangeth over them. Solomon saith, “The wicked flee when no man pursueth.” Again, it is said in Deut. xxviii. “The Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee.” Such a heart can have no joy in the Lord; it always feeleth that the revenging hand of God is heavy upon it. This joy belongeth to the righteous; to those that are upright in heart. It is said, Psalm xxxii. “Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in

heart.” It is manifest that this Scripture was not written for sinners, but for the righteous. Sinners must first be shown how they may be delivered from sin, and obtain God's favour: which, when they have learned, and obtained, it followeth that they of their own accord rejoice in the Lord, being delivered from remorse of conscience.

If any demand, how one may be delivered from remorse of conscience, and have God become merciful unto him, we will answer, He who seeketh after these things, must not begin with his own works, (as do the papists,) tormenting his conscience and increasing the wrath of God, but let him despair of himself and all his works, and embrace the promises of God in Christ, having faith that he shall receive whatsoever is promised in the gospel. The promises of the gospel are, that Christ should make an atonement for our sins, and become our high priest, mediator, and advocate before God: that we may not doubt but that our sins are forgiven through his merits, and that we are reconciled to God.

When such a faith possesseth the heart, and the gospel is thus received, God appeareth pleasant, and altogether lovely. The heart enjoys his grace and favour, and hath a strong confidence in him: it is quiet, and free from the fear of his vengeance: it is cheerful, and exulteth in the goodness of God, manifested through Christ the Saviour. From such love proceedeth faith, joy, peace, gladness, giving of thanks, praise, and a marvellous delight in God our heavenly Father, who dealeth so kindly with us, and poureth forth his grace in such abundance upon those who do not deserve it.

This is the joy of which St Paul speaketh, when he saith, ***Rejoice in the Lord always.*** He doth not tell us to rejoice in gold or silver, gluttony or drunkenness, in health, knowledge, wisdom, power, glory, friendship, favour, nor in good works, or whatsoever

is without God; for these afford but deceitful and vain joy, which cannot satisfy the heart. The joy which believers have, is putting their trust in God, committing themselves to his care, and relying upon him as their kind and tender Father.

Whatsoever joy is not after this sort, the Lord contemneth and rejecteth. Jeremiah saith, chap. ix. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me." And Paul saith, 2 Cor. x. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." We must rejoice always. Some will rejoice when all things go according to their wishes; but when adversity cometh they change joy for sadness and sorrow. But it is said in the xxxiv Psalm, "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth." Who shall hurt him unto whom God is merciful? surely sin shall not harm him, neither shall death or hell: wherefore it is said, Psalm xxiii. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

And again Paul saith, Romans viii. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." ***Again I say, rejoice.*** This repetition of the apostle confirmeth his exhortation: and truly not without cause; for we live in the midst of sin and tribulation, which move us to sadness and heaviness. Wherefore the apostle, endeavouring to comfort us, exhorteth us to rejoice in the Lord always, though we sometimes fall into sin. Joy in the Lord ought always to have the first place in our hearts, and overcome

the sorrow and sadness occasioned by reason of our sins. We must always think of what is written in 1 John ii. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins.”

The apostle hath already informed us how men ought to behave themselves toward God; namely, that they serve him with a cheerful heart, and rejoice in him continually. He now declareth in few words, how the believers ought to behave themselves toward men; saying, ***Let your moderation be known unto all men.*** That is, be joyful toward God, always rejoicing in him; but toward men, be of a patient mind, and so conduct yourselves, that ye be ready to suffer all things, and yield in every thing as much as possible, without transgressing the commands of God.

We must endeavour to please all men in that which is good; we must interpret aright the sayings of others, and accept the part which is good; that men may see that we are of those who would not disagree with any man for any cause whatever; who are rich with the rich, and poor with the poor; rejoicing with those that rejoice, and weeping with those that weep: in short, that we are all things to all men, that they may acknowledge that we are grievous to none; but agreeable, of a patient mind, and obedient in all things. We must endeavour to order and apply ourselves unto all, according to their capacity and ability: we must be ready to permit, to take in good part, to obey, to give place, to do, to omit, to suffer all things, for the benefit of our neighbour; even though we suffer hinderance, loss of substance, name, and body, thereby.

In order to make these things more plain, we will introduce an example. Paul, speaking of himself, saith, 1 Cor. ix. “Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are

under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law; as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” We here see the patient and pliant mind, rightly observing those things which are here commanded. The apostle did sometimes eat and drink, and do all things as a Jew; sometimes he did eat and drink with the Gentiles, and did all things as free from the law; for only faith in God, and love toward our neighbour, are necessarily required; all other things are free; and we may freely observe them for one man's sake, and omit them for the sake of another.

It is contrary to this moderation or meekness, when one, having an impatient mind, trusteth to his own knowledge, and contendeth that one thing among the rest is absolutely necessary or unnecessary, applying himself to none, but endeavouring to have all others apply themselves unto him: in this he perverteth the softness and meekness here taught; yea, and the liberty of faith also. We read in Matthew and Mark, that Christ suffered his disciples to break the sabbath; and he himself did also break it, when the case so required: when it was otherwise, he kept it, for which he gave this reason; ***The Son of man is lord also of the sabbath.*** Which is as much as to say, the sabbath is free, that thou mayst break it for one man's sake and convenience, and for the sake and convenience of another, thou mayst keep it.

Paul caused Timothy to be circumcised, because of the Jews; for they thought it of importance toward their salvation: again, he would not have Titus circumcised, because certain Jews urged it unjustly; so that the circumcision of Titus would have been a confirmation of

error unto them, rather than profit. Paul, therefore, would keep circumcision free; that he might sometimes use it, and at other times omit it, as he should perceive it to be commodious and profitable to others.

Every one ought to behave himself toward all men according to this doctrine, and the examples before mentioned; not to be selfish and stubborn, but to regard those things that will be acceptable to his neighbour. When it doth not hinder thy faith, and will profit thy neighbour to yield somewhat of thy own right, if thou do it not, thou art without charity, and neglectest that Christian patience spoken of by St. Paul. We can scarce find a better example of this subject, than the case of two unfeigned friends; for as they behave themselves toward each other, so ought a Christian to behave himself toward every one. Either of them endeavoureth to gratify the other, either giveth place to the other, suffereth, doeth, and omitteth whatsoever he seeth to be for the profit and convenience of the other, and that freely, without constraint. Each of them diligently applieth himself to the will of the other; neither of them compelleth the other to follow his mind, and if one should use the goods of the other he would not be offended, but take it in good part, and instead of grudging, would rather offer him more. In short, between such there is no exaction of law, no grudging, no constraint, no necessity; but liberty, favour, and good will.

On the contrary, such as are impatient and obstinate, who take nothing in good part of any man, but endeavour to make all things subject to their own will, and order all things according to their own judgement, such I say, trouble the world, and are the cause of all the discord, contention, wars, and evil that existeth. They say that they do those things for the love of justice; and for that, they endeavour to defend what is right. Thus we see verified the

saying of a Heathen, that “extreme rigour is extreme injury.” And Solomon saith, Eccl. vii. “Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself over wise.” For, as extreme rigour is extreme injury, so too much wisdom is extreme folly: that is, when wise men boast, they boast beyond measure.

It is proper that we observe a measure of our judgement, wisdom, and prudence; but in all things we must apply ourselves to the promotion of the happiness of others. ***Let your moderation, or patient mind, be known unto all men.*** He doth not command thee to be made known unto all men, or to tell of thy moderation before all men; he doth not say, tell if forth, but, ***let it be known***; that is, ***endeavour to practise it toward men.*** So that if any are disposed to speak evil of you, his mouth may be stopped by the testimony of all others, who have witnessed your moderation and meekness. Christ saith, Mat. v. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Again it is said, 1 Peter ii. 12. “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

By the words, ***all men***, it is not meant all the men in the world, but rather all sorts of men: that is, we must let our moderation be known toward enemies as well as friends; as well toward servants as masters, small as great, poor as rich, strangers as those at home; toward them that we know not, as toward those with whom we are familiar. Some behave themselves in a very gentle and patient manner toward strangers, but are obstinate and froward toward those with whom they associate. There are many who take all things in good, part from the great and rich, and interpret every thing in the most favourable manner; but toward the poor

and abject they show no gentleness or meekness, neither take any thing of them in good part.

We are all ready to do for our children, parents, friends and kinsmen, and favourably interpret, and willingly bear whatsoever

they do. How often do we even praise the manifest vices of our friends, or at least wink at them! but toward our enemies or adversaries we show none of these favours; in them we can find nothing that is good, nothing that is to be borne, nothing that can be spoken well of, but we dispraise every thing they do. To such, Paul here speaketh, saying, ***let your moderation (or patient mind) be known to all men.*** He would have our moderation and Christian meekness to be perfect and entire toward all, whether they be enemies or friends; he would have us suffer and take in good part all things of all men, without respect to persons or deserts.

Such undoubtedly will our moderation be, if it be not counterfeit; even as gold remaineth gold, whether possessed by the godly or ungodly. The silver that Judas received, when he betrayed the Lord, was not turned into ashes, but remained the same: so a patient mind that is sincere, continueth like itself whether exercised toward rich or poor, friends or foes. Our nature being corrupt and deceitful, we are apt to be patient and pliant toward rich men, great personages, strangers, and friends, and not toward others; wherefore it is false, vain, vile, hypocritical, and nothing but deceit and mockery before God.

In these few words, is comprehended the life which a Christian ought to lead toward his neighbour. For he that is of a patient and meek mind, studieth to deserve well all men; as well of the body as soul, as well in deed as in word. When a mind is so patient, as to bear the

offences and malice of others, there is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and whatsoever is the fruit of the spirit: Gal. v. But here the flesh murmureth: it is said, if we should endeavour to take all things in good part from all men, the unjust would abuse our meekness, and take from us all things; yea, they would not suffer us to live: but the apostle abundantly satisfieth this distrust and foolish cogitation; even from this place to the end of the text: ***The Lord is at hand.*** He will not therefore forsake thee, but will nourish and protect thee.

It is said, Psalm lv. “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.” And 1 Peter v. “Cast all your care upon him: for he careth for you.” And again, Christ saith, Mat. vi. “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” All which agreeth with the present consolation of the apostle, and hath the same meaning as the following: ***The Lord is at hand.***

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. In these words the apostle teacheth us to cast our care upon God, and turn to him by prayer and supplication. He, who will not put his trust in God, when he meets with difficulty and disappointments, but will first weigh all things by his own reason, and order them according to his own judgement, will find himself involved in many perplexities, and will lose all joy and quietness thereby. Such a person laboureth in vain, and plungeth himself still deeper into trouble and misery, from which he is not able to extricate himself. This we may learn by our own, and by the experience of others.

The admonition of Paul concerning prayer is given, lest we should be sleepy and slothful, and not pray for the things of which we stand in need. He that indulgeth himself in slothfulness, shall be easily wrapped in the cares of this world. Therefore, ***in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.*** When we are in trouble, we must flee unto prayer, and make known our wants to God, and desire him to bestow upon us those things of which we stand in need.

We must here take some notice of the formation of prayer, and what is the true manner of praying. The apostle mentioneth four things; prayer, supplication, giving of thanks, and requests or petitions. Prayer is the words or speech wherein something is desired; as the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, &c. Supplication, is when the petition is urged with earnestness, as when one prayeth for something that is very dear and excellent to him; as when we pray unto God by his mercy, by his Son, by his promise, by his name, &c.; as in the following passages: Psalm cxxxii: "Lord, remember David and all his afflictions." And Paul saith, Romans xii. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God;" and 2 Cor. x. "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," &c.

A petition or request is, when we name that which is desired, and for which supplication is made; as we may see in Mat vii. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." Thanksgiving is, when the benefits of God are rehearsed, whereby faith is strengthened, and stirred up to look for that which is desired, with more confidence. Wherefore, prayer urgeth or earnestly entreateth by supplication, but is strengthened and

made sweet and acceptable by thanksgiving, and therefore obtaineth whatsoever it asketh.

We read that this manner of prayer was used in the church, among the holy *fathers* of the Old Testament; who always in their prayers were wont to ask with supplication and thanksgiving. The same also we see in the Lord's Prayer; which beginneth with thanksgiving and with praise; in the beginning thereof we confess God to be our Father, unto whom we have access by his fatherly love, and through the merits of his Son.

Paul hath well expressed the mystery of the golden censer, mentioned in the Old Testament, whereof we read many things in the books of Moses. It was lawful for the priests only, to burn incense; but now, all we who believe in Christ, are priests; wherefore it is lawful for us, and for us only, to burn the incense of prayers. The censer, that golden vessel, is the words which we utter in prayer: surely golden and precious are those, of which the Lord's Prayer consisted, the Psalms, and other prayers used in the holy scripture.

Vessels, in scripture, frequently signify words. Wine, water, burning coals, and the like, are contained in vessels; so the meaning of what we express, is contained in words. By the cup of Babylon, is understood the doctrine of men; and by the cup from which the blood of Christ is drank, the gospel. The burning coals whereon the frankincense was laid, signify thanksgiving, and the rehearsing of benefits in prayer; which we are wont to do in making supplication. That fiery coals signify benefits, is manifest by referring to Romans xii. where the apostle reciteth the words of Solomon; Proverbs xxv. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of

fire on his head.” Benefits may properly be called coals of fire, for they inflame the heart with love, which was before cold and inactive.

In the law it was prohibited to lay the frankincense upon any other coals except those that were of the altar of the Lord: which signifieth that we must not rehearse our own good deeds in prayer, as did the pharisee, (Luke xv.) but only the benefits of God bestowed upon us in Christ: he is our altar, and by him we must offer: and for the benefits received by him we must give thanks, and make mention of them in prayer for the increasing of our faith. This Paul teacheth, where he saith, Col. iii. Do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” For God will not suffer us to glory in any thing else in his sight, which he declared in a type or figure, Lev. x. where we read that Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, were consumed in a flame from the altar of the Lord, because they burned incense, taking other fire than that of the altar.

The works of Christ are acceptable to God; we must therefore give thanks for these only, and rejoice in prayer. Incense signifieth the petitions made in prayer. Paul saith, ***let your petitions be made known unto God***; wherein he seemeth to have considered and interpreted them as a sweet savour ascending from the censer. As though he had said, when ye burn incense sweet and acceptable unto the Lord, make your petitions known unto God with supplication and thanksgiving: this incense and savour being sweet and acceptable to God, ascendeth to heaven like vapours of smoke, and entereth even unto the throne of God.

As burning coals give a strong savour and make it ascend upward, so the memory of the benefits of God which we rehearse in thanksgiving, maketh prayer steadfast and bold, which ascendeth into heaven; but without which it fainteth, is cold, and of no force.

Therefore, before we can pray effectually with faith, our hearts must be inflamed by the memory of the benefits which God hath bestowed upon us in Christ.

Perhaps some may demand how our petitions are to be made known to God, seeing they are known unto him before we pray? I answer; the apostle adjoined this, that he might instruct us of what sort true prayer ought to be: namely; being assured, and having confidence and trust in God. Such a prayer is not made at adventure, neither passeth it away into the wind, as the prayer of those who have no regard whether God hear or not, yea, rather believe that he doth not hear; which is not to pray or ask of God, but to tempt and mock him.

If a man desire money of me, whom I certainly know to be persuaded in his own mind that he shall not receive it, I should not grant, his request, but consider myself mocked. How much more is God offended at our much crying and babbling, when we do not consider whether he heareth us or not. Let us therefore learn to make known our petitions unto God; that is, so ask that we doubt not that they are known and accepted by him. If we in faith believe that we shall receive whatsoever we ask, we shall receive it: for as we believe, so it cometh unto us. As the smoke carrieth the savour upward from the censer, so faith carrieth the petitions of the believers into the presence of God; whereby we assuredly believe that our petitions will ascend to God, and that we shall obtain those things that we ask.

It is said in the Psalms, "God hath heard my petition; give ear Lord unto my prayer," &c. Christ saith, Mat. xxi. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." And James saith, chap. i. "Ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." Who cannot perceive that the

babbling and noise which is made through the world in monasteries, is mockery, and delusion? The prayers of these, if they may be called prayers, are abundantly shown before men; but God doth not regard them, neither doth he hear them; for they do not believe, neither are they assured that their prayers are heard by him; therefore as they believe, so do they receive. It was time, long ago, that those mockeries and blasphemies should have been abolished.

If we pray as we are here taught, there shall be nothing which we may not obtain. We pray for many things which we do not receive, but this is not marvellous, for it is evident that we do not ask in faith.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. By the ***peace of*** God, it is not meant that whereby God is peaceable and quiet in himself, but that which he giveth unto us, and poureth into our hearts. This peace is given to us while in the world, notwithstanding we suffer affliction. It passeth all understanding. It must not be understood by this, that we cannot perceive it; for if we have peace with God, it must be felt in the heart and conscience, otherwise we could not be preserved by it; but it is to be understood, that when tribulation cometh upon those who know not God, and are unacquainted with prayer and supplication, who trust in their own wisdom, being void of faith, they become exceedingly disquieted and troubled, not knowing the peace of God.

Those who rejoice sincerely in God, knowing that he is favourable to them, and that they are at peace with him, are patient in tribulation, and endure it valiantly, being strengthened inwardly by faith. When the believer is in trouble, he committeth all things to God, without seeking to know when, how, where, or by whom he will give him

quietness. Again; God showeth them a great favour, insomuch that he maketh their trials of great advantage to them, which no one would suspect. This is that peace of the cross, the peace of God, the peace of conscience, yea, true Christian peace, by which a man liveth quietly and peaceably with all men.

This peace cannot be comprehended by reason, that a man under the cross may have quietness of mind, joy of heart, and peace even in the very invasion of his enemies. This is the gift and work of God, which is unknown to all except those that have experienced it. Paul saith, Romans xv. 13. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." That which he here calleth *peace in believing*, he calleth in our present text *the peace of God*.

Paul would have us understand, that he who rejoiceth in the Lord by faith, and is of a meek and patient mind, will be assaulted by the devil; who will raise up some cross, that he may thereby drive him from his Christian duty. The apostle therefore would have every one to be prepared against the attacks of Satan, and to place his confidence where he cannot trouble it: namely, in God. We must wait patiently for the coming of our Lord, who will make an end of adversity: by this means, our minds, hearts, and consciences, will be preserved and kept in peace.

Patience cannot endure, where the heart is not confirmed in this peace: for only those who possess it, are persuaded that God is favourable to them, and that he taketh care of them. We must not here understand the hearts and minds to be the will of nature, but, as Paul informeth us, of Christ Jesus. These are the hearts and minds produced by faith and love; and those that possess them, behave with reverence toward God, and in a loving and gentle manner toward their neighbours. They believe in God, and

love him with their whole hearts, and are always ready to do whatever will be acceptable to him, and to their neighbours.

Such hearts and minds as these are often beset by the devil, who by the fear of death, and other troubles, endeavoureth to terrify, and drive from this godliness; suggesting false hopes, which are the devices and imaginations of men. Thus the mind sometimes becomes seduced, and seeketh comfort in itself and other creatures; having been drawn aside from the true worship of God, and wrapped in the snare of the devil. We perceive in this short text, great instruction in the Christian life; how we must conduct ourselves toward God, and toward our neighbours. We must believe God to be all things unto us, and we must be all things unto our neighbours. We must be kind and merciful to them, even as God hath been kind and merciful to us; thus, we must receive from God and give to them; and continue in faith and love, which is the whole sum of Christianity.

In what a godly manner Paul setteth forth the duties of a Christian in this text! First, he teacheth him that he ought to be glad and ***rejoice in the Lord always***: Secondly, to show himself ***meek and gentle toward all his neighbours***: if it be said, how can I do that without loss or injury? the answer is, ***the Lord is at hand***: if there be objections still, if it be said, what shall I do if men persecute me, and take away what I possess? he addeth, ***be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God***. If the flesh again murmur, saying, what shall I do if I be oppressed and set at nought? he concludeth by saying, ***the peace of God, which passeth all understandings shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus***.

The End

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(Original spelling and grammar retained)

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