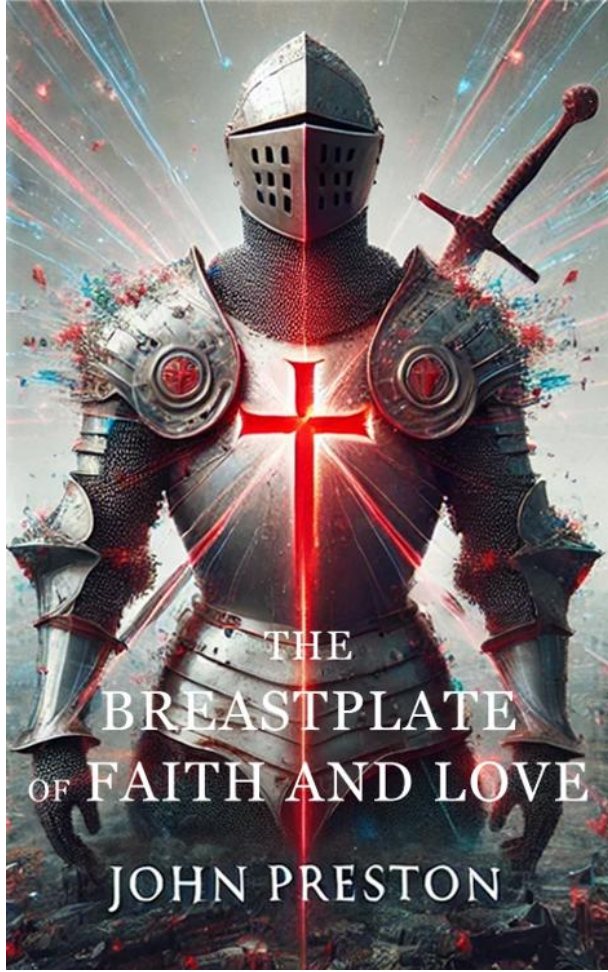


THE
BREASTPLATE
OF FAITH AND LOVE
JOHN PRESTON



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The Breastplate of Faith and Love

John Preston

Monergism Books

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Further revision and editing done by Monergism.

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Editor's Note – During the EEBO-TCP Transcription Process, all the text was hand transcribed according to visual representation; and as such, sometimes the letters s, l, f & t are misconstrued with each other, these letters regularly being almost illegibly similar in the original facsimile script. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may remain if uncaught. My sincere apologies in advance where such errors occur. As the Puritan Edward Leigh once said "If thou findest faults and Errata in the book, let love cover them, for to err (as the Satirist saith) is the sad privilege of mortality, and he (of all men) erreth most, who challengeth a privilege from error." Also, the symbol <H&G>, when included, signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Lastly, some archaic words may be updated to more contemporary terminology; but changes have been kept to a bare minimum.

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PREF. To the Christian Reader.

Christian Reader,

Innumerable are the sleights of Satan, to hinder a Christian in his course towards Heaven, by exciting the corruption of his own heart to disturb him, when he is about to do any good; or by discouraging him with inward terrors, when he would solace himself with heavenly comforts; or by disheartening him under the fears of sufferings, when he should be resolute in a good cause. A type whereof were the Israelites, whose servitude was redoubled, when they turned themselves to forsake Egypt: Wherefore we have much need of Christian fortitude, according to that direction; Watch ye, stand fast, quit yourselves like men: especially since Satan, like a Serpentine Crocodile pursued, is by resistance put to flight.

But, as in wars, (which the Philistines knew well in putting their hope in Goliath) the chief strength of the Soldiers lieth in their Captain, so in spiritual conflicts, all a Christians strength is in Christ, and from him. For, before our conversion, we were of no strength: since our conversion, we are not sufficient of ourselves to think a good thought. And, to work out from

the Saints all self-confidence, God, by their falls teacheth them, To rejoice in the Lord Jesus, and to have no confidence in the flesh.

Whatsoever Christ hath for us is made ours by Faith, which is the hand of the soul enriching it by receiving Christ, who is the treasure hid in the field, and with him, those unsearchable riches of grace, which are revealed and offered in the Gospel: Yea it is part of our spiritual armor. That which was fabulously spoken of the race of Giants, is truly said of a Christian, he is borne with his armor upon him; as soon as he is regenerate he is armed. Its called a Breast-plate, because it preserves the heart, a long, large shield, (as the word signifieth) which is useful to defend the whole man from all sorts of assaults: Which part of spiritual armor, and how it is to be managed, is declared in the former part of the ensuing Treatise, in ten Sermons.

Now, as all rivers return into the sea, whence they came, so the believing soul, having received all from Christ, returneth all to Christ. For thus the believer reasoneth. Was God's undeserved, unexpected love such to me, that he spared not his only begotten Son, but gave him to die for me? Its but equal that I should live to him, die for him, bring in my strength, time, gifts, liberty, all that I have, all that I am, in his service, to his glory. That affection, whence these resolutions arise, is called Love, which so inclineth the soul, that it moveth in a direct line towards that object, wherein it expecteth contentment. The soul is miserably deluded in pursuing the wind, and in taking aim at a flying fowl, whilst it seeks happiness in any creature: which appears in the restlessness of those irregular agitations, and endless motions of the minds of ambitious, voluptuous and covetous persons, whose frame of spirit is like the lower part of the elementary region, the seat of winds, tempests and earthquakes, full of unquietness; whilst the believers soul, like that part towards heaven, which is always peaceable and

still, enjoyeth true rest and joy. And indeed the perfection of our spirits cannot be but in union with the chief of spirits, which communicateth his goodness to the creature according to its capacity. This affection of Love, as it reflecteth upon Christ, being a fruit and effect of his love to us apprehended by faith, is the subject of the third part of the following Treatise in 8 Sermons.

The judicious Author out of a piercing insight into the methods of the Tempter, knowing upon what rocks the faith of many suffers shipwreck; that neither the weak Christian might lose the comfort of his faith, through want of evidences, nor the presumptuous rest upon a fancy instead of faith, nor the adversaries be emboldened to cast upon us, by reason of this doctrine of Justification by faith only, their wonted nicknames of Soli-fidians, and Nulli-fidians; throughout the whole Treatise, and more especially in the last Sermon, he discourseth of good Works, as they arise from faith and love. This is the sum of the faithful and fruitful labors of this Reverend, learned and godly Minister of the Gospel, who whilst he lived was an example of the life of faith and love, and of good works, to so many as were acquainted with his equal and even walking in the ways of God, in the several turnings and occasions of his life. But it will be too much injury to the godly Reader to be detained longer in the porch. We now dismiss thee to the reading of this profitable work, beseeching God to increase faith, and to perfect love in thy heart, that thou mayest be fruitful in good works.

Thine in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Richard Sibbes & John Davenport.

Part I. Of Faith.

SERMON I.

ROM. 1:17.
*For by it the righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith:
As it is written, The just shall live by Faith.*

In the words I have read unto you, Paul tells them that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. For it was a shame to him, partly, because the very substance of the Gospel was then persecution; and partly, because he was plain in speech; he came not with excellency of words, or man's wisdom; and therefore you may observe what ado he had to defend himself in his Epistles to the Corinthians, a wise people, who partly hated, and partly despised his manner of delivery: but, saith he, I am not ashamed of it, for it is the power of God to salvation: it is that which, being received, will bring men to heaven; being rejected, will shut men up in Hell; and therefore it is of no small moment. He gives a reason in these words, why it is the power of God to salvation: For, saith he, by it the righteousness of God is revealed. That is, the righteousness which is of God, which only God accepts, and by which alone men can be saved, is revealed by the Gospel, and no other way.

But to what purpose is this revealed, if I know not how to come by it? Many things are revealed, but how shall I know that they are mine? Therefore he adds, it is the power of God to salvation, to everyone that believes. As it is revealed by the Gospel, so something is to be done on our part; as God manifests it, exposes it, and lays it open, so you must receive it by faith.

I, but I have not so strong a faith, I cannot believe as I would, and as I should. Says he, Faith hath degrees, it is revealed from faith to faith. That is, one receives it in one degree, and the same afterward receives it in a greater degree, and so forward. All are alike justified, but there is difference in Faith, some is stronger, some is weaker, which I will afterward show at large.

The point to be gathered out of these words is this:

That Righteousness by which alone we can be saved now in the time of the Gospel, is revealed and offered to all that will take it.

When you hear this, it may be, at the very reading, you may not have such a conceit of the thing as you should have: but it is not a matter of light moment, but an exceeding great thing to see the righteousness of God revealed. It is the great, glorious mystery of the Gospel, which the Angels desire to pry into, which made Paul in his Ministry so glorious, which swallowed up his thoughts, that he could not tell how to express it: that now in this last Age, Christ hath revealed through us the unsearchable Riches of his Grace, that is, Riches which I know not how to express. Therefore he prays that God would open their eyes, that they might comprehend with all the Saints, the height, and length, and breadth of that Redemption, which Christ hath wrought for them. It is past a full comprehension, yet he prays that they may comprehend it in such a measure as is possible, though there

is a height, and breadth, and depth therein, which could not be measured. And this is it that is revealed to the souls of men, the scaping of Hell and death, this free access to the Throne of Grace, which none before had; this liberty to be made sons of God, and heirs of heaven, yea, Kings and Priests to God, and making good of all promises, and the entailing of them to our posterity, and making them Yea and Amen. All this, I say, is now revealed, which before was not.

2. It is said to be revealed, (mark that) partly, because this of all other things was never written in the hearts of men. The Moral Law was written therein, but they had not the least inkling, the least crevice of light to see this; partly, because it is now opened in a larger measure then it was heretofore, in the times of the Prophets: the door was a little open before, but now it is wide open, and nothing is hid from the souls of men, that is necessary for them to know.

Again, it is revealed not only in regard of the Preachers that make it known, but likewise in regard of them that hear it: for there is a greater measure of the Spirit of Revelation dispensed under the Gospel. Therefore, Eph. 1:18, the Apostle prays that the eyes of their understanding might be opened, that they might know what is the hope of their Calling, and the riches of his glorious inheritance in the Saints. For what is it to have a light shining, if their eyes be shut to whom it shines? So the thing revealed is the Righteousness of God. And lastly, it is that Righteousness, by which alone men can be saved.

This is the main point, which that you may understand, I will open, by answering these 6. Questions.

1. How this righteousness of God, or, which is accepted of God, saves.
2. How it is offered to us.

3. To whom it is offered.
4. Upon what qualifications.
5. How it is made ours.

And lastly, What is required of us, when we have it. These hang one on another, but for memory sake I have thus distinguished them.

First: How doth it save? I answer: 1. This righteousness saves after the same manner that the unrighteousness of Adam did condemn: let us set these two together, and the thing will be plain.

First, as Adam was one man, yet the common root of all mankind, of whom all that are guilty of death, and shall be damned, must be borne: so Christ, the second Adam, stands as a public person, and the Root of all that shall be engrafted into, and borne of him.

Secondly, as Adams first unrighteousness, the first sin he committed, is communicated to men, and made theirs by imputation; and not so only, but by inherency also; (for it hath bred in them original sin:) After the same manner, and by the same equity, the righteousness that Christ wrought, is made ours by imputation, and this imputative righteousness of Christ worketh a righteousness which qualifies the person, and is inherent in us. Lastly, as after this unrighteousness comes death, which rules and reigns in us, bringing everything into subjection, so that all the comforts men possess are overcome in some degree, while we live here; (all sicknesses, and troubles, and crosses, being as so many skirmishes which Death hath with us, before the main Battle comes:) So in Christ life reigns over all, and brings all into subjection to him: that is, it brings all the troubles man sustaineth, all the enemies he hath, yea death and sin into subjection, by degrees in this life, and after death perfectly. There is a comparison made in Rom. 5:14, which you shall find more fully to express, and more largely to

set this out then I have done. The first Adam was a figure of him that was to come, and 1 Cor. 15:45. Christ is called the second Adam; now you do see the miserable fruit of Adams fall, you see by lamentable experience, what original sin is, and how much it hath corrupted us; why then should you think it a strange thing, that the righteousness of Christ should be imputed? Again, Death, you see, reigns over all by one, Why then will not you believe that life shall reign over all men, that is, bring every enemy of ours into subjection by the other? For the righteousness of one saves, as the unrighteousness of the other condemns.

Another expression I find in 2 Cor. 5:21. As Christ was made sin for us, who knew no sin, so are we made the righteousness of God in him. That is, though Christ was a man without sin in himself, yet our sin was imputed to him, and he was by God reckoned as a sinner; and then he kills him, putting our curse upon him: so to us that are free from righteousness, Christ is made righteousness, so that God looks on us as if we had performed perfect righteousness, and when that is done, he saves us. And so much for the first Question.

But now when we hear that this righteousness saves, the Question is, How shall we come by it? In that it saves, it is good and comfortable, but it may save some men, and yet I have no share nor part in salvation?

I answer, It is freely given to us, even as Fathers give Lands and Inheritances to their children, and as Kings give Pardons and Titles, and Honors, and Riches, out of their clemency, because they will, to show their magnificence, and goodness to their Subjects; So doth God give this righteousness. As you shall find it expressed, Isaiah 9:6. To us a Child is borne, to us a Son is given: a place worth your marking and observation. And John 3:16. God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son,

&c. And Rom. 5:17, it is called the Gift of Righteousness. That is, a thing which God freely, simply, voluntarily, and only because he will, bestows on men, not looking on any worthiness in them of the same: (as we say, nothing is so free as gift.) The passage is this: For, if through the offense of one, Death reigned in all, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ. So that God gives it freely out of his mere love, without any other motive or end, but to show his magnificence, and to make manifest in the Ages to come, the unsearchable riches of Christ, the great and exceeding glorious riches that he hath provided for them that love him.

But what is the reason that God will have it communicated to the sons of men no other way but by gift? You shall see it, Rom. 4:5, that it is for these causes:

First, That no man might boast in himself, but that he that rejoiceth may rejoice in the Lord. If any other bargain or manner of conveyance had been made, we should have had something to boast of, but coming merely from God as a gift, we have cause to glory in God, and nothing else. Again, it is a gift, that men may learn to depend upon God for it: God will have no man challenge it as due; for it is a mere Grace. Lastly, it is a gift, that it may be sure to all the seed. If there had been anything required at our hands, This do, fulfill this Law, and you shall have this righteousness, it had not been sure, nay none had been saved: for by the Law is transgression and wrath, but being by gift, it is firm and sure to all the seed: for when a thing is freely given, and nothing expected, but taking it, and thanksgiving for it, what is more sure?

But, when you hear this righteousness is given, the next Question will be, To whom is it given? If it be only given to some, what comfort is this to

me?

But (which is the ground of all comfort) it is given to every man, there is not a man excepted; for which we have the sure Word of God, which will not fail. When you have the Charter of a King well confirmed, you reckon it of great moment. What is it then, when you have the Charter of God himself? Which you shall evidently see in these two places, Mark, ult. 15. Go and preach the Gospel to every creature under Heaven: What is that? Go and tell every man without exception, that there is good news for him, Christ is dead for him, and if he will take him, and accept of his righteousness, he shall have it; restrain it not, but go and tell every man under heaven. The other Text is Revelation, ult. Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the waters of life freely. There is a *quicumque vult*, whosoever will come, (none excepted) may have life, and it shall cost him nothing. Many other places of Scripture there be, to prove the generality of the offer: and having a sure Word for it, consider it.

But if it be objected, It is given only to the Elect, and therefore not to every man.

I answer, when we have a sure word that it is given to every man under Heaven, without any restraint at all, why should any except himself? Indeed when Christ was offered, freely to every man, and one received him, another rejected him, then the Mystery of Election and reprobation was revealed; the reason why some received him being, because God gave them a heart, which to the rest he gave not; but, in point of offering of Christ, we must be general without having respect to Election. For otherwise the Elect of Christ should have no ground for their faith, none knowing he is elected until he hath believed and repented.

But Christ's righteousness being offered to men in state of unregeneration, How shall I know it belongs to me? There is no other ground but this Syllogism. This righteousness belongs to every man that believes: but I believe, therefore it belongs to me. Therefore, though it be applied only to the believers, yet it must be offered to every man.

Again, we are bound to believe that the thing is true, before we can believe our share in it; we do not therefore make it true because we believe; but our believing presupposeth the object of our Faith, which is this, that Christ is given: now the very believing doth not cause Christ to be given; but he is given, and therefore we believe. In all actions the object is in order of nature before the action itself; my belief makes not a thing true, but it is true in itself, and therefore I believe it. It being true that Christ is offered to all men, therefore I believe that I am reconciled and adopted, and that my sins are forgiven.

Again, if he should not be offered to every man, we could not say to every man, if thou dost believe thou shalt be saved; but this we may say to all, even to Judas, if thou believest, Judas, thou shalt be saved.

Again, if it were not offered to all, then wicked men should be excluded as much as the Devils; but Christ took their nature on him, therefore it is possible for them, if they believe, to be saved.

But how differs this from the doctrine of the Adversaries; for they also say that Christ is offered equally to all:

I answer, In two respects: (not to run through all) The first is this, We say, Though Christ be offered, and freely given to all, yet God intends him only to the Elect. They say, His intention is the same to all, to Judas as to Peter. The other is, They affirm, that as Christ is offered to all men, so all men have sufficient grace to receive him, there is an ability by that as well as a

freedom, and universality in the offer. This we altogether deny. Though Christ be given to all, yet the gift of faith is a fruit of Election. God gives faith and repentance, and ability to receive him, where he pleaseth. The gate is open to all, we shut out none; but none will come in, but those whom God enables. A Pardon may be offered to all, and yet none accept it, but those whose minds God hath inclined. Therefore that he is offered to all it is without question. They that question it, do it because they do not understand the Doctrine of our Divines; for we propound it no otherwise in substance then they do, only we differ in the method: but it will be your wisdom to look to that which will be of use, and yield comfort when you come to die. As this you may build on, The Gospel is preached to every creature under heaven, and therefore I have my share in it. If a Pardon be offered to some, whose names alone are inserted therein, you cannot say on any good ground, I am pardoned: but when the Pardon is general, and offered to all, then I can believe the Pardon belongs to me. Were it only to the Elect, whose names are written in the pardon, we should first inquire whether we be elect or no, but that's not the method. Build you on the sure promise, they that are pardoned, shall take hold of it, they that take not hold of it, shall be excluded.

The next thing a man will desire to know, is this. What qualifications are expected? Doth not God require to find something in us, if he give it us?

I answer, that it is offered to all, and no qualification at all is required as preexistent to be found in us, but any may come and take it. God requires no qualification as concerning our sins; he saith not, you shall be pardoned, so your sins be of such a number, or of such a nature, but though they be never so many, though of never so extraordinary a nature, though they may be aggravated with all the circumstances that can be, yet there is no

exception at all of you, the pardon runs in general terms, This is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. And seeing it is in general terms, why will you interline and restrain it? You see it runs in general, and so you may take it.

And as it is propounded generally, so is it generally executed: 1 Cor. 6:9, you shall find, the greatest sins that can be named are there pardoned: Be not deceived, you know how no fornicator, nor adulterer, nor unclean person, &c. shall enter into the Kingdom of God, and such were some of you: but now you are justified, now you are sanctified, now you are washed. Though they had committed the greatest sins, you see, it is generally executed, without exception.

But there is another sort of qualification. Is there not something first to be done? I know, that though I have committed all the sins of the world, yet they shall not prejudice my pardon; but I must do something to qualify me for it. No, not anything as antecedent and precedent to the pardon; it is only required of thee to come with the hand of faith, and receive it in the midst of all thy unworthiness, whatsoever it be, lay hold on the pardon, and embrace it, and it shall be thine.

But you will object, then to what end is the Doctrine of humiliation? To what end is the Law preached to be a Schoolmaster, if no qualification be required?

I answer, humiliation is not required as a qualification; for no tears of ours can give satisfaction. And again, it hath been found in a Reprobate; For Judas had it. Neither is it any part of sanctification.

But how is it required then?

As that without which we will not come to Christ. As for example, If we say to a man, The Physician is ready to heal you; before you will be healed,

you must have a sense of your sickness: this sense is not required by the Physician: (for the Physician is ready to heal him) but if he be not sick, and have a sense of it, he will not come to the Physician. If at a general Dole it be proclaimed, let all come hither that be hungry, a man is not excluded if he be not hungry, but else he will not come: therefore we preach, that none receive the Gospel but the poor, those that be humble, and touched with sense of sin and wrath; and we preach so, because indeed no man will come without it.

In the next place, the Question will be, How this righteousness of Christ is made ours; or, What is to be done of him to whom it belongs.

To this I answer; though no precedent qualification be required, yet this must be taken, a man must not reflect on himself, and consider, Am I worthy of it? But he must take it as a Plaster, which if it be not applied, will not heal; or as meat, which if it be not eaten, doth not nourish. As the Husband woos his Spouse, and says thus, I require nothing at thy hands, no condition at all, I do not examine whether thou art wealthy, or no; whether thou be fair, or no; whether thou be out of debt, or well conditioned, it is no matter what thou art, I require thee simply to take me for thy Husband. After this manner comes Christ to us; we must not say, Am I worthy to make a Spouse for Christ? Am I fit to receive so great mercies? Thou art only to take him. When we exclude all conditions, we exclude such a frame and habit of mind, which we think is necessarily required to make us worthy to take him. As if a Physician come and offer thee a Medicine, by which thou mayest be healed, and say, I require nothing at your hands, only to drink it, for else it will do you no good: So God offers the righteousness of Christ, which is that that heals the souls of men; God looks for nothing at your hands, it matters not what your person is, only you must take it. So

you shall find himself expressing it, Isaiah 55:1, where he compares this to the offer of Wine and Milk: Come buy Wine and Milk without money. Let him that is athirst come, and he that hath no money. As if he had said, it is freely offered, you are only to take it.

But, when you hear you must take it, the Question will be, What this taking is.

I answer, This taking is nothing else but that which we call Faith: and therefore that we may not err in the main, I will declare what Faith is. And it is nothing else but this, when these two things concur, that God the Father will give his Son, and freely offers righteousness, and we receive this righteousness, taking Christ for our Husband, our King and Lord.

But, you will say, Faith is more: for *Fides est actus intellectus*, It is an act of the understanding, assenting to Truths for the Authority of the Speaker; therefore the mind and will must concur to make up this Faith.

For the better understanding of it, mark this word, the righteousness of God is revealed; wherein is likewise implied, (though it be not expressed) that it is offered: for to what purpose, or what comfort is it to see that there is such a righteousness, if it be nothing to us? But it is so revealed, that it is also offered. Now being both revealed, and offered, you must find something in men answerable to both these: to the revelation of it the understanding assenting to it as a Truth, that Christ is come in the flesh, and offered to all men.

Again, to answer to the matter of the offer, there is also an act of the will, whereby it comes in, and takes or embraceth this righteousness. Both these, 1 Tim. 1:15, are put together, This is a faithful saying, and worthy to be received, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. It is true, saith the understanding, and therefore that believes it; but it is worthy to be

received, saith the will, therefore that comes in, takes and accepts it. As in matter of marriage, If one come and tell a Woman, there is such a man in the world that is willing to bestow himself on you, if you will take him, and accept him for your husband: Now (mark what it is that makes up the marriage on her part:) first she must believe that there is such a man, and that that man is willing to have her, that this message is true, that it is brought from the man himself, and that it is nothing else but a true declaration of the man's mind. This is an act of her mind or understanding: But will you take him, and accept of him for your Husband? Now comes the will, and the concurrence of these two makes up the match. So we come and tell you, There is such a one, the Messiah, that is willing to bestow himself on you; If you believe that we deliver the message from Christ, and do consequently embrace and take him, now are you justified, this is the very translation of you from death to life, at this very instant you are delivered from Satan, possessed of a Kingdom, and salvation is come to your house.

Now because this taking of Christ is the main point which makes Christ ours, and the want whereof is the cause that every man is condemned, (it coming nearest to life and death) that you may know what it is, we must tell you that this is required therein:

First, there must not be Error personae, error of the person.

Secondly, you must understand aright what this taking is.

Thirdly, there must be a complete deliberate will, which must concur to this action of taking.

These three being declared, we shall not easily be deceived in it.

First, when you hear of this righteousness of Christ, and of its being made ours, you must know, that first Christ himself is made ours, and then his

righteousness, as first you must have the Husband, and then the benefits that come by him. I say, take heed that there be not an error of the person, that you mistake him not. And this excludes all ignorant men, that take not Christ indeed, but only in their own fancy. Therefore when you come to make this marriage, you must know that Christ is most holy, that he is also such a one as will bring persecution with him, as says of himself, that he knows not where to lay his head, such a one as for whose sake you must part with everything; such a one as is hated in the World, and for whose sake you must be hated: some would have the man, but they know not the man, and so many thousands are deceived, that are willing to take Christ, but they know not what they take, they understand not Christ aright, there is an error of the person, and so a miss of the match, and consequently of Justification: for, so as to make him their Lord, so as to be subject to him, they take him not, they do not consider that he requires such and such things at their hands.

Secondly, If there be no mistake of the person, yet what is this taking? In marriage, there is a certain form to be observed, and if that form be mist of, there is a miss of the match. This taking therefore is nothing but this, So to take him, as to be divorced from all other Lovers; so to serve him, as you serve no other Master; so to be subject to him, that you be subject to nothing in the World besides. This is properly to take Christ; and this excludes the greatest part of men, they being ready to take Christ, but then they will love the World too: but God tells them, that if they love the World, the love of the Father nor the Son is not in them. You must have your affections weaned from every kind of vanity. Go through the whole Universe, look on all the things that are, Riches, and Pleasures, and Honors,

Wife, and Children, if your heart be not weaned from every of them, you take him not as a Husband.

Again, others will serve Christ and their riches too, their credit too, their own praise with men too; but Christ tells them no man can serve both; you must serve him alone, and be obedient to none but him: if you do so, you take him for your Lord indeed. So many will be subject to him as a King, but they will be subject to their lusts too; if their lusts command them, they cannot deny them, some they will reserve; and, you know, how many this excludes. Therefore you shall find that no man can take Christ and his wealth: you know, the young man was shut out, because he would not let go his possessions, which he must part with, or else have none of him. So, John. 5:44. If you receive the praise of men, how can you believe? That is, if you be not weaned and divorced from all, you cannot believe. Though you be the off-scouring of men, though you be mocked and scorned, it matters not; but if you seek the praise of men, you cannot believe.

Where, by the way, you may mark something, and add it to that I said before. What is the reason that the seeking praise of men should hinder from believing? Certainly, if Faith were only an Act of the understanding, assenting to the truth for the Authority of its Speaker, it would be no hindrance or impediment to the act of the mind, in believing that such a thing is true; so that it must needs have reference to the will. Therefore, saith Christ, While you seek the praise of men, how can you believe? That is, take me for your God and Lord whom you will serve altogether? So that to take Christ with a justifying faith, is nothing else but to receive him, as it is expressed in many other places of Scripture: John. 1:11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but to as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his

Name. And so it is not (as the Papists say) a mere act of the understanding, but a taking of him for your God, your Savior, to whom alone you will be subject, and give yourself.

Last of all; When these two are done and effected, so that there is no error either in the person or in the form, there is yet one thing more remains behind, and that is, to take and accept him with a complete, a deliberate, and true will. For, even as in other matches, put the case the person be known, and the form duly observed, yet if there does not concur a complete will, it is not properly a match: and therefore those matches are unlawful, which are made before years of discretion, when a man hath not the use of his will, or when a man is in a frenzy, because there is then no complete or deliberate will; so in this spiritual Match, you shall see how many the want of such a will excludes.

First, I say it must be complete, which excludes all wishers and woulders, that prize Christ a little, that could be content to have Christ, but it is rather an inclination than a complete will, that are in an Equilibrio, that would have Christ, but not yet; that would live a little longer at ease, and have a little more wealth, but are not come to a resolute peremptory will, that have only a weak inclination, which is not enough: for in a match, the will must be complete, and it's needful it should be so, it being a thing that must continue all a man's life.

Again, it must be a deliberate will; and this excludes all those that will take Christ in a good mood, on some sudden flash, when they are affected at a good Sermon, and have some good motions cast into their minds, that will (at such a time) be content to take Christ, to serve him and obey him, to forsake their sins, and give over their former lusts, but the will is not deliberate.

Last of all, as it must be complete and deliberate, so it must be a true will; that is, it must be free; and that excludes all them that merely for servile fear, at time of death, in the day of sickness and trouble, when Hell and Heaven are presented to them, will take Christ: Indeed you can scarce come to any, but, in such a case, he will profess that he is now content to take Christ for his Lord and Savior; but this is done by constraint, and so the will is not free. So I say, when all these concur, the match is now made, and you are justified.

But after the match is made, something is required. Therefore there is one Question more: and that is, What is this that is required after the making of the match?

I answer, It is required that you love your Husband, Jesus Christ, that you forsake Father and Mother, and become one Spirit with him, as you are one flesh with your Wife: for you are now bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.

2. Again, it is now required that you should repent. And that is the meaning of that place, Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. I tell you of a Kingdom, and a great Kingdom, but no man can come into that Kingdom, except he repent: You must walk no longer after the flesh, but after the Spirit: You must have your flesh crucified, with all the affections and lusts of it.

Thirdly, You must part with everything for his sake, whether you have riches, or honors, or credit, or whatsoever, it is no matter, you must be ready to let them all go.

4. Again, You must be ready to undergo anything for his sake: you must have him for worse as well as for better: you must be content to be hated of all men for his sake, you must take up your cross, and follow him.

5. Again, You must do much, as well as suffer much for him, he died to this end, that he might purchase to him a peculiar people, zealous of good works: you must respect him as a Wife doth her Husband, not as a servant doth a hard Master; you must not look on his Commandments as a hard task, whereof you could willingly be excused, but as one that hath his heart inflamed to walk in them, as a loving Wife, that needs not to be bidden to do this or that, but in the doing of it may advantage her Husband, it will be a greater grief to her to let them lie undone, then labor to do them.

But now men say, This is a hard condition, I little thought of it.

It is true, the condition is hard, and that is the reason that so few are willing to come in, when they understand these after-clap conditions, that they must part with all, that they must be persecuted, that their will must be perfectly subject to the will of Christ, that they must be holy as he is holy, that the same mind must be in them that is in Christ Jesus that they must be of those peculiar people of God. And therefore have we told you that none will come in to take Christ for their Husband, till they have been bitten with the sense of their sins, till they be heavy laden, and have felt the weight of Satan's yoke, till then they will not come under the yoke of Christ; but those that be humble, that have their hearts broken, that know what the wrath of God is, that have their consciences awaked to see sin, will come in, and be glad they have Christ, though on these conditions; but the other will not. If you will have Christ on these condition, you may: But we preach in vain, all the world refuseth Christ, because they will not leave their covetousness, and idleness, and swearing, and their several sports and pleasures, their living at liberty, and Company-keeping, they will not do the things that Christ requires at their hands, and all because they are not humbled, they know not what sin means; whereas, should God show it to them in its right

colors, should they be but in Judas his case, had they tasted of the Terrors of the Almighty, were their consciences enlightened, and did it set them on, they would take him with all their heart.

But another Objection comes in, I would come in, but how should I do it, I want power and ability, I cannot mortify the deeds of the body, could I do that, I would not stand on the business.

To this I give a speedy answer: If thou canst come with this resolution to take him, take no care for doing of it; for as soon as thou art his, he will give thee another spirit he will enable thee to all things, John. 1:16. To as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God: What is that? Is it an empty Title? No, he made them sons not borne of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God. It is true, with thy own heart thou art not able to do it; but what if God give thee a new heart and a new spirit? When the match is made, and concluded between him and us, he sends his Spirit into our hearts, and this Spirit gives us ability, making us like Christ, changing us, and causing us to delight in the duties of new obedience in the inner man. Therefore take not care for ability, only labor for an honest heart, armed with this resolution; I am resolved to take Christ from henceforth, and you shall find another Spirit to enable you exceedingly.

And now, that we may not let all this go without some application, we will hereof make two Uses.

First, this great Use is to be made of it, To learn hence to see how great the sin of men is, and how just is their condemnation for the same, that when this righteousness of God is revealed from heaven by this Gospel, which we now preach, they resist it, casting it at their heels, not regarding it, but despising these glad tidings of salvation, which is so glorious a mystery. This very thing that we preach to you, is it that was so many

thousand years ago fore-told, and as long expected, being the greatest work that ever God did. This is it which Paul magnified so much, and stood so amazed at. Therefore, if you reject it, know that your sin is exceeding great: we that preach the Gospel, are Messengers sent from the Father, to invite everyone of you to come to the Marriage of his Son: If you will not come, (as some of you are young, and mind other things; others of you have gone long in an old tract, and will not turn; some have married a Wife, others have other business, and therefore you will not come; or if you do come, it is without your Wedding Garment, you come not with a conjugal affection) I say, if you refuse, the Lord will deal with you, as with them in the Gospel, he will have you brought and slain before his face. And we come not from the Father only, but we are also sent from the Son, he is a Suitor to you, and hath dispatched us as Ambassadors to woo you, and to beseech you to be reconciled; if you will come, he hath made known his mind to you, you may have him; if you will not come, you will make him angry; and you had need to kiss the Son lest he be angry: though he be so merciful, as not to quench the smoking Flax, nor to break the bruised Reed, yet notwithstanding, that Son hath feet like burning brass, he hath a two-edged Sword in his hand, and his eyes are like flames of fire: So you shall find him to be, if you refuse him. As he is a corner stone for some to build on, so he is a corner stone to grind them to powder that refuse him. When the better is the suitor, and is rejected, what wrath, what indignation breeds it among men? And so take all the sins you have committed, there is none like this, none shall be so much laid to your charge at the Day of Judgment, as your rejecting of the Son, and of his righteousness revealed, and freely offered to you. What Christ said, (It shall be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah then for such a City) I may apply to everyone that's come to hear

me this time; If you will not give ear to my invitation, it shall be easier for Jews and Turks, for the Salvages at the East-Indies, then for you. It had been better for you that Christ had never come in the flesh, that his righteousness had never been offered to you. Therefore is that added, Mar. 16. He that believes not, is damned. Of such consequence is the Gospel. When Moses was on Mount Ebal, he set before them a blessing and a curse, life and death: so do I now; If you will not accept of Christ, you are cursed. Therefore, when you hear this offer, Let every man examine himself how he stands affected unto it. For all hearers are divided into these two sorts, some are worthy, and some unworthy. As when Christ sent away his Disciples, if any were worthy, their peace was to rest upon them, if they were not worthy, they were to shake off the dust of their feet against that City. I say, consider if you be worthy of this righteousness: for if you find your hearts to long after it, if you find you prize it much, so that you can reckon all as dross and dung in comparison of it, and will sell all to buy this Pearl, then are you worthy: But if, when you hear of it, you neglect it, and attend unto it coldly, you are unworthy, and against such we are to shake off the dust of our feet: that is, God shall shake you off as dust, when you come for salvation to him at the day of Judgment.

If in examination you find yourselves unworthy, that this work hath not been wrought in you, (wherein it is your best way to deal plainly with yourselves) then give no rest to yourselves, but enter into a serious consideration of your sins, attend on God's Ordinances, make use of all that hath been delivered concerning humiliation, and give not over until you have attained this eager desire after Christ. Indeed this is wrought by God himself, but give not you over. This is it S. John calls drawing: none can come to me, except the Father draw him: and that is done when God gives

another will; when, on the propounding of Christ, he gives *agninam voluntatem*, the nature of a Lamb, changing the heart, and working such an inclination to Christ, as is in the Iron to follow the Load-stone, which never rests until it be attained.

Thus it was with the Woman of Canaan, she would have no denial; and Cant. 3, with the Spouse, that would not be at quiet until she had found her Beloved, seeking him day and night; finding him not within she enquires of the Watchmen, and never gives over till she hath found him whom her soul loved. As God puts an instinct in the creature, such a violent, strong, impetuous disposition and instigation is in them that shall be saved, and belong to Christ, God puts into them such a disposition as was in Samson, when he was athirst, give me water or else I die; so are they athirst after Christ, give me Christ or else I die. And this you must have; for God will put you to it, he will try whether you be worthy comers or no. Commonly, at the beginning, he is as a man that is in bed with his children, and loath to rise, but you must knock and knock again; and as it was with the unjust Judge, importunity must do it; though your desire be strong, yet, for a time, in his ordinary course, he withholds, and turns a deaf ear, to try if thou hast an eager desire: for if it ceases quickly, he should have lost his labor in bestowing Christ on thee. But if nothing will make thee give over, if thou wilt beseech him, and give him no rest, I will assure thee, God cannot deny thee, and the longer he holdeth thee off, the better answer thou shalt have at the end. And when thou hast Christ, thou hast that that cannot be expressed; for, with him, thou hast all things, When you have him, you may go to him for Justification, and say, Lord, give me remission of sins, I have Christ, and thou hast promised that all that are in Christ shall have pardon, that they shall have thy Spirit, and be made new creatures; now, Lord, fulfill these

promises. I say, It is a condition beyond expression, next to that we shall have in heaven, and far above that which any Prince or Potentate in the World hath, far beyond that which any man that swims in pleasures, and abundance of wealth hath; which, if it were known, would by all the World be sought after. Therefore, when you hear of such a condition offered, take heed of refusing it: for if you do, your sin is heinous, and your condemnation will be just.

The second Use I will only name: Consider what it is to refuse, yea what it is to defer your acceptance of it. God may take your deferring for a denial; you that think, Well, I will take it, but not yet, take heed lest you never have such an opportunity again. I say, be exhorted, be moved, be besought to take it. This I speak to you, that be humble, to so many among you as have broken hearts; others may take him if they will; but they will not, they mind not this Doctrine, they regard not things of this nature, they will when they lie a dying, but now they have something else to do. But you that mourn in Zion, you that have broken hearts, that know the bitterness of sin, to such as you is this Word of Salvation sent: The others have nothing to do with it; and let them not think much to be excluded; for Christ excludes them: Come to me all ye that are heavy laden, and ye shall find rest: Not but the others shall have him, if they will come, but they will not take him on the precedent conditions, named before. It may be, they would have redemption, and freedom, and salvation by him, but they will not take him for their King. They that be humble, that have their hearts wounded with the sense of sin, are willing to take him on his own terms, to keep his Commandments, and not think them grievous; to bear his burden, and think it light; to take his yoke, and count it easy; to give all they have for him, and to think all too little; to suffer persecution for his sake, and to rejoice in it;

to be content to be scoffed at, and hated of men; to do, to suffer anything for his sake; and when all this is done, to regard it as nothing, to reckon themselves unprofitable servants, to account of all as not worthy of him. Therefore be not thou shy in taking of him: for you have free liberty.

But, before I dismiss you, let me speak a word to you that be not yet humble, let me beseech you to consider three things to move you. First, the great danger that is in not taking of him. If you could be well without him, you might sit still as you are; but you shall die for want of him. If a Wife can live without a Husband, she may stay unmarried: But when a man's case is this, I see without Christ I must perish, I must lose my life, that is the penalty, such is the danger if I refuse him, me thinks this should move him.

Secondly, as the danger of refusing him, so consider the benefit of taking him: if you will have him, you shall with him have a Kingdom, you shall change for the better; for whatsoever you part withal, you shall have an hundred fold in this life: if you forgo any pleasure or lust, you shall have for it the joy of the Holy Ghost, far exceeding them: If you part with riches, you shall be truly rich in another world; yea, you shall there have a Treasure: If you lose friends, you shall have God for your friend, and shall be a Favorite in the Court of Heaven. In a word, you shall have a hundred-fold.

3. You shall be sure to have it, you shall not be deceived: for God hath put out his word, he hath declared that to be his will, and it stands now with his Justice as well as with his mercy, to give Christ: his Word is a corner stone, and you may build on it: Nay by two immutable things he hath confirmed it, his Word and his Oath, and Heaven and Earth may pass, but they shall not pass, you may build on them, to have Christ and salvation by him. When

Paul had delivered God's mind, if an Angel from Heaven should tell them the foundation is sandy, nay if he himself should preach another doctrine, they were not to believe him. Therefore if you will take him and have him, trust perfectly in the grace that is revealed by Jesus Christ, do it not by halves; It may be I shall be saved, it may be not, thou mayest build on it, thou mayest venture thy life on it. All these things considered, the greatness of the danger in refusing, of the benefit in accepting; and if it be thus sure if we will take him, then put it to venture, why do you stand off? What can we say more to persuade you? If you will take him, and this righteousness, you may have it. God hath committed this to us, what we loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven. He hath given us the Keys of Heaven and Hell, and if we open the Gates of Heaven to any, they shall stand open, but now in the preaching of the Word, the Gates of Heaven stand open to everyone of you. Therefore come in while it is called today, before the Sun set on you, as you know not how soon it may. Indeed, if we had not made the offer, the danger had been ours, and we should have perished for your sakes: but seeing we have made manifest the whole Council of God, we are now free from the blood of every one of you; for we have made known the will of God to the full; you know what is offered to you; and if you take him not, your blood shall be on your own heads. Therefore consider whether you will take him or refuse him; that is the question, Will you take him, or not take him? You that now refuse and slight this offer, the day may come, when you would be glad to have it. You that are now in the height and flower of your youth, and you that are more ancient, living in health and wealth, and having your fill of pleasures, it may be, for the present, you have other things to take up your minds, but the time will come when the Bridegroom shall enter in, and the doors shall be shut, when your Houre-glass shall be out, and your time

spent, and then this relation of righteousness, and remission of sins, now offered, would be reckoned glad tidings: but take heed that it be not too late, beware lest you cry, and God refuses to hear: Not but that God will hear every man, if his cry comes from unfeigned faith and love; but, it may be, God will not give thee that unfeigned faith and love when you be come to that extremity; seeing you would not come when he called, it may be he will not come when you call; it may be, he will not breathe the breath of life, nor give such a spirit and disposition as he will accept of. Christ died to purchase to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, and not only to save men. He died for this end, that men might do him service; and if you will not come in now in time of strength and youth, when you are able to do him service; I say, in his ordinary course, he will reject you now in your extremity, you may not then expect mercy at his hands. Therefore do not say, I will follow my covetousness and idleness, my pleasures and business, my lusts and humors, and hereafter come in; for you are not to choose your own time. If he call you, and you refuse to come, take heed lest in his wrath he swear that you shall not enter into his rest.

FINIS.

SERMON II.

ROM. 1:17.
*For by it the righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith:
As it is written, The just shall live by Faith.*

The next point that these words afford us, is this; that,

Faith is that whereby the righteousness of God is made ours to salvation.

The righteousness of God (saith the Apostle) is revealed from faith to faith. That is, it is so revealed and offered by God, that it is made ours by faith, we are made partakers of it by faith: you see it ariseth clearly from the words.

Now for the opening of this point to you, you must understand that there are two ways or Covenants, whereby God offereth salvation to men. One is the Covenant of works, and that was that righteousness by which Adam had been saved if he had stood in his innocence; for it was that way that God appointed for him, Do this, and live: But Adam performed not the condition of that Covenant, and therefore now there is another Covenant, that is, the

Covenant of Grace, a Board given us against Ship-wrack. Now this Covenant of Grace is double:

Either absolute and peculiar;

Or conditional.

Absolute, and peculiar only to the Elect; so it is expressed, Jer. 31. I will put my Law into your inward parts, and write it in your hearts, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. So likewise, in Ezek. 36. I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you, and I will take your stony hearts out of your bodies. Here the Covenant is expressed absolutely, and this is proper only to the Elect.

But now beside this, there is a conditional Covenant of Grace, which is common to all; and that is expressed in these terms, Christ hath provided a righteousness and salvation, that is his work that he hath done already; Now if you will believe, and take him upon those terms that he is offered, you shall be saved: This, I say, belongs to all men, This you have thus expressed in the Gospel in many places, If you believe, you shall be saved, as it is, Mar. 16. Go and preach the Gospel to every creature under Heaven; he that will believe shall be saved, he that will not believe shall be damned. It is the same with that Rom. 4:5. To him which worketh not, but believeth in him which justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted righteousness, Mark it: To him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, that is, there is a certain justice or righteousness that Christ hath prepared or purchased for men, though they be ungodly, he requires nothing of them beforehand, though they be wicked and ungodly, yet this righteousness is prepared for them; that which is required of them, is only that they take it. Now he that will believe God that he hath prepared this for him, and will receive it, it is enough to make him a righteous man in God's acceptance; so that this is the

only way now by which men shall be saved. The work is already done on Christ's part, there is a righteousness that God hath prepared, which is therefore called the righteousness of God; and there is nothing precedently required or looked for on our part, but taking and applying of it.

But, you will say, Is there nothing else required of us? Must God do all, and must we do nothing but only take that righteousness that is prepared for us?

I answer, it is true indeed, we must lead a holy life, a religious, sober, and righteous life, for, for this end hath the grace of God appeared, saith the Apostle: yet you must know withal, that we cannot work in our selves this holiness, this religious and sober conversation, that must be God's work altogether, we are only to take this righteousness, and the other is but a consequent that followeth upon it. To illustrate this unto you by a similitude; A Wheel or a Bowl runneth, not that it may be made round, that is the business of the workman, who makes it round, that it may run: So it is in this case, God doth not look that we should bring holiness and piety with us, for we have it not to bring: we are at the first only to believe and accept this righteousness that is offered us; when that is done, it is God's part to frame us, and to fit and fashion us for a holy life: such a kind of speech you have it expressed in, Eph. 2:10. We are God's workmanship, fashioned in Christ Jesus to walk in good works, which he hath ordained, &c. Mark it: it is not an action of our own, but God is the workman, we are the materials, as the clay, and the wood, that he takes into his hands; when we have but taken this righteousness that is offered, it is God's work to cast us into a new Mold, to give us a new heart, and to frame a new spirit within us, that so we may walk in good works before him: this is the great mystery of godliness: for we have much ado to persuade men to believe that the

righteousness prepared by Christ should be offered to them, and nothing be required but receiving of it: this will not sink into the hearts of men by nature, they think they must do something precedently, or else this righteousness is not offered them. But, my beloved, we must learn to believe this, and know that it is the work of God to sanctify us after he hath justified us. I confess, it is not so in other things, there is still some action of our own required to gain this or that habit or ability, as you see in natural things, there are some kind of habits that we get by some precedent actions of our own, as the learning of Arts and Sciences, to learn to write well, &c. here there is some action of our own required to fit us for it, and then we get the ability to do it.

But besides these, there are other habits, that are planted by nature in us, as, an ability to hear, to see, to taste, &c. Now for these, we need not any action of our own for the attaining of them, because they are planted in us by nature: So it is in these things that belong to salvation: It is true indeed, we may get habits of moral Virtues by labor and pains of our own, there are actions of our own required to them; and in that the Philosopher said right, that we learn to be temperate, and sober, and chaste, &c. But now for the Graces of the Spirit there it is not so, those habits that nature hath planted in us, we exercise them naturally, without doing any action of our own to attain them; as we do not by seeing oft learn to see, but it is a faculty naturally planted in us: so it is in all the works that we must do, which are the way to salvation, God works them in us, he infuseth those habits into us. Therefore this conclusion is good, that it is faith alone, by which this righteousness is made ours to salvation.

This is evident by the Apostle, Gal. 2, ult. Saith he, it is not by the Law, If righteousness had been by the works of the Law, then Christ had died

without a cause. As if he should have said, salvation must needs be by one of these two.

Either by something that we do our selves, some actions that we ourselves have wrought, or else it must be merely by faith. Now if it had been attainable by any work of our own, Christ died without a cause: as if he should say, Christ could have given you ability to do those works without his dying; but for this very cause Christ came into the World, and died, that he might work righteousness, and make satisfaction to God: so that you have nothing to do for the first attaining of it, but to receive it by faith.

And if you would know the reason, why God, that might have found out many other ways to lead men to salvation, yet hath chosen this way above all others to save men, only by faith, receiving the righteousness of Christ, which he hath wrought for us; you shall find these four reasons for it in the Scriptures. Two of them are set down, Rom. 4:16. Therefore it is by faith, that it might come by grace. Mark it: This is one reason why God will have it by faith, that it might be of grace: For if anything had been wrought by us, (as he saith in the beginning of the Chapter) it must have been given as wages, and so it had been received by debt, and not by favor; but this was God's end in it to make known the exceeding length and breadth of his love, and how unsearchable the riches of Christ are: his end was to have his Grace magnified. Now if there had been any action of ours required, but merely the receiving of it by faith, it had not been merely of grace; for faith empties a man, it takes a man quite off his own bottom; faith cometh as an empty hand, and receiveth all from God, and gives all to God. Now that it might be acknowledged to be free, and to be altogether of grace; for this cause God would have salvation propounded to men, to be received by faith only.

Secondly, as it is by faith, that it might come by grace, so also that it might be sure, that the promise might be sure; if it had been any other way, it had never been sure: Put the case that God had put us upon the condition of obedience, and had given us grace and ability, as he did to Adam, yet the Law is strict, and the least failing would have bred fears and doubts, and would have caused death. But now, when the righteousness that saveth us is wrought already by God, and offered to us by him, and offered freely, and that the ground of this offer is the sure Word of God, and it is not a conjectural thing, now we may build infallibly upon it: for unless faith have footing on the Word, we cannot say it is sure, all things else are mutable, and subject to change: therefore when God hath once said it, we may firmly rest in it, and it is sure. And this is the second reason why it is only by faith.

Thirdly, it is by faith, that it might be to all the seed, not only to those that are of the Law, but also to them which were strangers to the Law. If it had been by the Law, then salvation had been shut up within the compass of the Jews; for the Gentiles were strangers to the Law of God, they were unclean men, shut out from the Commonwealth of Israel; but when it is now freely propounded in the Gospel, and nothing is required but only faith to lay hold upon it, when there is no more looked for but believing, and receiving; hence it comes to be to all the seed: for Abraham himself, before he was circumcised, he was as a common man, the veil was not then set up; yet, even then, his faith was imputed to him for righteousness.

The last reason why it is of faith, is that no man might boast, that no flesh might rejoice in itself; for if it had been by any other means, by anything done in ourselves, we had had cause to rejoice in ourselves, but, for this cause, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 1:30. Christ is made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that he that rejoiceth might

rejoice in the Lord. As if he had said, if God had given us a wisdom of our own, we had had cause to have rejoiced in our selves; but we are darkness, Eph. 4, there is nothing but foolishness and weakness in us, to the end that no flesh might rejoice in his presence.

Again, if we had had grace put into our selves, (though it had been but little) for which God might have accepted us, the flesh would have boasted; therefore his righteousness is made ours.

But, when this is done, yet, if after justification, it had been in our power and ability to have performed the works of sanctification by any power or strength of our own, we should yet have been ready to boast thereof, Christ is made sanctification too, so that we are not able to think a good thought, we are not able to do the least good thing without him: It is I (saith the Lord) that doth sanctify you: It is I that doth act every Grace; it is I that do put your hearts into a good frame: Christ is made sanctification to us; so that take a holy man, after he is justified, it is Christ that sanctifieth him, and that carries him thorough his life in a holy and righteous conversation, and all this is done that no flesh should rejoice in itself.

And yet one thing more is added by the Apostle; for if a man could rid himself out of misery, if a man could help himself when he is under any cross or trouble, he would then be ready to boast in himself: therefore, saith he Christ is made to us redemption also: so that take any evil, though it be but a small evil, a small disease, a little trouble, no man is able to help himself, in this case, it is Christ that redeems us from the least evils, as well as from hell itself: For you must know, that all the miseries that befall us in the World, they are but so many degrees, so many descents and steps towards hell; now all the redemption that we have, it is from Christ; so that let us look into our lives, and see what evils we have escaped, and see what

troubles we have gone thorough, see what afflictions we have been delivered from, it is all through Christ, who is made redemption for us.

It is true indeed, there are some general works of God's providence, that all men taste of; but there is no evil that the Saints are freed from, but it is purchased by the Blood of Christ; and all this God hath done, that no flesh might rejoice in itself: and for this cause, salvation is propounded to be received only by faith, there is no more required at our hands, but the taking of Christ by faith; and when we have taken him, then he is all this to us.

So that now you see the point cleared, and the reasons why it is by faith only, that the righteousness of Christ is made ours to salvation.

Now, in the next place, If to this that we have said, we add but one thing more to clear the point, we shall then have done enough to satisfy you in this point; and that is this, to show you what this faith is: for, when we speak so much of faith (as we do,) every man will be inquisitive to know what this faith is: therefore we will endeavor to do that at this time.

First, Faith, if we should take it in the general, it is nothing else but this:

An act of the understanding, assenting to something.

But now this assent is of three sorts.

First, there is such an assent to a truth, as that a man is in a great fear lest the contrary should be true; and this we call opinion, when we so assent to any proposition, as that that which is contrary, may be true, for ought we know.

There is a second kind of assent, which is sure, but it is grounded upon reasons and arguments; and that we call Science or knowledge: that is, when we are sure of the thing we assent to, we make no doubt of it; but we are led unto it by the force of reason.

Again, there is a third kind of assent, which is a sure assent too, but we are led to it by the authority of him that affirmeth it: and this is that which is properly called Faith: So that a general definition of Faith is this:

It is (nothing else but) a firm assent given to the things contained in the holy Scriptures, for the authority of God that spake them.

This is properly Faith, or believing, if we take the word in the general.

But if we speak of justifying Faith, we shall find that that is not commonly expressed in the word believing only, but believing in Christ, which is another thing; and therefore you shall find that it differeth in two things from this common and general faith.

First, in regard of the object, and indeed that is the main difference: for whereas the other faith looks upon the whole Book of God, and believes all that God hath revealed, because God hath revealed it; This justifying Faith pitcheth upon Christ, and takes him, with his benefits and privileges: so that the difference lieth not in the habit of Faith, but in the object; for with the same faith that we believe other things, we believe this; as with the same hand that a man takes other Writings with, he takes a Pardon; with the same eyes that the Israelites see other things, they looked upon the brazen Serpent, the difference was not in the faculty, but in the object upon which they looked, by which they were healed; so it is in this, between this faith and the other, they differ not in the habit, but in the object.

There is a second difference, which is a main difference too; the other faith doth no more but believe the truth that is revealed, it believeth that all is true that is contained in the Scriptures, and the Devils may have this faith, and wicked men may have it; but justifying faith goeth further, it takes Christ, and receives him, so that there is an act of the Will added to that faith, as it is expressed, Heb. 11:13. They saw the promises afar off, and

embraced them thankfully: Others (it may be) see the promises, and believe them, but they take them not, they do not embrace them. So that if I should define justifying Faith unto you, it may be thus described:

It is a Grace or a habit infused into the soul by the Holy Ghost, whereby we are enabled to believe, not only that the Messiah is offered to us, but also to take and receive him as a Lord and Savior.

That is, both to be saved by him, and to obey him (Mark it) I put them together, to take him as a Lord, and as a Savior: for you shall find that in the ordinary phrase of Scripture these two are put together, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Therefore we must take heed of disjoining those that God hath joined together, we must take Christ as well for a Lord as a Savior, let a man do this, and he may be assured that his faith is a justifying faith. Therefore mark it diligently, if a man will take Christ as a Savior only, that will not serve the turn, Christ giveth not himself to any upon that condition, only to save him, but we must take him as a Lord too, to be subject to him, to obey him, and to square our actions according to his will in everything. For he is not only a Savior, but also a Lord, and he will be a Savior to none but those to whom he is a Master. His servants you are to whom you obey, saith the Apostle. If you will obey him, and be subject unto him in all things, if you make him your Lord, that he may have the command over you, and that you will be subject to him in everything, if you take him upon these conditions, you shall have him as a Savior also: For, as he is a Priest, so you must know that he is a King that sits upon the Throne of David, and rules those that are to be saved by him: Therefore, I say, you must not only take him as a Priest, to intercede for you, to petition for you, but to be your King also; you must suffer him to rule you in all things, you must be content to obey all his Commandments. It is not enough to take Christ as a

head, only to receive influence and comfort from him, but you must take him also as a head to be ruled by him, as the members are ruled by the head; you must not take one benefit alone of the members, to receive influence from the head, but you must be content also to be guided by him in all things, else you take him in vain.

Again, this must be marked, that I say, you must take or receive him: you must not only believe that he is the Messiah, and that he is offered, but there is a taking and receiving that is necessary to make you partakers of that that is offered: those words John. 3, make it plain; God so loved the World, that he Gave his only begotten Son, &c. Giving is but a Relative, it implies that there is a receiving or taking required: For when Christ is given, unless he be taken by us, he doth us no good, he is not made ours. If a man be willing to give another anything, unless he take it, it is not his. It is true indeed, there is a sufficiency in Christ to save all men, and he is that great Physician that heals the souls of men, there is righteousness enough in him to justify all the World: But, my beloved, unless we take him, and apply him to ourselves, we can have no part in that righteousness: this is plainly expressed in Matth. 22, where it is said, the King sent forth his servants to bid men to the Marriage of his Son: And so in Eph. 5, the same similitude and comparison is used by the Apostle, where he setteth forth the union that is between Christ and the Church, by that union there is between the Husband and the Wife: put the case that a Husband should offer himself to a woman to marry her, and she should believe it, yet unless there be a taking of him on her part, the match is not made; and so it is here, and in this thing the essence of faith consists, when Christ offereth himself unto you, you must believe that there is such a thing, and that God intendeth it really, but it is the taking that consummates the marriage; and when the Wife hath

taken the Husband, then all that is his is hers, she hath an interest in all his goods: so also it is here, there must be a believing that Christ is offered, that he is the Messiah and that there is a righteousness in him to save us; but that is not enough, we must also take him, and when that is done, we are justified, then we are at peace with God.

But that you may more fully understand what this faith is, I will add these four things more.

First, I will show you the object of this faith.

Secondly, the subject or place where it is.

Thirdly, the manner how it justifieth us.

Fourthly, the actions of it.

I say, that you may more fully understand what this faith is, consider first the object of it, and that is Christ, (as I told you before) and herein this is to be marked, that a man must first take Christ himself, and after, the privileges that come by him. And this point I could wish were more pressed by our Divines, and that our hearers would more intend it. I say, first remember that you must first take Christ himself, and then other things that we have by him, as the Apostle saith, Rom 8. If God have given us him, that is Christ, he will with him give us all things else: but first have Christ himself, and then all things with him. And so, 2 Cor. 1. All the promises In Him are Yea and Amen. That is, first we must have Christ, and then look to the promises; this must be still remembered, that we must first take his person, we must have our eyes fixed upon that: And so that place before-named, John. 3. God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son: he gives his Son, as a Father gives his Son in marriage; the Father gives the Son, and the Son himself must be taken: So that we must first take Christ, we must fixe our eyes upon him: For faith doth not leap over Christ,

and pitch upon the promises of Justification, and Adoption, but it first takes Christ. The distinct and clear understanding of this will help us much in apprehending and understanding aright what justifying faith is: we must remember to take Christ himself; for it is an adulterous affection for a Wife not to think of the person of her Husband, but to think only what commodity she shall have by him, what honors, what riches, what conveniences, as if that made the match, to be content only to take those; will this, think you, make a match amongst men? Surely no, there must be a fixing of the eyes upon the person, that must do it: Do you love him? Are you content to forsake all, that you may enjoy him? It is true indeed, you shall have all this into the bargain, but first you must have the person of your Husband: therefore remember to fix your eyes upon Christ, take him for your Husband, consider his beauty and his excellencies, (which indeed are motives to us) as a Woman that takes a Husband, is encouraged by the benefits that she shall have by him: but still remember that he himself must be taken. As it is in other things, if you would have light, you must first have the Sun; if you would have strength, you must first take meat and drink, before you can have that benefit by it: so you must first have Christ himself, before you can partake of those benefits by him: and that I take to be the meaning of that in Mar. 16. Go preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven; he that believes and is baptized, shall be saved: that is, he that will believe that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and that he is offered to mankind for a Savior, and will be baptized, that will give up himself to him, that will take his mark upon him: for in that place, by baptizing, is meant nothing else but the giving up of a man's self to Christ, and making a public testimony of it, although there be something more meant generally by baptizing; but here it is meant, a testification to all the world, that we

have taken Christ. Now everyone that will believe and be baptized, that is, everyone that will do this, shall be saved: so that a man must first take Christ himself, and then he may do as the Wife, after she hath her Husband, she may think of all the benefits she hath by him, and may take them, and use them as her own. This is the first thing.

The second thing that I promised, was to show you the subject of faith, and that is the whole heart of man; that is to say, (to name it distinctly) both the mind, and the will: Now to show you that both these are the subject of faith, you must know that these two things are required:

First, on the part of the understanding, it is required that it believe; that is, that it conceive and apprehend what God hath revealed in the Scriptures; and here an act of God must come in, putting a light into the understanding: for, my beloved, Faith is but an addition of a new light to reason, that whereas reason is purblind, faith comes, and gives a new light, and makes us see the things revealed by God, which reason cannot do; by faith we apprehend these great and glorious Mysteries, which otherwise we could not apprehend, as we see it expressed in 2 Cor. 4. The god of this World hath blinded their eyes, that the light should not shine into their hearts, by which they should believe this glorious Gospel. So then there must be a light put into the mind, that a man may be able by that to elevate and raise his reason to believe this: that is, to conceive and to apprehend the things that are offered and tendered in the Gospel.

But this is not all, there is an act also of the will required, which is to take and receive Christ: for this taking is an act of the will; therefore there must be a consent as well as an assent. Now it is the act of the understanding to assent to the truth, which is contained in the promises wherein Christ is offered: but that is not all, there is also an act of will requisite to consent

unto them, that is, to embrace them, to take them, and to lay hold upon them, and to apply them to a man's self. This I will the rather clear, because it is a thing controverted. I say, there is a double act, an act of the mind, and an act of the will: to this purpose consider that in Rom. 5:17. For if by the offense of one, death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Mark it, you may see what faith is in those words; Those that receive the gift of righteousness: righteousness is given and offered by God, and those that receive that gift of righteousness, shall reign in life: so that taking and receiving being an act of the will, it must needs be that the will must come in to this work as well as the understanding. Like unto this is that 1 John. 12. To as many as received him, &c. That is, to as many as believed in his Name: for so the words afterwards express; that is, when we are willing to take Christ, which is nothing else but the consent of the will, when the will is resolved to take him, being so apprehended as he hath been described, as a Lord, and as a Savior, this is faith; this, I say, is an act of the will, because it is an act of receiving. John. 5:44 it is evident, How can ye believe which receive honor one of another &c? If believing in Christ were only an act of the mind, as the Papists affirm, and some others besides; it believing were nothing else but an assenting to the truth of God, which is an act of the understanding, how could the praise of men be opposite to believing? But the meaning is, How can you believe, and take me for your Husband, and yet seek praise of men too? For that will come in competition with me, and then you will forsake me. I say, this makes it evident, that justifying faith is not only an act of the mind, but an act of the will also; because otherwise the seeking praise with men, could be no impediment to the act of believing.

Now this also, as well as the former, must be wrought by God and God puts a new light into the understanding, he raiseth it up to see and believe these truths; so there is another act which God also works on the will, and unless he work it, it is not done: for come to any man that is in the state of nature, and ask him, Will you be content to take Christ? That is to say, to receive him in that manner as he hath been described? His answer would be, No. Beloved, the lives of men express it, though they speak it not in so many words: Therefore till God come and draw a man, and change his will the work is not done. If you take a Bough, and offer it to a Swine or a Wolf, they will refuse it, and trample it under their feet; but offer it to a Sheep, and the Sheep receives it, and follows it: so when Christ is offered to men upon these conditions that we have named, men refuse him, they reject him, and slight him: but when God takes away these wolvish and swinish hearts of ours, and turn our wills another way, (which is the drawing the Scripture speaks of) then we are willing to take Christ. If you take other metal than Iron, the Loadstone will not stir it; but turn the metal into Iron, and it will follow the Load-stone: So, let the hearts of men continue in that condition wherein they are by nature, and they will never take Christ, they will never accept him; but when God puts into them such a strong and impetuous instigation and disposition as that of the Spouse in the Canticles, that had no rest till she had found her Beloved, then they will take Christ upon his own conditions. So the we see this Faith is an action both of the mind and the will, wrought by God, enlightening the mind, and changing the will; which is that which our Savior Christ calls drawing; none comes to me unless the Father draw him: that is, except his will be set on work, unless God change him, and put such a disposition and instigation into him, that he can find no rest till he come to Christ.

Thirdly, the next thing we are to speak of, is, How this Faith justifieth.

Now for this, know that this faith is considered two ways; either,

As it works, or, As it receives:

Either as a quality, or as an instrument.

As a quality it works; and in this sense it hath nothing to do with Justification.

It justifieth us as it is an instrument, and that not by altering the nature of sin; that is, by making sin to be no sin, but by taking away the efficacy of sin. As, for example, when a man hath committed sins, Faith doth not make his sins to be no sins; indeed, it scattereth them as a Cloud: You may consider it after this manner: First, it cannot be that that sin that is once committed, should be made to be no sin; for what is once done, it cannot be undone, God himself cannot do that, because it is a thing that cannot be; for when the sins are committed, they do remain so: and therefore, I say, it cannot be that that which is sin should be made to be no sin; we cannot make Adultery to be no adultery, for the nature and essence of the thing must remain. Well now what doth faith? It doth this, though the sin be the same that it was, yet it takes away the sting and the guilt of sin, by which it puts us into the state of condemnation, and by which it binds us over to punishment. As the Lions to which Daniel was cast, they were the same as they were before, they had the same propenseness, and disposition to devour as they had before, they had the ordinary nature of Lions; but at that time, God took away from them that fierceness that was in them, so that they did not devour him, though they were there still: so it is with sin, the nature of sin is to condemn us, but now when God shall take away this efficacy from it, it doth not condemn: and this is that that faith doth.

Even as the Viper that was upon Paul's hand, though the nature of it was to kill presently, yet when God had charmed it, you see it hurt him not: so it is with sin, though it be in us, and though it hang upon us, yet the venom of it is taken away, it hurts us not, it condemns us not: thus faith, by taking away the efficacy and power of sin, it justifies us, as an instrument, as a hand that takes the Pardon.

The King, when he pardoneth a Traitor, he doth not make his Treason to be no Treason, for the act of the Treason remains still; but the taking of the Pardon makes the Traitor not to be under condemnation: So, my beloved, faith is that act that takes the Pardon from God, so that though the sin remain the same, and of its own nature is of power to bind us over to death, yet by this faith taking the Pardon from God, it comes to pass that it hurts us not, we are not condemned for it.

You know, debts in a man's book, the writing remains still, the lines are not blotted out, yet when they are once crossed, the creditor cannot come and ask his debt anymore, because it is crossed: So it is in this, our sins are the same after we are justified, as they were before; but faith is that that crosseth the book; faith, I say, by apprehending the Pardon, and taking the acquittance at God's hands that he offers.

If a man have an acquittance, although the debt remain the same in the Book, yet there can no more be required at the hands of him that hath taken the acquittance.

Thus, I say, faith justifies us as an instrument, by accepting, receiving, and taking the acquittance that God hath given to us through Christ.

Let me add one word more of the next thing: which is, What are the acts of this faith?

They are these three:

First, To reconcile, or to justify.

Secondly, To pacify the heart.

Thirdly, To purify, or sanctify.

The first thing that Faith doth, is to reconcile: That is, (as I said before) by faith we are pitched upon Christ; we take him first, and then we take the privileges, they all follow upon it, forgiveness, and adoption; this is the first act of Faith, to reconcile us to Christ himself; and upon this we have boldness to go to Christ for forgiveness, to go to Christ to make us heirs of all things: For after this manner faith doth it; All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollo, &c. And why? Because you are Christ's. (Mark it,) you must first be Christ's: that is, even as the Wife is the Husband's, so you must be knit and united to Christ, and then all things are yours: so that Faith first makes us Christ's, it reconciles us to him, and makes us one with him, and in him, one with God the Father; and then all things are given unto us, and made ours.

The second act of faith is to quiet and pacify the heart; to comfort us, in assuring us that our sins and transgressions are forgiven; and this is different from the former: There are two acts of faith:

The one is the direct act by which we apprehend and take Christ, and the righteousness that is offered through him, by which we take forgiveness.

And the second is the reflect act by which we know that we have taken Christ, and have taken out our pardon; and this act is very different from the former, we may have the former without this.

We commonly think that we are not justified by Christ, unless we have assurance of it; and when we look for that, and find it not presently, all our hopes are gone, but it should not be so; It is one act of Faith to take Christ,

and another act of faith to comfort and pacify the heart; and that these are two distinct things, consider but this in a word.

The first act is constant, when a man hath once taken and accepted of Christ, he is always his; after we once have Christ, there is no divorce: But the other act of assurance, whereby we know that we have taken him, that is a thing that may fail and deceive a man.

Again, the first act admits of no degrees; for when a man is once in Christ, he is always Christ's, when he is once married to him: Marriage, you know, admits of no degrees; so Justification is equal to every man, it admits of no degrees, it is always the same; we are not now less justified, and then more, but we are always alike justified, being once justified: but the other act of faith, whereby I am assured that I have taken Christ, that admits of degrees, a man may have sometimes more comfort, sometimes less; and therefore righteousness is said here to be revealed from faith to faith.

Lastly, the first act of faith, whereby we take Christ, and those privileges by him, as the Wife takes the Husband, that is founded upon the sure Word of God, God hath tendered it to us upon his Word and promise, and he must perform it, it cannot be altered nor changed; he that builds upon it, builds upon the corner-stone, that will not fail him: But now the second act, whereby I come to know that I have done this, that is grounded upon experience: Indeed, we are helped by the Holy Ghost to know it, but it is chiefly grounded upon our own experience: for it is no more but the act of a man's own heart, reflecting upon what he hath done, when he considers, Have I taken Christ, or no? As a Lord, and as a Savior; as a Priest, to save me; as a King, to live by his Laws; this is a looking upon an act of mine own, therefore the understanding and knowing of it must come from experience.

The last act of faith is to purify, and to sanctify. I cannot stand upon it at this time, nor make Use, and apply this as I desired: therefore I will break off here. So much for this time.

FINIS.

SERMON III.

ROM. 1:17.
*For by it the righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith:
As it is written, The just shall live by Faith.*

The last point that we delivered out of these words, was this, that Faith is that whereby we are made partakers of the righteousness of Christ.

We come now to the Uses of it.

And first of all, if it be by faith only by which we are made partakers of that righteousness that saveth us, the first consecutory that we will draw from hence is this, That we should learn to come to Christ with an empty hand, and not to be discouraged for any want that we find in ourselves, nor for the greatness of our sins; we should not be discouraged for the want of a perfect degree of repentance and godly sorrow, or for the want of whatsoever good work you think is requisite to salvation, for, my beloved, you must know that this is the nature of faith, that it doth its work best alone; and faith is so far from requiring anything in the party that shall have Christ, that necessarily he must let go all things else, otherwise he cannot believe: and

this is a point necessarily to be considered: for every man is apt to conceive and think that it is impossible that God should accept him, unless there be something in him why God should regard him: If he find himself to be exceeding ungodly, he thinks that Christ will never look after him.

And again, if he have nothing at all to give, if he have nothing to bring with him in his hand, he thinks that he shall have no pardon: But you see that faith requires nothing in the first apprehension of Christ, if a man be never so ungodly, it is all one, the promise notwithstanding is made unto him.

Again, Why should you look for righteousness in yourselves? The work of faith (and it hath nothing else to do) is to take that righteousness of Christ, that is none of your own: so that there is nothing else at all required; for all that faith hath to do, is only to take from Christ that righteousness that we want our selves: so that I say there is no reason why any man should be discouraged in his first coming, for any want that he finds in himself, or for any condition that he is in, because faith only is that that makes us partakers of a righteousness to justify us, because we ourselves have it not. I say, faith is so far from requiring anything to be added to it, to help it in the act of justifying, that of necessity it excludes all things else: for faith hath this double quality, not only to lay hold of Christ offered, but to empty a man of all things else whatsoever. As for example, Faith is not only the believing of a truth which is delivered, from the authority of him that doth deliver it; but it is a resting upon Christ, a casting of our selves upon him. Now when a man leans upon any other thing, he stands not upon his own legs, he stands not upon his own bottom; for if he did, he could not properly be said to lean. If a man trust and depend upon another, he provides not for himself, but he that so looks to himself, that he provide so

as to make himself safe if another should fail him, so far he trusts himself; so that, beloved, if you trust Christ, it is of necessity required that you must be unbottomed of yourselves, you must altogether lean upon him, you must cast yourselves wholly upon him: For faith hath such an attracting virtue in it, that it fills the heart with Christ. Now it cannot fill the heart with Christ, unless the heart be emptied first. Therefore I say, faith hath a double quality, not only to take, but to empty; and they are reciprocal, the one cannot be without the other.

Hence it is that we say, faith ingrafts a man, a man cannot be ingraft into a new stock unless he be quite cut off from the former root; therefore faith drives a man out of himself, and makes him nothing in himself, so that when he comes to lay hold on the promise of God, he looks at no quality or excellency of his own, he looks at no fitness nor worthiness in himself, but he comes with a hand and a heart altogether empty: So that when a man comes to beseech God to receive him to mercy, and to grant him a Pardon of his sins, when he comes to take hold of the righteousness of Christ for his justification, if he think that there is any little worthiness in him, or that there be no fault in him at all, and from thence shall think that God will receive him, this man is not fit to come to Christ, he must be wholly emptied of himself, and then God will speak peace unto him.

But you will ask, What is that that faith doth empty a man of?

Faith emptieth a man of two things:

First, of all opinion of righteousness in himself.

Secondly, of all opinion of strength and ability to help himself: for if either of these remain in the heart, a man cannot receive Christ.

First, I say, a man must be emptied of all opinion of worthiness in himself, of all conceit that he hath the least righteousness in himself; therefore when

the young man came to Christ, and Christ told him that he must keep the Law, and he said he had done all those things from his youth, Christ knew that he was not yet fit, therefore, saith he, Go and sell all that thou hast: Christ's end was nothing else but to discover to him his own unworthiness. If thou wilt be perfect, (saith Christ) take this trial, Canst thou be content to let thy wealth go, to follow me? Canst thou be content to suffer persecution? This showed that he was not perfect, but that he was still a sinful man; this was the way to prepare him for Christ, this course we see Christ always took: we see it expressed in the Parable of the Publican and of the Pharisee, the Publican went away justified, because he was wholly emptied of all conceit and opinion of worth in himself.

But the Pharisee was not justified, (not because he was not a juster man then the Publican, for he was in outward performances better then he; but) because he had an opinion of his own righteousness, he was conceited of a worthiness in himself, therefore he went home not justified.

What was it that excluded the Jews? Was it not an opinion of something they had of their own?

The Laodiceans, they thought they were rich and increased, and wanted nothing, therefore they never came to buy of Christ. That which a man thinks he hath already of his own, he will never be at the cost to buy; therefore that is the first thing that a man must do, he must think himself of no worth at all, he must be empty of all opinion and conceit of his own excellency.

But this is not all, although a man be persuaded of this, that he hath no worthiness in himself, yet if he think he is able to help himself, and can stand alone without God, he will not come to take Christ; and therefore this further is required, that a man see that he hath no ability to help himself,

that all his redemption must come from Christ: for if you ask many men whether they have any opinion of worth in themselves, they will be ready to answer, No. What then is the reason that they come not to Christ? It is because they are in health and prosperity, and they can do it soon enough hereafter, they can yet for the present subsist without Christ; but when God shall show a man's heart to himself, when God shows a man his danger, and shows it him as a present, and how unable he is to help himself out of danger, then a man will have no rest till he have Christ. Therefore you shall see both these required, 1 Cor. 1:30. Christ must be to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption too. First, if a man think that there is anything in him, either wisdom, righteousness, or sanctification, that excludes him, for he will rejoice in himself: and that concerns the first condition required, to be empty of all opinion of worth.

But yet if a man think that he is able to stand safe and secure for a time, that he is able to be a Buckler to himself, that he hath somewhat whereunto he may lean, and doth not see that Christ must be his redemption also, he will not come at Christ.

That which kept the Prodigal son away, it was not an opinion of any worth in himself, but because he thought he could live without his father, he had his portion in his own hands, and at his own disposing; and he would not come home to his Father, till he could live of himself no longer: so that, though we have an opinion of no worth in ourselves, yet if we conceive or think that we can live without Christ, we will not care for him.

This was the fault of those that were invited to the marriage, they refused to come, not because they thought that themselves were of worth, but they were persuaded that they needed not those things to which they were

invited. Therefore, I say, these two things must be done, a man must be emptied of all opinion of worth in himself.

And secondly, of all ability in himself to help himself, and when faith hath done both these, then it brings a man to Christ, when a man seeth that there is nothing in him why God should regard him, and that he cannot stand longer, nor be in safety longer then Christ helps him, and speaks peace to him, now a man is fit to take hold upon Christ: and therefore we must learn to come to Christ with an empty heart.

Many men complain that they would believe, but they want that sorrow that they should have, they want that repentance that they would have, they think they are not yet fit, therefore they dare not apply the promises.

To these we say now, that there is a double kind of complaint.

One is, when a man looks upon these things, as upon things that make him fit, which if he have, he thinks God will respect him; and if he have not, he thinks that God will not look after him. If thy complaint be thus, it is sinful; for in this thou seekest something in thyself.

But if a man's complaint be this, that he is not yet awaked enough, that he is not yet sensible enough of his sins, the doctrine of the remission of his sins, and free Justification doth not affect him as it should. Indeed, here is just cause of complaint; for these things are necessary before you can come to take Christ. Therefore that place in Matth. 10:11, will explain this, and answer an objection that may be made against it, when the Apostles were sent out to preach the Gospel, when they came to any house, they were bidden to Enquire who were worthy; If any man be worthy (saith Christ) your peace shall come upon him: but if he be not worthy, shake off the dust, &c. A man would think by this that there were some worthiness required in

the party that comes to Christ, and that before he can apply the first promise of Justification.

To this we answer, the worthiness that is required here is nothing else but an ability to prize Christ, to set him at a high rate, to long after him, to hunger and thirst after his righteousness, your peace shall come upon such a man. That is, if there be a broken-hearted man that looks after Christ, whose heart yearns after him, that he is able to prize him aright, he shall be accepted: but if they be such men as will not receive you, such as will not set meat before you, such as will give you no respect, shake off the dust of your feet, &c. So that I say, such a complaint we may make, If we find a want of desire after Christ; for that is required; but if we look upon anything as a qualification in ourselves, such a worthiness is not required, we must be driven out of all conceit of it, or else we cannot take Christ. So much for that Use, that seeing it is only faith whereby we lay hold of Christ's righteousness, that then we have no reason to be discouraged, in respect of any want; nay, we must find a want of all things, before we can be made partakers of this righteousness.

Again, secondly, if it be by faith only, by which we are made partakers of this righteousness, and by which we are saved, then we should learn hence to rejoice only in God, and not to rejoice in our selves; for this is the very end why God hath appointed this way of salvation: Eph. 1:6. For he hath chosen us to the praise of the glory of his grace, in his Beloved. That is, that he might have the praise of the glory of his grace, as it is in Eph. 2. Therefore it is of faith, and not by works, that no man should boast of himself: 1 Cor. 1:30. Therefore Christ is made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that no flesh should rejoice in itself. Now if that be God's end, if that be his aim, why he will have us saved by faith, let

not us disappoint him of his aim, let us not take from him the glory of his grace; but let us glory in the Lord.

This point we should especially look to, not to rejoice in ourselves, but in God: For, my beloved, we are all naturally exceeding apt to rejoice in ourselves, we would fain find some excellency in ourselves, every man is apt to reflect upon himself, and he would fain see some worth there that he might rejoice in; and if he be nobody at all there, it is contrary to his nature to think that he shall be accepted: there is nothing in the world that we are so backward to as this. It was Adams fault in Paradise, whereas he should have trusted God, and have been wholly dependent upon him for all, he would needs know good and evil, he would have something of his own; and this was it that lost him all, and brought the curse upon him, because he would not be dependent.

Now in the Gospel, God comes by a second means of saving men, and in this the Lord would have the creature to have nothing in himself to glory in, but man is hardly brought to this, but exalts and lifts up himself, and would fain have some worth and excellency of his own; but as long as we do thus, we cannot be saved: that is the argument that is used Rom. 6:4, why Abraham was justified by faith; if there had been any other way, Abraham had had wherein to rejoice in himself: but faith excludes this rejoicing, and only faith, we should, I say, learn to do this in good earnest, to see that there is no worth in ourselves, to have Christ to be to us all in all: Col. 3:11, is an excellent place to this purpose, saith the Apostle there, (in the matter of salvation) There is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, but Christ is all in all. That is, when we come to be justified before God, when we come to the matter of salvation, God looks at nothing in a man, he looks at no difference between man and man; one man is virtuous, another man is

wicked; one man is a Jew, and hath all those privileges; another man is a Gentile, an alien from the Common-wealth of Israel; one man is circumcised, another man is uncircumcised; but all this is nothing: Why? For Christ is all in all. Mark it: First, he is all; that is, there is nothing else required to justify: Indeed, if we were something, and he were not all, we might then look at something besides; but he is all.

Again, he is all in all: that is, go through all things that you may think will help you to salvation, in all those things Christ is only to be respected, and nothing but Christ, whatsoever is done without Christ, God regards it not; if you will do any work of your own to help yourselves in salvation, if you will rest upon any privileges, Christ is not all in all; but Christ must be all in all in everything: and if only Christ be all, then we must come only with faith; for it is faith only that lays hold upon Christ.

Now a natural man, he will not have Christ to be all, but himself will be something; or if Christ be all in some things, he will not have Christ to be all in everything, to have Christ to be his wisdom, his righteousness, his sanctification; to do nothing but by Christ; to have Christ to be his redemption, not to be able to help himself without Christ, but that Christ must help him out of every trouble, and bestow upon him every comfort, this, I say, is contrary to the nature of man: therefore we must be thoroughly emptied of ourselves in this matter of rejoicing, as well as in the matter of taking: for in what measure any man sets any price upon himself, so far as he hath any opinion of himself that he is something, just so far he detracts from Christ: but when a man boasts not of himself at all, such a man rejoiceth in God altogether, such a man will stand amazed at the height, and breadth, and length, and depth of the love of God; such a man will be able to see that there are unsearchable riches in Christ; such a man will be able

to say with Paul, that he cares for nothing, he reckons all things dung, Phil. 3. I have all the privileges (saith he) that other men have; I am a Jew, I am a Pharisee; but I reckon all these things as dung; that is, I care for none of them, if I had an hundred more: It is true, I have been as strict as any man; yea, I went beyond others: for I was zealous in that course wherein I was, yet I have been taught thus much, that all these things are nothing, for God regards them not, he regards nothing but Christ and his righteousness, therefore I look not after these things, but that I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, but that righteousness that God accepteth, which is through faith in him. Therefore, my brethren, learn thus to rejoice in Christ, and in God, and not in yourselves; this is the most excellent work that we can perform, it is the work of the Saints and Angels in Heaven, we should learn to come as near them now as we can: In Reu. 7:11, they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation cometh by our God, that sitteth upon the Throne, and by the Lamb; and therefore, praise, and wisdom, and glory be given to God for evermore; because salvation is from the Lord, and from the Lamb, and not from our selves at all: hence it is that they fell down, and worshipped him; and for this cause they all cry, wisdom, and glory, and praise be to our God for evermore.

If salvation had been from ourselves, if we had done anything to help ourselves therein, there had not been ground of giving all praise and glory to God; and if this be the work of the Saints and Angels, we should labor to perform it as abundantly as we can now: and let us do it in good earnest: for if men could be brought to this, to rejoice in God alone, their mouths would be filled with praise exceedingly, they would regard nothing else, and in the course of their lives they would make it evident to the world, that they were

such as made no account of the World, so they might have Christ, they would be content with any condition: for Christ is all in all to them.

Thirdly, if it be by faith only by which we are made partakers of the righteousness by which we are saved, then it should teach us to let other things go, and principally to mind this matter, to labor to get faith, whatsoever become of other things; for it is that by which we have salvation.

The Papists, they teach that works are the main, and many things they prescribe that men must do: our Doctrine is, you see, that faith only is required: Indeed, many things follow upon faith, but faith is that you must only labor for, and then the rest will follow upon it.

This Doctrine of ours, you shall find that it is delivered clearly in Gal. 5:5,6. We wait, through the Spirit, for the hope of righteousness, which is through faith. That is, we look for nothing from the Law, we regard no works at all in the matter of justification; that which we look for, is only that righteousness which is taken by faith: and why do we so? For, saith he, in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision is anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, &c. As if he should say, there is good reason why we should expect salvation only by faith, because nothing else will help us in that work, circumcision is nothing, nor uncircumcision is nothing: by those two he means all other things, that is, the having of all the privileges in the world, the doing of all the works that can be done, faith is all in all; but it must be such a faith as works by love; though it be by faith only, yet it is not an idle faith: therefore you are especially to labor for faith.

There are many other excellencies that we are capable of, many moral virtues, such as Aristotle and Socrates have described; but without faith, God regards none of these: take one that is a wicked man, and take another,

let him be never so virtuous, as Socrates, and Seneca, that were the strictest in morality of all the Heathen; nay, take any man that lives in the Church, that lives the most strict and exact life, and yet is not justified by faith, God makes no difference between these men, the one is as near to heaven as the other, God looks upon them both with the same eye; for he regards nothing without faith. He that is the most profane and ungodly, if he come with faith, he shall obtain Christ; the other that hath all other moral Virtues in the most exact manner, without faith, they shall do him no good: therefore we are to seek for nothing in the matter of justification, but how we may be enabled to believe, we are principally to study this matter of faith.

Take such a one as Socrates, and such a one as Saint Paul, it may be Socrates might be outwardly as temperate, and as patient, and be endued with as many excellencies, he might appear in his carriage as strict as Saint Paul; but here is the great difference, The one doth what he doth of himself, and through himself, and for himself; the other doth what he doth of Christ, and through Christ, and for Christ: therefore faith mainly is requisite.

If we had all other excellencies, yet we shall find this in them, that they do always give something to the creature.

Again, if you go never so far in them, yet you shall find that there is some imperfection in them.

But faith it emptieth the creature of all things, it leaveth nothing in a man, it makes him lean and rest only upon Christ, and upon his righteousness for salvation.

Again, faith worketh in us a love to God: for, we having nothing in ourselves, but all that we have being from him, we cannot but love him again.

Again, faith presenteth to God a perfect righteousness, and therefore God only accepts it: for God must be just, and nothing can satisfy the Justice of God, but a righteousness that is perfect, nothing can attain a righteousness that is perfect, but only faith, labor therefore to believe this, and to turn all your study and care how to get faith. My beloved, this is a thing that we are bound to preach to you; this is the sum of that Doctrine that Christ so often preached when he was upon the Earth, Believe, for the Kingdom of God is at hand: this is the sum of all the Doctrine of the Apostles, it was all they had to do, to persuade men to believe: What was the sum of all Paul's Doctrine? We go up and down, saith he, from place to place, witnessing both to Jews and Gentiles, &c. So it is our part, when we come to preach to you, when we come to dispense to you that which is for the nourishment of your souls, we must do as those Stewards that set bread and salt upon the Table, whatsoever other dish there is; so we should always preach Christ, and persuade you to believe in him, and stir you up to turn the stream of your endeavors after the obtaining of that faith that taketh this righteousness; the principal thing we are to look unto, is, to see from what Fountain that that we have comes; if a man have never so many virtues in him, if they arise not from this fountain, if they spring not from this root, they are nothing, God looks upon them without acceptance or delight.

Again, this is that that you are to do in hearing, that which you are chiefly to look after, is, how to get faith; and therefore if men will employ their strength and their endeavors, and busy themselves to attain such and such virtues, it is but as the watering of the branches, and to let the root alone; faith is the root; that is, it is that that makes all acceptable to God: for what is the difference between Christianity and Morality, and without this, what is our preaching? We may gather well near as good instructions to resist

vice, out of Plutarch, and out of Seneca, as out of Paul's Epistles, but this differenceth it, that we preach Christ, and from Christ we derive ability and strength to do all things else, and that makes all else to be acceptable; so that this is it that you must look after, to have Christ, to receive all from him, to do all for him; for these are reciprocal, unless you think you have all from Christ, you will never do all for him; when we think Christ is all-sufficient, we will be perfect with him again.

But, by the way, in this you see not only the difference between moral virtues, and those in a true Christian, which is godliness, that they come from different fountains, and look to different ends; but you see also the difference between those shows of strictness that are among the Papists, and that sincerity of life that we preach unto you, which is an effect of this faith: for, if you mark it, you shall find that all that they do, either is without Christ, or adds to Christ; they think they shall be saved for doing such and such things, which prepare and fit them for salvation, they look mainly to the works of humbling the body, and doing many actions of mortification, but still Christ only is not sought after in all this. But now look to the Doctrine that we have delivered, it is Christ that we preach, it is faith that we preach unto you. It is true, we preach those things too, we lay the same necessity upon you of doing good works, we stir you up to holiness of life, and mortification; but here is the difference, we derive it all from Christ by faith, we say that faith doth all.

Indeed when you have faith, if that faith be right, it will work by love: here then you see the difference, we do the same things, but we derive all from a justifying faith, laying hold upon Christ; and so love to him, and all other graces do arise from this.

Again, a fourth Use of this point is this, If salvation be only by faith, then we should learn hence to go with boldness to God, to take the promises, and to reckon them sure to us. If something else had been required on our part, we should then have gone with a great deal of doubting to God; but now, seeing there is nothing required, but only to go and take it, this should make us to go with boldness to the Throne of Grace, to come with assurance that we shall speed.

And therefore in the business of seeking to God for the remission of our sins, (which indeed is the greatest business that we have to do) what greater comfort can there be, then to have this assurance, that if we come to God for it, we shall not fail nor be deceived of it?

For the present occasion of receiving the Sacrament: What is the end of the Sacrament, but to preach faith? The Sacrament preacheth that to your outward senses, that we do to your understandings; it presenteth to the eye, that which we now preach to the ear: for what is the Covenant of God in the Gospel, but only this? God offers Christ unto you freely, as the Bread and Wine is given unto you. To us a Son is given, &c.

Again, we take him, and bind ourselves to obey him, and to love him, to be to him alone, to marry him, to make him our Lord and our Husband. Now in the Sacrament both these are done: when the Bread and Wine are offered, they are but a resemblance of the offer of Christ. Indeed there is a blessing in it: for it is God's Ordinance, it increaseth this grace of faith. And again, there is a bond on our part, wherein we tie ourselves to obey Christ.

Now if any of you will offer to come, and yet have not given up yourselves to God in good earnest, you receive your own condemnation, you are divorced from Christ, and married to the World; and this is to receive the Sacrament unworthily. The main end of the Sacrament, is to

increase faith, and salvation is ours by faith; therefore we should come with boldness, and lay hold upon the promises of it.

We should do in this case as Joab did, lay hold upon the horns of the Altar; that is, take hold upon Christ, and remember that sure word of promise, To us a Son is given, to us a Child is borne. And, Let whosoever will, come and take of the waters of life freely. Go through the whole Book of God, all the promises therein are as so many grounds for faith to build upon; it is impossible that God should slay you, if you come and lay hold of the horns of the Altar. If you will take Christ, and receive these promises, and rest on them, it is impossible but that God should perform them, he hath bound himself to perform what he hath said, in 1 John. 1:9. If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive them: As if he were unjust and unfaithful if he should not do it. His Oath is passed, he hath added an Oath to his promise, that by two immutable witnesses it should stand firm.

We should do in this case as Jacob did, after he had once a promise from God, when he meets his brother Esau, Lord, (saith he) Thou hast promised to do me good, therefore deliver me from the hand of my brother. So, when we have a promise, and God hath said, He that will take Christ shall be saved, and Christ is freely given, and the pardon is general, therefore what should hinder us? Urge God upon his promise, wrestle with God, as Jacob did, and let him not go without a blessing; wrestling implies resisting, it is a sign God resisted him for a time: so, it may be, God will deny thee a great while, yet continue thou to seek him, let him not go, he cannot deny thee in the end, thou shalt have the blessing at the last: we should learn thus to importune God; tell him, Lord, I have a sure promise, and thou hast made the pardon general, and I am sure I come within the number of that

Commission: Go and preach the Gospel to every creature, go and tell every man under heaven, that Christ is offered to him, he is freely given to him by God the Father, and there is nothing required of you, but that you marry him, nothing but to accept of him; here is a word sure enough, if there were nothing else but this. Therefore learn to do in this as the Woman of Canaan did, though Christ denied her, yet she would not give over: for she had this ground to build upon, that he was Jesus, he was the Son of David, he was merciful, and she had exceeding great need of him, and therefore she would not give over; so, I say, having this ground for your faith, go to God with boldness, and never give over; it is impossible (if you seek him in good earnest, with all your heart) but that he should receive you.

It is true indeed, he gives to some sooner then he doth to others; with some he deals as he did with the Woman of Canaan; to some he gives an answer quickly, some again he defers longer, and he will put us to the trial. Christ dealeth differently with his children, he doth with us sometimes as the unjust Judge, he turns the deaf ear to us, or like the man that was in bed with his children, and was unwilling to rise; but what saith the Text? Luk. 11:6, though he would not do it for him as a friend, yet his importunity makes him rise and lend him: so thou thinkest (it may be) God is not thy friend, yet by thy importunity he will rise at the last; therefore, though thou find God to be as an enemy, though he be never so backward to rise, yet give not over, I can assure thee, as certainly as there is any truth in the Book of God, thou shalt be heard in the end, Heaven and Earth shall pass away before this sure Word shall perish. It is God's manner to put men to the trial, and it is his wisdom so to do, otherwise, he would have many that would be forward at the first, that would fall off in the end.

It was Naomi's wisdom to bid her Daughter Ruth go back to her kindred, but she would not, she stood it out: I will go (saith she) where thou goest, and nothing but death shall part between me and thee. When Naomi saw that she was steadfastly minded, she took her along with her. So, if God should receive men at the first, many men would come in, and take hold upon Christ, and make a profession of his Name, but they would not hold out to the end with him: But when Christ shall tell them, I have not so much as a place to lay my head in, if thou wilt have me, thou must deny thyself, and take up thy Cross, and thou shalt find a great deal of trouble, and suffer persecution; If a man now, notwithstanding this, will not be beaten off from Christ, but, though Christ turn the deaf ear to him for the present, and present to him all manner of difficulties, yet if he will, notwithstanding all this, be constant still in importuning God to have Christ, when God shall see that his mind is thus set, he will take him along with him, he will be thine, and thou shalt be his, his people shall be thy people: this is it that knits the knot between you: My Beloved is mine, and I am his; his Word is passed for it, he hath promised his consent, now if we will give ours, the match is made.

If it were doubtful whether we should have his consent, it were another case; but we have a sure Word for it, we should learn therefore to importune him.

Now when we have done this, when we are come with this boldness, and have laid hold upon Christ, then let us look to the privileges, then let us take the pardon of our sins, adoption, and reconciliation, and all things else, only remember that condition of after-obedience, that though we may come freely, and come with this boldness, and though nothing be required, but that we take this Son of God that is offered, yet, I say, there is a condition of

after-obedience, we must resolve to serve him, and to love him with all our heart, we must resolve to do that that Ruth promiseth to Naomi, to live with him, and to be with him, and that his people shall be our people, &c.

But you will say, I am willing to do this, to part from my lusts, and to be to Christ alone, but I am not able, my lusts are strong and prevalent.

To this I answer, If thou be but willing, Christ desires no more: I would but ask thee this, Suppose that thou wert able to overcome those lusts; take a man that is strongly given to good-fellowship, (as they call it) to company-keeping, that is given to fornication, to swearing, or whatsoever the sin be, take any prevalent lust that is in any man that now heareth me, I would ask him this Question; Put the case thou wert able to get the victory over thy lust, wouldst thou be content to part with it, and to take Christ? If thou sayest, No, I had rather enjoy the sweetness of my lusts still, Art thou not now worthy to be condemned? But if thou answer, I would, upon condition I were able to overcome my lusts; I assure thee, God will make thee able, God requires no more but a willingness to come, and take Christ, the other is God's work.

I, but I have tried, and have not found it so.

I answer, it cannot be, thou hast not yet solved to part with thy lusts, thou hast not yet set down this peremptory conclusion in thyself, that thou wilt forsake everything that you may have Christ: If any man say he is willing to take Christ, and to part with the sweetness, and the pleasantness, and the profitableness that his lust brings to him, if he could get the victory, if he were freed from the solicitations of them: Let me tell thee, thou must first resolve to take Christ upon his own conditions, and for the other, God hath promised to do that himself: 1 Cor. 8:9. God will confirm you, and keep you blameless; for he is faithful that hath called you to the fellowship of his

Son. As if he should have said, Do you think that God will call men to Christ, that he will beseech men to take his Son, will he call you to the fellowship of his Son, and will he not keep you blameless? He hath promised it, and sworn it, if he should not do it, he should be unfaithful; when God calleth you to come unto Christ, he promiseth that the virtue of Christ's death shall kill sin in you, and that the virtue of Christ's Resurrection shall raise you up to newness of life; God hath promised that he will give the Holy Ghost: for he never gives his Son to any, but he gives them the Spirit of his Son too. Now, He that hath called you is faithful, and he will do it. So that I say, if thou wilt come in, (that is) if thou wilt accept of Christ upon his conditions, it is certain God will receive thee; and if thou find thyself troubled with the violence of any lust, or of any temptation, press upon God, urge him with his Word and promise, that he would assist thee by his own strength, that he would enable thee to overcome, that he would give thee the Spirit of his Son, and resolve as Job, Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him: for I have a sure promise, Heaven and Earth shall pass, but not one tittle of his sure Word shall pass till it be fulfilled.

Now because this is a point of much moment, this laying hold upon the promises, and because it is a thing that is not easily done, therefore I will show you these two things.

The first is this, that the understanding must be rightly informed, what ground a man hath to do it; when a man comes to believe the forgiveness of his sins, let him not think, I have a persuasion that my sins are forgiven, therefore they are forgiven, but a man must labor to see the ground of it: for, a thing is not true because we are persuaded it is so; but the thing is first true, and then we believe it: God hath first offered forgiveness of sins to you, and then you look upon his Word, and so believe it; But, I say, when a

man is persuaded in a confused manner, without any just ground, without a clear knowledge of the progress of faith, how it goeth along, this is not right, this keepeth many from assurance, because they are not clearly instructed in it: For, to the end that faith may take hold of the promise, that it may be sure to us, we must conceive of the right method, and that stands in these four things.

First, we must see our own condition, we must be sick before we can seek to the Physician, we must see ourselves to be condemned men, that there is nothing in us to help ourselves; we must be broken in heart in some measure, we must see ourselves to be children of wrath, and then we will come and seek for a remedy; and that is,

By looking into the Book of God, (and that is the second thing) and there I find all the promises, Christ is there clearly offered, only with this condition required, that I must obey him, and serve him, and love him; so that that is the second thing, Christ is offered in the Scriptures to everyone, and if you have him, you shall have a pardon of your sins with him; only he is offered with condition of obedience: Well, when you see this clearly, now you come to consider it, you begin to ponder this Word, whether it be so or no, a man begins to think, Is this a sure promise? And then he sees, that look what certainty there is of the Scriptures in general, there is the same certainty in these particular promises: so that with the same faith that a man is to believe the Word of God, with the same faith he is to believe this offer of Christ.

I, but is it sure to me?

Then a man looks to the generality of the promise, that it is offered to all, none excepted, and therefore, saith he, it is offered to me.

But will Christ do to me as he hath promised, is he powerful and willing to do it? Then a man looks into the Word, and finds that he is Almighty, that he is able to make him the Son of God, that whatsoever Christ hath by nature, he shall have it by matching with him: Indeed Christ hath it immediately as he is the Son of God, but we have it mediately, as the Wife hath the riches of her Husband. If a Woman marry the Kings Son, she hath the same privileges, and the same inheritance that he hath: so, whatsoever Christ hath becomes ours: Paul, and Apollo, and all are Christ's, the World is Christ's, and all things present and to come are Christ's, and they are all made ours. Now when this is well pondered, and we find that we have a sure Word to confirm this,

Then, in the third place, we come and take him, and this no man will do indeed, till he have well considered, as the saying is of marriage, that it is a bestowing of one's self upon such a one, so it is in this; everyone therefore should consider beforehand, what it is to bestow himself upon Christ, and when this is done, that we have made the match, and bestowed ourselves upon Christ, then,

In the next place, we come to see what we shall have by him, and then we come to make use of all that Christ brings with him, reconciliation, and pardon of sin, and all things else that he hath, I have with him, I am the son of God, and I shall be sanctified; (for together with him I have his Spirit,) all my prayers shall be heard, all the promises in the Book of God are mine; for In him they are all Yea and Amen: as all the World is his, so it is all the wealth of a Christian after he hath taken Christ. Now when this is distinctly propounded to us, and we conceive it aright, it makes the way much more easy to us; but when we go on in a confused manner, because the Gospel is not clearly understood by us, hence it is that we labor much, and yet the

thing is not done: therefore, my beloved, if you have a persuasion of the forgiveness of your sins, if it be but a mere persuasion, it will alter exceedingly, it will go and come in the time of temptation; but when you have a sure Word, when you have built yourselves upon the Scriptures, it is not dependent upon your persuasion, but it is the Word that you rest upon: For fancy, and opinion, and persuasion, it will grow sometimes longer, and sometimes shorter, as the shadow doth, whereas the body of the thing is the same; but when your eye is upon the Word, when you rest upon that, then your persuasion will continue the same as the Word continues. Indeed, your comfort may be sometimes more, sometimes less; but when it is pitched upon the sure Word, that is it that will bring you comfort in the working of it, to observe the method and degrees of it. Indeed, my beloved, it is a point of another nature to believe than the world thinks of; therefore examine, and recall, and understand this Doctrine that we have now taught you distinctly, it will be worth all your labor, for the present you shall have a good conscience, and the assurance of God's favor, and when death comes, the right understanding of it will be worth all the world besides.

It is said of the second ground, that they fell away, because they had no root in themselves: they had some root, but their faith was pitched upon a general Doctrine, upon a general persuasion, that hath a kind of root, but it hath no root in itself: so many Christians go far, and they do much, but they have no root in themselves, that is, they do not understand distinctly, and thoroughly, the grounds upon which their faith is built, they see not a sure ground for it in the Word of God, they know not how faith is built upon the sure corner stone; for Christ is that sure corner stone, he that is built upon him shall never be ashamed, we should learn therefore not to give over till we be rooted and grounded. If a man should ask many people, What is the

reason that you are persuaded that your sins are forgiven? (for you ought to build that upon an infallible ground) If it be no more but because you are persuaded, it is nothing; but if you can say, My sins are forgiven, because I have Christ, and he that hath the Son hath life, I have the sure Word of God for it, God cannot lie, he is Truth it self that hath said it, and he hath offered Christ to every creature under Heaven; then is the ground good, thou mayest take him boldly, being within that number.

So much for this time.

FINIS.

SERMON IV.

ROM. 1:17.
*For by it the righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith:
As it is written, The just shall live by Faith.*

The next thing to be done is this, to draw the will to take the promises; for, though the understanding rightly apprehend all that is delivered in the Word, yet except the will be bowed, except we incline, and be willing to embrace these offers, and willingly take Christ upon these conditions, the thing is not done; for, I say, justifying faith is as well in the will as in the understanding: for that which I deliver now, is built upon that which I delivered before; and I speak chiefly to those that understand the premises, or else you will not fully understand that we are now about.

But seeing that the will hath a part in faith as well as the understanding, the second thing is to draw the will: But how is that done? This is the work of God, he only hath the sovereignty over the will and affections of a man, it is the great prerogative of God, when a business is to be done with the will and affections, God must persuade it, as in Noah's speech, God

persuade Japheth to dwell in the Tents of Shem: As if he should say, I may persuade in vain, except God put to his hand to the work: So it is the property of the Spirit to convince; as John. 16. The Spirit shall convince the World of sin and righteousness. That is, he shall show men their sins, and their need, and withal convince them, and persuade them to take Christ's righteousness. Thus I say, it is God that draweth the will, it is he that puts a strong instinct into the heart of man, it is he that must work on the heart, as in John. 6:44. None can come to me except the Father draw him. How shall that be done? If God doth once draw a man, he will have no rest till he have Christ, he will not be at quiet till he have gotten him: compare that place, None come to me except the Father draw him, with that Cant. 1:4. Draw us, and we will run after thee, it is not such drawing as when a man is drawn by force, but it is a drawing which is done by changing the will and affections, when God alters the bent of the mind, when God justifies a man, he will affect a man's heart so, that he shall be so affected with Christ, as that he shall have no rest till he have him; when he doth see his need of him, he shall not give over, till he be assured that he is reconciled to him: Draw us, and we will run after thee: It is such a drawing as is called the teaching of God: John. 6:45. Ye shall be taught of God: that is, when God comes to teach a thing, he boweth the will and affections to do it. We heretofore exemplified this by the similitude of the Ant, and the Be, and other creatures, they are said to be taught of God, when God puts a strong instinct into them to do such and such a thing, he teacheth them to do this and this: So God teacheth men to come to Christ, that is, he puts a strong inclination into their hearts, and when that is there once, they can have no rest; as the Iron cannot rest till it come to the Loadstone, and as the stone cannot rest till it come to the center, so the heart of man, when God draweth it, when he

hath changed the will, then he finds such a disposition in him as was in the Spouse, Cant. 2. She fought him whom her soul loved, she sought him by night, and by day, she sought him in the street, and among the Watchmen, and never rested until she had found him: So when God hath drawn a man's heart, when he hath inclined a man's will to embrace Christ, he is never satisfied until he have found him.

But, you will say, God doth this by means, he useth Arguments to draw the will.

It is true, The Question therefore is, How God doth this: we will propound three means by which God doth usually do it.

First, the will is drawn, by being persuaded what the miserable condition of a man is that is not yet come to Christ, that hath not yet taken him, that hath not gotten the pardon and forgiveness of his sins, that hath not got assurance that Christ hath received him to mercy.

The second thing is, the good that he shall get by it.

The third thing is, that he shall not lose his labor if he do attempt it.

The first thing, I say, that draws us to Christ, is to consider how miserable we are without him, if men were persuaded of this, they would more seek him. It is true, if a man could live alone he would not come to him: take Rebels, and Pirates, if they were able to maintain themselves abroad, if they could be as happy in rebellion as in receiving mercy, they would never come in: So it is in this case, If we be brought to this exigent, that we see we cannot hold out any longer, we are not stronger then he, as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 10. Are we stronger than he? When a man is persuaded of that, when a man seeth this necessity is laid upon him, or else he perisheth, then he will come in: So take a servant or a son, if he be able to live from his Father, or Masters house, perhaps he will run at riot still; but when he seeth

he cannot have so much as husks, he can have nothing to sustain him, that is it that will bring him home: So take a Wife, a Spouse, if one come to woo her, if she be able to live without him, it may be she will refuse him, but if the case be so that she cannot subsist, but the Creditors will come upon her, she must needs have a Husband to protect her, to be a bar and a covering unto her, now she seeth a necessity of it: Therefore we say the Law drives men unto Christ, and the Law doth it by showing a man his sin, and the curse due to it, by showing a man his vileness, and if this will not do it, then it shows him the curse; when a man sees the misery that the Law brings upon him, and pronounceth against him, that he is condemned, that persuades him: Therefore the Law draws a man, and the sense of his misery, showing him that he is out of Christ, this draws him to consider that God is his enemy, that all the creatures are his enemies: for if God be thine enemy, then needs must all the creatures be so, because they turn with him to and fro, as an Army turns at the beck of the General. Now to have God and the creatures to be a man's enemy, to have everything to work together for a man's hurt; prosperity slays him, and adversity is not a Plaster or Medicine, but a poison to him, everything joins for his hurt; the Word, which is the savor of life to others, is the savor of death to him; the Sacraments, which are a means to convey grace and assurance to others, it is a means to convey Satan to his heart, it increaseth his condemnation and his judgment, when the wrath of God abides upon a man; that is, it shall be upon him for eternity hereafter: for he that hath not the Son, hath not life, John. 3, ult. when a man seriously considers all this, when he seeth what case he is in, that he cannot live without Christ, this will be one thing that boweth and inclineth the will to come in and take Christ: but this is not all.

But in the second place, a man will know what good he shall have by such a Husband; and indeed, if this were all, he could never marry out of love, and if he do not, it can be no match: Therefore we must find some good, some excellency in Christ; and this is the second thing that draws the will, If we take him, we shall have all his wealth, and all his honor, all the joy and pleasure he can afford, we shall have all his wealth; that is, go to the whole Universe, and see what there is profitable or comfortable to the sons of men, and all that is ours, whether it be Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all is yours, you are Christ's, and Christ is God's, all this is yours. As for the things of the world, if we take him once, we have all these: would not a man desire all these, Is not this a strong argument to move a man to take Christ, that all the Angels in Heaven, all the excellent Ministers on the Earth, (that are next to Angels) they are all his servants; God hath bestowed these gifts for his sake, they are set awork for the furthering of his salvation: and the Angels, you know, are ministering Spirits, sent forth for the good of the Elect; for the World, as the Apostle saith, that is, whatsoever is in the World, all the good and all the evil in the world, even that evil doth him service, the afflictions, and persecutions, and storms, drive him to his haven, as well as fair gales; everything scours him, doth him some good or other, all in the world is his, both life and death; that is, whatsoever belongs to this life or another, all is for his service; and not that only, but when death comes, that a man thinks is the greatest enemy; that there is no good in death, yet that doth him good, it heals our sins, it is a means of happiness; in a word, when the Apostle could say no more, things present, or things to come; for a man should look to both: as heaven will not content him without the things of this life, so the

things of this life will not content him without Heaven; but when there is both, the mind is satisfied.

Now when a man considers what wealth he hath by Christ, and again, that he shall have all his honor; now look what honor Christ hath, the same he hath by matching with him; having him we have all things: If a man could enter into a serious consideration of this, to think that he is a King, that he is an heir of all things, that all the promises do belong to him; do but think with yourselves, if any of you should be raised from a mean ordinary condition, to be made an earthly Prince, how would you be affected with it? Would it not put other thoughts into you? Why should you not believe spiritual privileges to be as real? Why should you not rejoice more in them? They are more durable, they are more excellent, they have all in them the other have: Indeed they are things that are not seen with the eye, they are spiritual, they are things that are enjoyed and reserved for afterward, but yet there is much for the present: Learn to consider this, and it would draw and move you; but because these things are looked on with a general eye, as matters of fancy and speculation, they are looked on as things that are rather talked of, we see no such thing, we have no feeling of them, therefore we do not affect them: but we should labor to believe this: The Scripture often mentions and repeats this, Ye are a Royal Priesthood, Heirs with Christ. Labor to come to this disjunction, if these things be not so, why do you believe them at all? If they be so, why do you not rejoice in them, proportionable to these privileges? And so for Joy; at his right hand there are Joys and pleasures for evermore. And as it is so for eternity, so the nearer we draw to him in this life, the more pleasure we have; for he is the God of all comfort, the nearer we are to him, the more comfort, all the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasure, because they lead nearer to God who is the

cause of all comfort, So that is the second thing to consider, the good you shall have by Christ when once you see how miserable you are without him, and that you shall gain so much by him.

Now in the third place, there is one thing remaining, How shall I have him? I may attempt it, and go without him, I may seek, and be denied: and therefore, in the third place, you shall be sure to obtain; that is a great means to encourage us to come unto him, when you see you shall not fail, there is nothing can hinder on your part, as you have heard in the precedent condition; there is required but an earnest hunger and thirst after him, he justifies the ungodly, and therefore nothing can hinder on your parts: and therefore if anything hinder it, it must be on God's part. Now what is there on God's part that hinders? He hath promised, and bound himself, and he will not go from his Word, he will not deny himself: and therefore when there is no hindrance on neither part, then why do you not believe? If you will consider Christ, and see how he describes himself in the Word, if you look unto all those arguments that are propounded unto us therein, to persuade us, you will make no question, but if you are willing to come, you are sure to receive him, you shall have remission of all your sins: If you consider, first those speeches in Ezekiel, I desire not the death of a sinner: and Why will ye die, O ye house of Israel? Such exhortations are very frequent; Oh that my people would return: and How often would I have gathered you, as the Hen gathereth her Chickens: I say, these are the speeches of God, and God speaks as he means; you shall find by the manner, and the fashion, and the figure of the speeches, that God desires it earnestly: Why will ye die, O ye house of Israel? By way of interrogations: and, Oh that my people would do thus and thus: Even this God desires, that a sinner would return. There is no action that God doth, but he doth it

willingly, that he forgives sinners, that he receives those men that will come home unto him. You see in the Father of the Prodigal, that doth express the disposition of God, he runs to meet his Son, he was the forwarder of the two, he falls upon him, and kisseth him, he could not express his joy for his coming home: such is the disposition of God: I take no delight, as I live, saith the Lord, in the death of a sinner: but rather that he should live. And therefore when God saith it, we have a surer Word, you should better think of it, undoubtedly he will receive you to mercy.

Again, consider how Christ did in the days of his flesh, how he behaved himself then, was he not exceeding gentle to all that came unto him, exceeding compassionate and pitiful, ready to heal everyone, ready to do anything that was requested of him, that he denied not any that was importunate with him: do you think that he hath put off that disposition; is he not the same still? As it is in the Hebrews, Is he not a merciful High Priest still? And that the bowels of compassion in him melt over a straying sinner, and is ready to receive him, his bowels yearn within him, and therefore doubt not but the Lord will receive you.

Again, of necessity he must receive you, or else the blood of Christ were in vain, his Cross and death were of none effect: What now can make the death of Christ to be of none effect, but when it is not regarded, when his blood is trampled under feet and despised of men, when it doth no good, when it is not improved for the purpose it was shed for? Do you think that God sent his only Son from Heaven, to die a cursed death, and would he have his blood shed in vain? Now except he should receive poor sinners when they come, the death of Christ should be of none effect: And therefore it cannot be but God must be ready to receive them. So that there is no

difficulty in him, all the difficulty is in ourselves, we are not willing to come.

Again, if we consider what he hath done for others, how many he hath received to mercy, when one sees such Rebels received to mercy, and considers with himself, and thinks how he gave pardon to Manasseh of his sins, which were crying sins, and of an extraordinary nature, sins that were of long continuance; he forgave Mary Magdalens sins, he forgave these greater sinners, and why should he not forgive me? If one should come to a Physician, of whom he hath heard a great fame, and if he should meet with hundreds by the way of his Patients, and all of them should tell him he hath cured them, and healed them, it would encourage a man to go on with confidence. Or if one should come to a Well of which he hath heard much, and should meet with hundreds of people by the way, and all of them should tell him, we have been at the Well, and it hath cured us, and made us whole, this would encourage a man to go with confidence, because of the multitude that have tried the experience of it: so we should run to Christ; when so many thousands have been forgiven, why should not these persuade us that he is ready to forgive us, as Paul saith, he hath showed mercy to me, that others might believe in God, I am an example for them to trust in God: therefore when we see he hath forgiven others so many and so great sins, why should we doubt?

Again, if Christ should not be ready to receive us, no flesh should be saved, nor there is no man that would fear him, or hear him; Psal. 130:3, there the same argument is used; If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, who should stand? But there is mercy with thee that thou mayest be feared. That is, if God should not be pitiful to mankind, and ready to receive them,

notwithstanding their manifold failings, and infirmities, and rebellions they are subject unto, no flesh should be saved, but all the world should perish.

Again, not so only, but God himself should not be worshipped, men would not regard him; men would not serve him: Therefore, I say, of necessity God must have mercy upon men, that they may fear him, and serve him, and that men may be willing to serve him.

Take a hard Master, a cruel King, a man that shuts out men, and excludes them that they have no hope, there is none that will serve such a man, there is no man that will come in to him; but there is mercy with the Lord that he may be feared and worshipped, and men may come in and worship him: and therefore doubt not but Christ is willing to receive you.

If all this will not persuade you, yet in Isaiah 55, there is one thing more, if it will not enter into your thoughts; If you think your condition be such, if you think your sins so circumstantiated, as I may say, that they are committed in such a manner, that you think, though others have been forgiven, yet you cannot, it passeth your thoughts, you know not how to imagine it; yet know, his mercy is above all: a man must hold that conclusion still.

And if this alone will not persuade me, yet when all this is put together, when I see the misery of a man without Christ, when I see I shall be happy with him, when I see it is of necessity, and if I come I shall certainly be received, he cannot refuse me, all this will help to persuade a man; this you should learn to press upon your own hearts, we that are the Ministers of Christ are bound to do it: and therefore he hath sent us out to compel men to come in, that his House may be full: therefore he commands them to go unto the high-way, and unto the hedges, and compel men to come in. (And what is that?) That is, be so importunate with them, promise them, threaten

them, command them in the Name of Christ to consent and come in, God would fain have his House filled, he hath killed his fatlings, he would not have his Table ready, and have no guests; he would have his House filled, that his Table might not be prepared in vain, and that it may not be in vain, we are to invite you to this marriage, we are to invite you to these fatlings, to this Wine and Milk; it is a banquet, and a banquet you know what it is; In a banquet there is as much as will cheer the body, a concourse of all pleasant things; Such things are in Christ, there is spiritual comfort, a concourse, a heap of all spiritual joy and comfort, of all precious things you can find; and if you will come and taste, you shall have all his Jewels, all his Graces, to beautify and to adorn you withal: let this persuade you to come in.

But some may object, If I come in, I must lose my right eye, or my right hand, I must part with my lusts, which are as dear to me as these members.

I will be brief for this point, because I will finish the Text at this time, and will answer it even as Christ doth, Matth. 5. It is true, we must do so, but then remember we shall have heaven for our labor: if Heaven be not worthy losing of a right eye, or a right hand, keep thine eye still, if thou wilt needs keep it, but thou shalt be sure to go to hell: There needs no other answer, do but seriously consider of this; If I will, I may keep this lust, this fleshly desire, but certainly that will lead me to hell. Let that answer serve for this.

But it may be further objected, If I do thus, I must deny myself, and this is a difficult thing for a man to offer violence to himself, to cross himself in all his desires, a man is able to do much, he may be willing to take great pains, and to suffer much, but to cross himself still of his most inward desires that he hath, those that are most rooted in the soul, that stick near and close unto him, this is difficult.

I answer, Christ is worthy of all these, thou shalt provide better for thyself by doing this, there is another life in the regenerate part, and it perfects that, though you destroy the flesh, and offer violence unto that, yet there is the inward man that is growing up daily, though the outward man fail: It is true, violence must be offered to the flesh, you must be content to part with pleasures, and the outward man in that sense must suffer somewhat, but remember what you gain, there is the inward man that so much the more provides for itself; and if you will not then deny yourself, you deny not your disease that will slay you. If a man have a disease that cries hard to him to have such and such things given it, it is wisdom for him to deny it, because he nourisheth that that would destroy him: so herein himself is his disease, and to give to that, is his destruction: so that that which you call yourself is your disease, and when you feed yourself, you feed your disease: and therefore everyone is to be ruled by the Physicians advice, who teacheth to do otherwise, Christ teacheth us another way, which is for our health and safety: I cannot stand to press that.

But I shall endure persecution, and loss of friends; nay, perhaps loss of life.

I, but thou shalt receive a hundred-fold, thou shalt have no loss by that bargain, thou shalt find Christ worth all that thou givest him. More I should add, but I come to the last point.

The righteousness of Christ is revealed from faith to faith.

The first point ye have heard; that, Righteousness is revealed and offered in the Gospel to as many as will take it. As also,

The second, That it is by faith by which we are made to partake of this righteousness, it is revealed from faith to faith; that is, it is so revealed as that it is taken by faith.

The third point, that we are now to handle, is this, that, Faith admits degrees, and we ought every Christian to grow from degree to degree.

In this proposition faith admits of degrees, and that we ought to grow from one degree to another, I find two parts:

First, that there are degrees of faith.

Secondly, that we ought to grow from degree to degree.

For the first, that I may run through them as briefly as I can, There are degrees in faith in these four respects: as there are two acts of faith, one whereby we take Christ, and that we call a direct act, by which we truly lay hold on him, and receive him as our Lord and Savior. The second is that act of faith by which we know we have received him, the reflect act which is assurance, both these receive degrees: The first receives degrees in three respects: the last receives degrees, I will name but one, and so make up the fourth.

The first act by which we receive and take Christ the Messias offered unto us, it admits this first degree, there is a great degree of persuasion that Christ is offered, and that he is ours, that he is given by God the Father; and though I find this proposed in the Word, that Christ is given to us, yet there are degrees of the persuasion of the truth of this; and this we need not wonder at; for though it be faith, and though the persuasion be true, and good, and firm, yet notwithstanding it may admit of degrees, else any man might object;

If a man be fully persuaded, what needs he more? If he be not fully persuaded, it is not faith; if he be fully persuaded, that makes it faith, and how can that admit degrees?

I answer, it may, because there are degrees in the very persuasion, though the persuasion be good and true, yet there are degrees in it: As for example,

there is such a proposition of Truth, which I am persuaded to believe by arguments that overcome me, I must needs yield to it, and yet there are more arguments and reasons that may be brought, that may work a greater persuasion, as we say, that may be more immediate to persuade us of that conclusion: as, a man may see a thing by a little glimmering light of a candle, he may see it certainly and firmly, but when there come more Candles or a Torch in, he may see more clearly, although he saw it certainly before: So the promises of God, we may behold them, and apply them to ourselves to be sure and firm, and yet this may admit more degrees, when there is more light, and more arguments, when the Spirit of Adoption speaks more clearly and fully to us, there may be a greater degree of persuasion: and therefore that objection, that either it is not faith if there be doubting, or if it be firm in a man, he needs no more; I say, it is not so, for faith admits degrees, there is a full persuasion, Col. 2, which intimates there is a lesser faith than that: As, you know, a Ship may be carried with a gentle gale of wind as well as with a stronger gale, though it go not so fast, but it may be moved, it may be put on with a gentle wind as well as with a strong gale.

So a Tree may be rooted, and rooted strongly and firmly, and yet may be more rooted afterward; The phrase of Scripture carries it so: Oh ye of little faith: there is a little faith, and therefore it implies there is a strong faith, yet the least is accounted faith. So, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief: it was unbelief, and yet it was reckoned for belief.

So our Savior said to Peter, Why doest thou doubt? Certainly Peter believed, or else he could not cast himself upon the water; and yet there was doubting indeed mingled with it: And indeed, if faith were not mixed with doubting, who should have faith? Did not David trust God much? And yet his faith was mixed with doubting: saith he, I shall perish one day by the

hand of Saul, and yet he had faith: Therefore, I say, there may be faith, though we have not so full a persuasion.

But, you will say, how differs it from opinion?

Opinion is an assent to a truth, with a fear lest the contrary may be true: it differs from opinion in the object: the object of opinion is something in its own nature uncertain, but Faith pitcheth upon the Word of God, which is in its own nature infallible, and cannot deceive.

Again, opinion is a matter of speculation and no more: faith is a matter of practice, but that is not all.

Opinion goeth no further, but stays in a doubt, but faith proceeds to full assurance: And therefore it hath the denomination of full assent. As we say of a Wall that is a little white, it is white, because it tends to full whiteness: and as we say water is hot, that is a little hot; so faith that is but in a little degree, yet it may be true, firm and substantial.

But what is the least degree of faith, the least assent, the least belief of the promises, without which it cannot be said to be faith?

I answer, the least degree of faith is that which brings us to Christ, which makes us willing to take him. Mark this point, for it will be of much use to you, when the promises of God are preached to you, and made known unto you, when the arguments that move you to come to Christ are declared and made manifest: Now if a man stands and knows not whether he were best to take him or no, this is not faith, such a man acteth nothing, he is such a one as is spoken of in Jam. 1, for that I take to be the meaning of that place; a man that knows not whether he should come to Christ or no, that stands in a doubt, and sometimes he will go, and sometimes he will not; he is off and on, to and fro, such a man hath not faith; such a one Christ rejects: but now when there is so much weight as will cast the Ballance the right way,

though there be something left in the other end of the Ballance; that is, though there be some doubting, some fear, yet if I so far believe the promises, and the Word of God, as that I am willing to take Christ for my Husband, I am willing to rest on him, to pitch on him, to bestow myself upon him; this is faith, though it come not to the full degree.

As for example, if one be a spokesman for a Suitor, he comes and tells the Spouse to whom he is a Suitor, that such a man is of such parentage, hath such honor, and such wealth, and is thus qualified; now, if she be but so far persuaded as that she is willing to take him for her husband, that is enough to bring her to make the match, that persuasion will bring her to do it; afterward she may come to know the thing more fully, and to be better persuaded, but that adds to the degrees: So, if there be but so much assent, so much firmness of persuasion to bring us to Christ, to make us willing to come to take him for our Savior and for our Lord, that is the least degree of faith, and though there be doubting left, and though there be some fears, yet, if there be but so much as will produce that, it is faith. Let me exemplify it in some other thing: Take Hester, when she was to come to the King, she knew not what success she should have, she was fearful, as we may see by the manner of going about the business, yet, seeing there was so much as drew her to the action, she comes and says, If I perish, I perish; as if she had doubted she might have perished, yet she resolved to do it; this may be said to be an act of faith, that put her on the work. Take a Martyr that comes to suffer, he hath many doubts and fears, and yet if there be but so much persuasion as will produce the act in him, as that he is moved to do the thing, he may properly be said to do it out of faith.

And so of all other actions. The three Children, God can deliver us, if he will, (say they) if he do not, we will not worship that Image that thou hast

set up. There might be some doubting in them, and yet, because there was so much trust in God as to bring them to do the thing, here was faith enough to make them acceptable in the sight of God. So, I say, if there be so much faith as will bring us to God and to Christ, that is the least degree, other degrees there are that may be added afterwards, but this is thy comfort, if thou have but so much as will produce such an effect, thou mayest be sure that thou hast faith.

Secondly, Faith admits degrees in regard of the difficulty and hardness of the things that are to be believed.

As for example, Martha and Mary both believed in Christ when he feasted with them, but when Lazarus was dead, and had been in the grave four days, that put them to a stand: Now if they had been able to believe this, there had been a greater degree of faith. And that was it that magnified Abraham's faith so, that when there was so great difficulty that he must go and offer his son, the son in whom God had promised that his seed should be blessed, who was called the son of the promise: Now here was a great degree of faith, because there was great difficulty.

Moses, we see, when he came to believe the promise of God, in Numbers 11, that so many, even six hundred thousand should be fed with flesh, and that they should be so fed a whole month together, it set Moses at a stand, he knew not what to say; Not one day, (saith he) not ten days, not twenty days, but a whole month together, and six hundred thousand people! If all the Flocks and Herds should be killed, and all the Fishes in the Sea should be gathered together, how should this be done? This was a great thing to believe: and therefore God pitied Moses, God seeth when things are hard to be believed, and pities man; God bears with Moses in that case, because the thing was difficult and high; there are some things which are above hope,

and in such cases God is willing that his people should ask him a sign, he knows their strength, they had need of something to confirm them. And therefore in such a case, when God comes in such manner, if they ask him a sign, God is willing to give them a sign: Indeed, when men will ask a sign to tempt God: an adulterous generation asks a sign; that is, for trial or temptation, not for love of Christ, and to be persuaded he is fit for them, but an adulterous generation, they did it not out of love: but, I say, when either the thing is high, or else when the means of persuasion is weak and slender, As, we know, Christ said unto Nathaniel, Doest thou believe for this? As if he should say, This shows thy faith is great, that for so small a thing as this thou believest; I said no more but I saw thee under the Fig-tree. And this showed the weakness of Thomas his faith, that he would not believe unless he might put his finger into the print of Christ's wounds, and his hand into his side: so that when a man believes by slender means, or when he believes things of a higher nature, which is more above hope, when there is great difficulty, in this sense faith admits degrees.

Thirdly, Faith admits degrees in regard of the extent of it, when there is more things revealed to them; and I take it, this place will carry, that the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; that is, the righteousness of Christ was revealed in the time of the Law and the Prophets, it was revealed obscurely, and there was a little saith among them to believe, it was enough to save them, but when the time drew nearer, there were greater revelations, as we know, in the time of the Prophets, their faith was great, as there were more revelations, so there was more faith: So, I say, it admits degrees in regard of the extent of revelation; as the Apostles, when Christ was upon the earth, they had a degree of faith, but when Christ ascended, then there was more revelations, then they grew from faith to

faith, because they grew from revelation to revelation, then the Spirit of God was sent into their hearts to reveal all things, and to lead them into all truth, you know they had abundance of revelations afterwards. So in this regard, in regard of the extent, faith receives degrees, not because the habit is increased, but because the revelations and objects are more: And therefore that is the comfort of poor Christians, those that are yet ignorant, they may have a true habit, and as true a grace in the heart; and though a man be more conversant in Scripture, and knows more then they, he hath more revelations, and in that sense, though he have a greater faith then the other, yet the other hath a like precious faith with him, in regard of that grace.

So, we see how faith receives degrees in these three respects.

Now, last of all, that faith that gives assurance, that pacifieth and comforteth the heart, which is nothing but a reflect act, by which we know and are persuaded that we have taken Christ, and that our sins are forgiven, this admits of degrees of proof. And here, as the evidences of sanctification are more, so is the assurance; as the Apostle saith, the Spirit witnesseth to our spirit; he discovers good things to us, we had need of the light of the Spirit, to judge aright of the sincerity of the graces that we have, we shall go amiss else, we shall not be able, except we have the Spirit to help and assist us, and so we grow from assurance to assurance.

Now for the second part, that we must grow in all these.

First, as faith admits of degrees, so we must labor to grow in all these degrees.

First labor to grow to a more full and firm assent, by that means we shall draw nearer to Christ, and receive him in a greater measure: Mark, this very act of taking Christ, that immediately justifies, but it is fed with assurance

in the understanding, it is that which doth increase, and strengthen, and supply this action of the will in taking Christ. So that, the more strong assent the mind and understanding of a man gives to those truths which concern justification, delivered in the Scripture, the stronger his will is in taking Christ: As in the Act of marriage, a Woman takes such a one to be her husband, but yet there are degrees in the will, one may take him with greater greediness, with a more full persuasion that it is best for her, with more love, and with more resolution: So, the stronger the assent is that we give to the promises of God, wherein he assures us of the pardon of our sins, wherein Christ is offered freely unto us, the more we take Christ, and so the union is greater between us, we are linked and knit together, and married, as it were, in a greater degree.

Secondly, in regard of difficulty, which is the second thing wherein faith admits degrees, when we believe hard things, or easy things propounded with slender arguments. Labor to grow in this: for this is very profitable for you; I will give you but these two instances.

You know what Moses lost, and what Abraham got; Moses lost Canaan, he lost the honor of carrying in the people, he lost the honor of concluding his work, when he had taken so much pains, and all because he did not believe when he struck the Rock, for want of faith. Abraham now, that believed things that were of a high, of a difficult nature, you see what he got by it; for this cause, saith the Lord, I will do thus and thus, because thou hast not spared thine only Son, which is repeated, Rom. 4. Abraham being strong in faith, gave glory to God. And therefore, you see, Abraham is set above all men, he is the Father of all the faithful, he is the head, the top of those to whom God showed mercy, he showed mercy to all for Abraham's sake: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Abraham is first, this did Abraham get

forever, because he believed in God in so great a matter; this you shall gain, if you will believe, it will bring a great reward, yea it will not only bring a reward, such as Abraham had, but it will bring increase of the same faith, God will reveal more to you, and give you more of his Spirit, as he did to Nathaniel: Believest thou? For this saith Christ, thou shalt see greater things then these: If we believe in difficult cases, God will make us with facility to believe them another time.

Thirdly, for the multitude of revelations, for the extent of faith, that way we should labor to be filled full of faith, as Barnabas is said to be full of faith; And how is that? By studying the Word much, for therein will God reveal this: this is it that Paul magnifies so much in 2 Cor. 12, that which he gloried in, he doth not name it in his own person, but saith, I knew a man in Christ had such a revelation: he glories not in this, that he had wealth, or honor, but in the multitude of revelations; that of all other might have exalted Paul, but he was wise, he knew what he did when he was so apt to be exalted, in that it seems there was some extraordinary excellency in it.

Lastly, labor to get full assurance, the more assurance you have, the more love.

Again, you shall do the more work when once we are assured that our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord, as 1 Cor. 15, ult. it will make us abound in the works of the Lord.

Again, it establisheth a man in well doing, he shall never hold out and be constant till he come to have assurance that he shall not lose his reward. I cannot stand on this point: I will name the Uses, that so I may not leave the point unfinished.

The first is a Use of much comfort, if there be such degrees in faith, then let us not be discouraged, though we come not to the highest, if we have but

a little, yet since there are degrees, this is enough to make us partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and of salvation. The end of this is to comfort those which are apt to be discouraged. A little grain of true Muske is able to sweeten a great deal; So if faith be true, a little true faith will perfume all the heart and soul, it hath influence into everything, and it puts a good tincture upon all that a man doth, though it be but little, yet the influence is great, Therefore though thou have not a great measure of faith, if thou have a little, comfort thyself with that; we know, the least bud draws sap from the root, as well as the greatest branches, as truly; so they that bud, that are but yet in the beginning of faith, yet they are as truly grafted into Christ and receive life from him, as those that are grown Christians. And therefore be not discouraged because thou hast not, as yet, a great measure of Faith, say not, because I am not as strong as such, therefore I am nobody, reason not so, if thou have but as much as will bring thee within the door, within the Covenant, within compass once; it is true, when a man is within the door, there are greater degrees, he may go farther into the house, or a little way in, but all is one when he is in once: So in faith, a little faith is enough to put a man within the Covenant, to put one within the Gate of Heaven, as it were; indeed when they are in, some go further, and some go not so far: but if thou be in at all, comfort thyself with that, and think not that every little infirmity shall break the Covenant when thou art in: No, that which makes a divorce betwixt God and you, will do it, but every infirmity doth not that. Take heed therefore of robbing God of his glory, and yourselves of comfort; you know what a Father he is, he is a tender, and a wife Father: we reckon it wisdom in parents, when they consider the infirmities of their children, God is wise, let us go to him, a Father will bear with his son and receive him again and again, though he have infirmities: So God is thy Father, what

though he see many failings in thee, what though he see we have little grace, or little faith, yet we are sons, God will spare us; and therefore cast not away your hope, but labor to know that though you be but as smoking Flax, yet there is fire there, as well as if it were all on a flame.

Now it is Satan's end indeed to discourage, and remember but that, that the thing he labors, is to persuade you that you have no faith, and that a little will not serve the turn, and that because thou art not so strong as the strongest Christians, that therefore thou hast a false heart, and art nobody at all; his end is to discourage, labor to resist him. And we that are Ministers of Christ, we are in this case to comfort and encourage you, as Paul saith, we were gentle among you, as a Nurse among her children; we should be tender over you, and comfort and encourage you, we are not Lord's of your faith. And therefore in Ezekiel 33, it was the fault of the Shepherds, they ruled all the people with rigor, but we are helpers of your joy; for what have we to do, but what our Master hath set us about to do? As he did; how did he behave himself? The smoking Flax, he did not blow it with a tender breath to kindle it more, he dealt not roughly with it: So the Ministers of God should labor to build men up, to draw them on; Indeed sometimes the Minister must be sharp, to wake men when they sleep, to discover hypocrites, and temporizing professors, to teach those to know themselves, that have a form of godliness, without the power thereof, here the Word preached must be a two-edged sword, that must pierce between the marrow and the joints; here the Word must be as the Thunder and Lightning, it must have terror in it: So Christ comes with his Fan in his hand, and with his Axe in his hand, he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire, and hew down the unfruitful Trees; but this is to be understood of those that are false-hearted, those that are not sound, that have Christ offered them, but do not

receive him. Indeed, to those our Ministry is sharp, but for others it is not so: And therefore in Ezekiel 34, we are to do as the Shepherds do there with their Flocks, some Sheep are weak, and are not able to go the pace of the rest; some are broken, some are lost, and some are gone astray, and some are great with young; our business is to seek those that are lost, to drive all according to the pace of the weakest, to bind up the broken, to carry them in our arms; thus Christ did, and if we fail in this, Christ, who is the great Shepherd of the Flock, he sees it, if we go astray, he fetches us in; if we be broken, and have lost our wool, and be not in right order, he binds us up, he feeds us, and tenders us; thus Christ deals with you: And therefore be not discouraged, though thou be not so strong as the strongest, yet if thou be a Sheep, if thou be in the fold, if thou hast the least degree of faith, it is able to make thee partaker of this righteousness, although thou have not the highest degree, though thou have not that excellency that others have.

The second use is, to exhort you to grow in faith, (and so I end) content not yourselves with a little, a small measure of faith, though notwithstanding a little will serve to put you in the state of salvation, yet it should be your wisdom to get a great degree, as the Apostle saith, 2 Pet. 1:13. Trust perfectly in the grace brought in by the revelation of Christ: (Mark it) for it is an excellent place for this purpose; study it, and think well of it, trust perfectly in the grace revealed; that is to say, do it not by halves, let not there be some odd reckonings between God and thee, stand not in distance from him, but trust upon him perfectly, believe fully and assuredly that your sins are forgiven you, believe fully the grace that is given you through Christ, do it perfectly, thoroughly, trust perfectly in the grace brought in by Christ, that is our fault that we do it not in such a manner; hence it is that our Joy is weak, our grace is weak, trust perfectly, that your

Joy may be full, that you may have full communion and fellowship with Christ, the benefit is exceeding great when we trust perfectly, and why will you not? Why should you limit the holy one of Israel? It was their sin and transgression to limit him in his power and all-sufficiency, as if he were not able to do such and such things, and is it not as great a sin to limit him in his mercy and goodness? Why cannot he forgive sins and transgressions, that in all circumstances are the greatest sins, in what nature soever? To think otherwise, is to limit the holy one of Israel; trust perfectly therefore. It is not a little that will serve the turn, as the Apostle saith, 2 Pet. 3, ult. grow in grace, there is need of it; you shall find, that as you wade further in the profession of Christianity, so you shall have need of more strength, you shall have greater employment, therefore you have more need of growth to go forward, and persevere.

Again, you shall meet with greater temptations and assaults, if you be not more strong then at the first, you are not able to resist.

Again, If you grow in faith, you shall grow likewise in Joy, and that is a thing which we have continual use of, that is of only use to comfort and strengthen us, to make us abound in the works of the Lord, that helps us to go through all variety of conditions, that enables us to abound and to want, to pass thorough good report and evil report, to suffer and endure persecution, now the more you grow in faith, the more you grow in joy, as the Apostle saith, Rom. 15:13. The God of peace fulfill you with all joy by believing: So that the more we believe, the more joy, the more consolation we have.

Again, the more you grow in faith, the more you shall gain the favor of God, the more you shall win his love; there is nothing in the World doth so much win the favor of God, as a great degree of faith: and therefore, though

thou mayest be saved with a less degree, yet that thou mayest be in a greater degree of favor, seek more faith; and this, though it be reckoned a small matter to have a great degree of God's favor, yet, it is the greatest dignity in the world; Look upon all the difference of men, it is their difference in the favor of God that makes them so. Why was Moses a man above all the rest? Saith God I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy; I have chosen Moses: look to what difference of men you will: look into what estate, what condition thou wouldest have, either for thy soul or thy body, whatsoever it be, it is by the grace and favor of God in Christ Jesus, that all thy comfort and consolation increaseth.

What shall make me grow in the favor of God?

I answer, there is nothing that causeth God to set so much by us as faith: the woman of Canaan, see what cause Christ had to give her such a great commendation, great is thy faith, and because her faith was great, therefore he set her at so high a rate. So the Centurion, saith Christ, I have not found so great faith in Israel, and that is the thing that he set so great a price upon. So Jacob, when he got the name of Israel, when he prevailed with God, certainly it was the greatest blessing that ever he had: Why was that? Because he showed the greatest faith that ever he did, it was a strong faith that prevailed with God: And what set him at so high a rate in God's Book? It was the faith he had in God, therefore he is remembered in the whole Book of God for his faith, Therefore the more faith you have, the more God prizeth you, it is it that wins his love. I cannot stand upon the arguments why we should grow in faith, they are many; The more faith we have, the more powerful are our prayers in prevailing with God, for faith gives strength to them.

Again, the more faith you have, the more you bring glory to God; if there be much faith, there will be much fruit, it is the root of all grace, as, John 15:8. Herein is my Father glorified, that you bring forth much fruit. Get much faith then if you will have much fruit, that you may bring glory to God: as if he should say, If a man have but some faith, he brings forth fruit, yet there shall be something wanting: but when a man is eminent, when he is conspicuous, when he is as a great light that every man turns his eye to, when he is as a Tree that brings forth much fruit, which turns the eyes of the beholders to it, So it is with Christians, herein, saith Christ, is my Father glorified, &c.

A Christian hath no such motive as this, he shall glorify God exceedingly, if he have abundance of faith, he shall have abundance of every Grace, he shall grow rich in good works; this is that which we should all labor for: I cannot stand to press it further. So much for this time, and for this Text.

FINIS.

Part II. Of Effectual Faith.

SERMON I.

1 THESS. 1:3.
Remembering your effectual Faith, &c.

In the former Verses, the Apostle setteth down this general, We give thanks always for you, making mention of you in our prayers, without ceasing. First, he tells them that he prays for them; and then he tells them more particularly, that his prayer was a thanksgiving. And this giving of thanks for them, he expresseth by the continuance of it, he did it constantly, without ceasing, (not by fits) making mention of you in my prayers. Then he names the particulars for which he gives thanks, namely these three: For their,

Effectual Faith,

Diligent Love,

Patient hope.

Now these three Graces he describeth and setteth forth three ways:

First, from a certain property or character which distinguisheth the true faith from the false faith, the true love from the false love, the true hope

from false hope. I give not thanks for every faith, but for such a faith as is effectual, (that is the property or character by which the truth of faith is discerned.) Again, not for every love, but for such a love as is laborious, (for so the word signifieth.) Thirdly, not for every hope, but for such a hope as makes you patient; that is the character by which to know hope. And this is the first way whereby he describeth these Graces.

Secondly, he describeth them from the object upon which these Graces are pitched, and that is Jesus Christ our Lord, that is to say, I give thanks for the faith you have in Christ, for the love you have towards him, for the hope you have of what he will do for you: I give thanks for that faith, for that love, for that hope, that hath Christ for the object of it.

Thirdly, he describeth these graces from the sincerity of them: I give thanks for all these graces that you have in the sight of God; that is to say, not in the sight of man only; as if he should have said, many make a profession of faith, and go for believers in God, and for lovers of God, and men judge them so: but you have it in the sight of God: that is, not only in the sight of men, not only in your own fancy, apprehension, and opinion, but indeed, in good earnest, in sincerity.

Lastly, In the sight of God our Father: he describes God by this property, he is a Father. I need not say more for the opening of the words. We will come to that point for which we have chosen them, which is the first thing for which he gives thanks.

Remembering your effectual Faith.

This point we will deliver to you out of them, that, The Faith that saves us must be effectual.

This Doctrine we have need to add to that which we formerly delivered: for having said so much of faith, that faith is that that saveth men, and that

there is no more required of you, but to take the gift of righteousness, only that you receive Christ, only that you believe in God that justifieth the ungodly; that is, that you only accept of that justification that God is ready to give to every man, be he never so ungodly. Now (when we hear so much of faith, and that there is nothing at all required of us, but a mere taking, left any man should be deceived, and run away with a false opinion, that if he have but a naked apprehension, and no more, he shall do well enough,) I have chosen this Text, that you may know what kind of faith it is that is required of us, namely effectual faith. The faith that saves us must be effectual.

Now Saint Paul adding this word to it, (remembering your effectual faith,) he gives us this intimation, that there is a faith which is not effectual; there is a faith in the world, that goes for true faith, which, if it be examined, is not a faith that saves. We see, through the Scriptures, much mention made of a certain faith which men had, which yet was not a saving faith: we see, many came and believed in our Savior, but he would not commit himself to them: for he knew what was in their hearts. Here was a faith to believe in him: nay further, it was such a faith as had some effect too, (for it made them come to him) and yet, for all this, it was not such a faith as God accepts, it was not an effectual faith.

So when John Baptist came, before Christ, there were many hundreds that came to him, and rejoiced in his light, but it was not effectual, but a counterfeit faith that they had, notwithstanding all that.

So there came many that were invited to the Wedding, so that the house was full; but yet every man had not a Wedding garment. There was a certain faith which brought them to the House, but they had not true faith, they had not the Wedding garment; that is, they had not such a faith as could produce

and bring forth in them a conjugal affection, which is the Wedding garment. So two of the four grounds had faith, they brought forth some fruit, that faith strengthened and enabled them to do so much as they did; but yet it was not true faith, it was not the faith which the fourth ground had.

And not only in the New Testament, but in the Old Testament also, there is often mention made of such a faith, and of such a trust in God, as enabled men to do much, but it was not an unfeigned trust, it was not effectual, but as it is, Jeremiah 3:10. Treacherous Judah hath not turned to me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord. Therefore certainly, saith the Lord, their turn of evil and misery shall come: they trusted in God, but not with their whole heart.

So likewise, Deut. 5:25 the people there desire Moses to go and receive the Commandments from God for them, and whatsoever God should say to them, that they would do: here was a fair profession; it is likely themselves thought it to be sound and good, yet Moses tells them they were deceived in it: Oh (saith he) that this people had a heart to do this indeed. So, we see, there is a faith that is not effectual, and therefore we have the more need to look to it, because there is so much false faith in the World. As, when you that are Tradesmen, do hear that there are so many counterfeit Drugs, or so many counterfeit Colors, or whatsoever you deal in, you will look the more to it; so we should look the better to our faith in this regard. Therefore to open this point a little, we will do these three things:

First, I will show the cause why there is so much ineffectual faith, why there is so much faith that is not sound and substantial.

Secondly, I will show wherein the efficacy of faith consists, what it is for faith to be effectual.

Thirdly, I will show the reasons, why God will accept no other faith at our hands, why we cannot be saved, unless we have such a faith.

For the first, namely the causes of ineffectual faith, the reasons why the faith of many is ineffectual, that it works not powerfully, that it is not substantial, you shall find them to be these five.

First, the vanity or ineffectualness of faith ariseth upon our taking of Christ upon mis-information, when we know not who it is that we take, when there is an error in the person we take, when we understand not aright what we do. Many do as the young man that came running to Christ, he came hastily, he made account to be his follower, but Christ tells him that he might mistake him, and therefore he lets him know what it was to follow him, what a Master he had betaken himself unto: saith he, if thou wilt be my servant, go sell all that thou hast. As if he should have said; Mistake me not, if thou wilt be mine, thou must be mine altogether, thou must take up thy Cross, thou must part with anything. Now, if the young man had gone away with this mistake, that he had not understood Christ, he had become a Disciple of Christ, as well as others, but it had been upon a mistake.

And so likewise that Scribe, to whom Christ said, The Son of Man hath not whereon to lay his head. As if he should have said, It may be thou lookest for ease, for Bed and Boord with me, thou lookest for a pleasant life, but it will not be so; I lead not a pleasant life myself, I have not whereon to lay my head; I am not in so good a condition as many Fowls are, as many Beasts are, I have not a nest, I have not a den; that is, I have not that which should be instead of these to me, and therefore know what thou doest before thou betake thyself to my service. Now men, not considering this, they put themselves upon Christ, they take upon them the profession of his Name, before they enter into a serious consideration, and

this is it that causeth faith to be ineffectual: as one speaking of false fortitude, names this for one amongst the rest; Many (saith he) are valiant for want of experience: that is, they know not what the wars are, they know not what hardness they must endure, and therefore when they come to feel it, when they come to see what pains they must take, and what they must endure, they shrink: so it is in this; many men enter upon the profession of Christianity, upon that warfare, (for so our profession is called) I say, many enter upon it out of mistake; they understand not what it is, they have not experience of it, they know not how many will come against them, they know not that the force of their enemies is so great, they know not that they have so many thousands to meet them; therefore they undertake the business, they go about the enterprise, and it comes to naught, because they considered not what they did. Therefore, saith Christ, let him that builds a House, set down before what it will cost. That is to say, if a man consider not what Christ looks for at his hands, if he consider not beforehand, that, if he will be Christ's, he must crucify the flesh, with the affections thereof, that he must deny himself in those things that are dearest to him, he must be content to be hated of all men, this is a thing that will go hard. This is that, that a man can hardly endure to be scoffed at, to have every man his enemy, to part with all his friends, to live a despised man, to suffer persecution, that the end of one persecution should be the beginning of another, and the end of one suffering the beginning of another.

Again, for a man to have his inward lusts and desires so mortified, and so crucified, and so restrained, to be so strait-laced in everything, I say, because men consider not this, what it is to take this profession on them, when the time comes, what do they? They go back again. Hence it is, that many, out of flashes, and in good moods, will be ready to embrace

Religion; but we see by experience, how soon there is an end of it. As the people, when Christ came to Jerusalem, how ready were they to receive him, with blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord, and Hosanna, &c? But how soon were they gone again? So many young comers on, in this City, and many, even of our profession, in the beginning of their time, are ready to take upon them the profession of Christ; but afterwards, when they come to see what must be done, when they see that Christ and the world cannot stand together, that Christ and pleasures cannot stand, but they must be content to go another course, then they go back, and their faith proves ineffectual: this, I say, is the first cause, when men are not thoroughly informed what they do.

A second cause of the ineffectualness of faith is, when men take Christ out of fear, when they are in some present distress, and would have ease, and upon this they take Christ, not because of any true love to him, but because they would be delivered out of that present exigent which they are in; and this is as usual as the other. How many are there, that, when God affrights them a little with the terrors of the Law, when their consciences are troubled, when then begin to apprehend Hell, so long as they are in such a condition, they are willing to take Christ: but as soon as these storms are over, and their hearts are at peace again, when their consciences return to some quiet, and when there is an end of those terrors, then there is an end of their religion, and of their faith, so that their faith proves ineffectual. So, many men, when they are in some great calamity; as, you know, Pharaoh, when he was in the present strait, then he would do anything: so many men under great crosses, afflictions, and disgraces in the World, then they will be religious, but let them have peace and prosperity, let them abound in all things again, and they will forget God. Such Isaiah complains of, Isaiah 58,

they hang down their heads for a day: That is, when the storm is on them, when they have some affliction, for such a time, they will do anything; there is nothing more usual than this. When men come to have sickness, and to apprehend death, what will not a man do for his salvation at such a time? And therefore you find by experience, that few of those that make such promises in their sicknesses, when they apprehend death, do keep them afterward: for they come from fear, and therefore they last not.

Take any man, the most ambitious man in the world, when he comes to die, the praise of men is then nothing to him, then he will part with anything. Take a covetous man, to save his life, what will not he do? A Merchant that loves his goods never so well, yet when the Ship is ready to sink, he will cast them out, he is willing to lose them, rather than to lose his life: So when a man comes to such an exigent, when he comes to stand in the gate of destruction, as it were, when he sees Heaven and Hell before him, he is ready to do anything then, not because indeed he loves Christ, or is willing to take him, but to save himself; as the foolish Virgins, when the Gate was shut, then they cry, Lord, Lord, open to us: They would fain have had Christ then, not out of love to Christ; for then they would have taken him before: It was not out of any love to the Bridegroom, but out of fear, and fence of their own misery that they had when they were shut out, and that made them cry, Lord, Lord, open to us. And this is the second cause that makes the faith of men to be ineffectual, when they take Christ out of fear.

The third cause is, when men take Christ, not out of love to his person, but out of love to those commodities and advantages they shall have by him, when they look not upon him, when they fix not their eyes upon his person, and the beauty that is in him: but they look upon the Kingdom, they

look upon the wealth they shall have, they look to what they shall get by him. This faith proves ineffectual; because when other commodities are presented, that are present, and sensible, and in their apprehension greater than these, then they let Christ go again. Men do in this case, as those that marry for wealth; if that be their end, when they have gotten the wealth that they would have, when they have that which they desire, they care for their Wives no longer: so in this case; when men look at nothing but simply at heaven, disjoined from Christ; or, when they look at some other advantages, when they look at an earthly Kingdom, (as many of the Disciples did) when they look for great matters by Christ in this world, when they find it quite otherwise, when they lose in the world, and all that they have is in hope, it is in things spiritual, that are not seen with the eye, things that are not sensible, then they are ready to slip from Christ again. So it is usually among us, many take Christ for advantages, as Christ tells them plainly, John. 6. (saith he) you seek me, not for the Miracles which I did, but for the loaves: That is to say, not out of love to the work, not because you judge aright of the things of the spirit, not because you love grace, but because you love some advantage that you have by religion, some profit that it brings you for the present, and because you would be freed from Hell for the future; such things as carnal men may see, and be affected with: but this will not hold out.

The manner of these men is to seek mercy and not grace. If they can be but assured that it shall go well with them, that they shall be freed from the fears they might have of Hell, that they may have some hope of being in a better condition, this is that they look for: but as for grace, for repairing the Image of God in their hearts, to be enabled to obey Christ in all things, this is a thing that they desire not, this is a thing they long not for: therefore the

secret inquisition of their heart is, What good shall we get by it? They inquire not, what excellency, and what beauty there is in Christ, what manner of one he is, that they may love him; but what good shall we get by him? What advantage will it be to us? Contrary to that in Cant. 5:12, when the Spouse is there asked what the reason was that she followed her Beloved so much? And that she magnified him so much? She doth not tell them, because I shall have such things by him, or he is thus wealthy, or I shall have this honor by matching with him; but mark her answer; My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand, his head is as the most fine Gold, his looks are black as a Raven, his eyes are as the eyes of Doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set: and so she goes along in a holy delectation; This is my beloved, oh ye Daughters of Jerusalem. I say, so it is with those that take Christ in good earnest, that look upon the excellencies of Christ, as he is considered in himself: not that the other is excluded: for we may look at the advantages, and commodities that we have by him, but not upon that alone; but, mark, in her answer she describeth what a one he was, and therefore she loved him. My Beloved is white and ruddy, the fairest of ten thousand, such a one is my Beloved, therefore, chap. 1, ver. 2, she describes him to be such a one as he is; and (saith she) therefore the Virgins love thee: as if she had said, there is a Harlots love, that looks only what they shall have by him: but none but Virgins, that is, those that have chaste and good affections, those that have holy and right affections, indeed the Virgins love thee; but the others do not: for they have adulterous and Harlot-like affections, (as we may call them, when a man looks not unto God himself, but to his own advantage and profit.) And this is the third cause that makes faith prove ineffectual.

Fourthly, faith proves ineffectual for want of preparation, and humiliation that should go before it; because the heart is not circumcised, the heart is not broken yet, it is not emptied of those things that it must be emptied of before a man can take Christ, and therefore in Deut. 30:6, saith Moses, The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts, and then you shall love him with all your soul, and with all your strength. As if he should have said, It is impossible you should cleave to God, to love him indeed, to take him in good earnest, unfeignedly, with all your hearts, except first your hearts be circumcised; therefore the Lord your God will circumcise your hearts; that is, he will humble you, he will break your hearts, that your lusts shall be mortified in you; he will take away those strong, violent, those carnal and sinful desires, that abounded in your hearts before, and when that is done, then you shall love the Lord in good earnest, not feignedly, but with all your hearts: Now, if a man come to take Christ before he be thus circumcised, he takes him in vain, he takes him so, as that he cannot hold him, nor continue with him.

Now this circumcision is done by a certain work of preparation or humiliation, by which these strong lusts are broken in us: therefore, when men come to Christ, before the Law hath been a sufficient Schoolmaster to them, before it hath indicted them, before it have put them in prison, and told them that they must pay every farthing, (when a man comes to this, he seeth that he cannot do it, then he goeth to Christ, and beseecheth him to pay his debt,) before the Law have done this, men care not for Christ, they take him negligently, and therefore they hold him not. And for this it was, that before Christ came into the World, he would make way before him: so, before he will come into a man's heart, the Mountains must be brought down, the spirit of Elias must make way; that is, there must be a sharp

ministry to show men their sins, that they may be thoroughly humbled, and prepared, or else they will never take Christ so as to keep close to him.

A man must be brought to have a present apprehension of death, and of the wrath of God, and damnation, or else he will not lay hold on the Horns of the Altar; as Joab, when he saw that Solomon would slay him indeed, and take away his life, then he lays hold on the Horns of the Altar, and would not let go; so when a man sees present death, he will keep close to Christ, and till this be wrought, a man may take Christ, but his faith will be ineffectual, because indeed, till a man be soundly humbled, he never accounts and reckons sin to be the greatest evil; and till he do that, he never accounts Christ to be the greatest good, and if a man do not reckon Christ to be the chief good of all other, there will be somewhat propounded, which will be esteemed before him, and when that comes, he lets go Christ. But when there is a sound humiliation, which makes a man prize Christ above all other things, then faith proves effectual; that is, a man holds out, he goes thorough with the work, he cleaves so to Christ, as that he will not part with him: but for want of this, because men's hearts are not circumcised, because way is not made, because the Mountains are not brought down, because the Ministry is not sharp enough to prepare them, hence it is that their faith is vain, and comes to nothing.

Fifthly and lastly, the faith of men proves ineffectual, because it is not well grounded, they take to themselves a persuasion of the remission of their sins, upon an uncertain ground; they are not built upon the Rock, they take Christ, but they are not well bottomed: for there is a certain false persuasion, which is nothing else but a strong fancy, which makes a man to think that his sins are forgiven, and that he is in a good estate: but when it comes to examination, he can give no sound reason for it. When men take

Christ on this manner, when they are persuaded their sins are remitted, and yet have no good ground for this persuasion and peace, it holds not out, it continues not. Therefore to such as these Saint Paul speaks, Eph. 4:10. Be not children (saith he) in understanding, to be carried about with every wind of doctrine. As if he had said, Indeed you are such as have embraced Christ, but you must not do as children do, that being not able to use their own judgment, they see what other men do, and they hear what they say: but, saith he, you must learn to be men, that you may use your own understanding, that you may see with your own eyes, or else you will be like a Ship tossed and carried about with every wind. That is to say, it was a false persuasion that drove you to Christ, and another wind will drive you from him: therefore be not children in understanding. So, I say, when you have a persuasion of the remission of your sins, of believing in Christ, be not children in understanding, see that it be soundly grounded. That is a condition required by the Apostle, Col. 1:23. Christ hath reconciled us to God the Father, to be blameless, and without fault. But (saith he) I must put in this condition, If you continue grounded, and stablished in the faith, that you be not moved from the hope of the Gospel. As if he should have said, There is a certain faith, by which you may take Christ, and so you may be persuaded of reconciliation; but, saith he, that will not do, unless you be grounded and stablished in the faith. The word in the Original signifieth, Except you be so built as a house is built upon a sure foundation, as a Tree that is soundly rooted, when you are so pitched upon Christ, that when new objects come, new temptations come, things that you never thought on, yet nothing can move you from the hope of the Gospel: If you be not grounded, you may take a hope to yourselves of reconciliation, and of being without fault in the sight of God, but it will never hold out, unless it be soundly

grounded. Hence you see therefore, that if a man be not well rooted, if he be not built upon the Rock, if this persuasion of the remission of his sins be not well bottomed, that causeth him not to hold out, but to fall off again. Whereas it is required of us, that we keep so close to God, in such a case our faith should be built on so sure a ground, that nothing in the World should move us, no not the most probable arguments that may be brought in: as we see, Deut. 13, saith Moses, If a Prophet, or a dreamer of dreams come, and give you signs and wonders, and the thing that he foretold come to pass, that you could not answer anything, you can see no reason but that he should be a true Prophet, saith he, God will put you to such trials, to prove you to see if you be soundly grounded. All that are saved, he will have them so fixed, he will have them take their salvation upon so good a ground, upon such infallibility, that whatsoever shall be brought against them, they shall keep them close to God. This is that that we should labor for, and for want of this, when men have a confused persuasion that their sins are forgiven, and think it enough, if their hearts be quiet, if they have rest in their consciences, that they be not troubled, and never examine what the grounds are: I say, for want of this it is, that in temptation they fall away; when other men come and preach other doctrines, then they are plucked away with the error of the wicked, as Peter saith, 2 Pet. 3:17. Be not plucked away with the error of the wicked, but grow in knowledge. As if he should have said, If you have but some persuasion, but some good opinion that Christ is yours, and that it is best for you to cleave to him, this will not hold, you will be plucked away with those errors that other men are plucked away with. This is the first thing which we have done with, to show the causes of the ineffectualness of faith.

In the next place, I am to declare unto you what it is that maketh faith effectual, wherein the effectualness of faith consists. In this we will show you three things.

First, in what sense it is called effectual faith: for the very opening of this word which the Apostle useth, will open a Window to us, it will open a crevice of light, to see into the nature of the thing itself.

Secondly; we will show you particularly and distinctly, wherein this effectualness of faith consists.

Thirdly, we will show you how it is wrought, how this faith is made effectual in us; and when we have done these three, you will fully understand what effectual faith is.

First, for the opening of this very appellation, this name effectual faith: you shall find that a thing is said to be effectual in four respects.

First, we say a thing is effectual, when it doth its office, when it exerciseth that proper function that belongs to that quality, or that grace, or that gift, or that creature whatsoever it is; and when it doth not that, then we say it is ineffectual, when it doth not the thing that we look for from it. In this sense, faith is said to be effectual, when it doth the thing for which faith is, when it doth the thing that God expects of faith, that is the proper function of faith: and what that is, you heard before; namely to take Christ: If faith take Christ, it is effectual faith.

Now, for the opening of this a little further to you, to show you what this proper function of faith is. It is, when a man is so far persuaded of the truth of the Scriptures, of the truth of the promises, and doth so far appropriate them to himself, that he is willing to take Christ, though there be some doubting's and wavering's in him, yet if there be so much faith as to do the thing, this is properly effectual faith, though it be not perfect faith: For you

must know, that there is a doubting mingled with the best faith: Therefore when we say effectual faith, we do not mean that it is such a faith as is without doubting's, and without fears mingled with it: but, if it be such a faith as doth the thing itself, for which faith is appointed, it is properly said to be effectual faith. It is a point necessary for you to understand; and if you compare this that we have said (concerning this description, of this first explication of effectual faith) with that in Jam. 1:7,8, we shall see what the meaning is. He speaks there of doubting, and tells you, that those that doubt, they are like a wave of the Sea, tossed to and fro, and in the end they vanish away. Saith the Apostle, Let not such a man think to obtain anything at God's hands: for he is a double-minded man, and is unstable in all his ways. The meaning is, that there is such a faith that makes a man doubt, when he knoweth not what he should do, but is unstable; as a wave of the Sea, that is tossed to and fro: he is sometimes going towards God, sometimes from him again, and in the end he goes quite away. (Saith he) such a man shall not receive anything. Why? Because he is a double-minded man. Now, by a double-minded man, is not meant a man that hath one thing in his face, and another in his heart, one that pretends one thing, and intends another, (though the word be sometimes so taken, yet in that place it is not so to be understood) but by a double-minded man this is meant, when the mind is divided, between two objects, that it knows not which to choose, but stands as one in Bivio, that hath two ways before him, and knows not whether to go this way, or that way; a man that is distracted in his own mind, he knows not what to resolve on. Now when a man's faith comes to this, that he knows not whether to take Christ, or the World; he doubts whether he should choose, God, or the World, there is an uncertainty in his mind, that it is divided: sometimes he thinks it is best, and sometimes

he thinks it not best, *aliud stans, aliud sedens*, when he thus wavers, this is not effectual faith. But now, if a man go beyond this, and pitch upon Christ resolutely, when he goeth so far, as that he resolves to take him, although he have many pluck-backs, although there be many things that may dissuade him from it, though there be some reluctancy in his mind, some fear whether it be the best way or no, yet if he pitch on Christ, he chooseth him rather than the World, though he have some inclination to the World still, though there be somewhat offensive in his heart, though, as I said, there be some doubts, some fears whether it be the best way or no, yet if faith come so far as to pitch on Christ, to choose him, to take him, this is properly effectual faith. Indeed, it is far from perfect faith, but it is effectual faith, and such as shall save you. Therefore you shall find this rule among the School-men, (I name them, because they were Papists, and their doctrine of faith is contrary to this) they say, it is not faith, except it be a full persuasion; they speak not there of resting on Christ, that is not the thing, but of the full persuasion of the truth of the thing to be believed; yet notwithstanding, you shall find this rule among some of the Schoolmen, *Fides non excludit omnem dubitationem*: faith doth not exclude all doubting, but that doubting that overcometh, that doubting that casteth the balance the contrary way: if it be such a doubting as doth not overcome, it may stand with true and sound faith. So, I say, if you would know now, what it is to pitch on Christ, and so to take him, though there be some reluctancy, some doubt, some fear, you shall know it by this: if a man have so taken him, that still he is growing, still his faith is prevailing, still his faith is overcoming those doubts and fears from day today, he is better and better resolved; I say, though his faith be not perfect at the first, yet if it be still thus on the growing hand, it is saving and effectual faith. Whereas

another man, that is not soundly rooted, that is divided thus, he takes Christ, but it is not upon any good ground, but as the Weather-cock stands such a way, while the wind blows that way, not because the Weather-cock is fixed, (for when the wind turns, the Weather-cock turneth too:) so, such men cleave to Christ, not because they have any good ground, but because they want temptations to a contrary way: let temptations from the World come, let there come reasons that they knew not before, let there come new objects, new allurements, which they knew not of before, they will forsake Christ again, but when the heart is fixed, when there is an Anchor that holds the soul though the ship waver, when there is an anchor, to hold it fast though it be much tossed to and fro, though there be much doubting, thou mayest be sure it is true and effectual faith.

This point you must mark; when I say it is effectual it is no more but when it thus pitcheth on Christ, though there be some doubting: It is so far from being true that faith must be without all doubting, that we may boldly say, it is not faith, except it have much doubting, unless there be some fears, unless there be some troubles within, that resist this faith, and strive against it; otherwise it is no faith: for certainly, there is no man that hath perfect faith, especially at the first, or afterward either, so as to set his heart fully at peace, and then if it be not perfect faith, if there be no doubting, there must be perfect flesh, that is, there is nothing but flesh, and if there be some faith which is imperfect, always in the beginning there must needs be doubting, because there is some flesh, and some spirit, there is fire and water, and therefore there must needs be striving. We may say of doubting, in this case, as we say of Thistles; they are ill weeds, but the ground is fat and good where they grow: so doubting is a thing that resists faith, it is bad, but it is a sign the heart is good where it is. So that, where there is all peace, where

there is no questioning, where the heart is not perplexed and troubled, and complains not, it is a sign that the strong man possesseth the House wholly; it is a sign there is nothing but flesh there. Therefore mark this point to your comfort, that if there be but so much faith as will produce this work of taking Christ, though there be some doubting's mingled with it, yet it is properly effectual faith, because it doth the thing, though not perfectly. That is the first acceptation of the word effectual, a thing is said to be effectual, when it doth the proper function of it, though it do it not perfectly, and thoroughly, yet, if it do it, it is said to be effectual: so faith, if it pitch upon Christ, though not so perfectly as afterwards it may, it is effectual.

Secondly, a thing is said to be effectual, as it is opposed to that which is vain and empty, to that which is but a name, a shadow of it, but is not such a thing indeed. So faith is said to be effectual, when it is true, real, and substantial, you know, there be empty clouds, we see the heavens many times full of clouds, but there is no rain follows, they are driven away with the winds, they are empty clouds, they are not clouds indeed: so there is a great show of faith sometimes, that makes a man show like these clouds, and yet it is vain and empty, no rain follows. A counterfeit Piece, although it show to be good money, yet, when we find it counterfeit, when we find it clipped, we cast it away: so true faith is said to be effectual, when it is opposed to vain faith: in Jam. 2, the later end of the Chapter, the Apostle speaks to that purpose, to show the difference between true faith, and dead faith, which is but the name of faith, but is not faith indeed.

Thirdly, a thing is said to be effectual, when it lieth not idle and still, but is doing something: As a Pilot in a Ship, he sitteth not still there, if he do sit still and do nothing, we may say he is an ineffectual Pilot, he were as good not be there: so when faith lies still in the heart, and is not stirred and

moved, nor shows itself in the fruits of it, this we say is ineffectual faith; whereas faith should be in the soul, as the soul is in the body, which is never there in vain, but still it is stirring, and showing itself by motion, by action, by doing somewhat or other. And in this sense faith is said to be effectual, when it is a stirring faith, when it is a lively and fruitful faith, that is doing somewhat in the soul of a man.

Last of all, a thing is said to be effectual, when it goes thorough with the work that it hath in hand: this differeth from that which I named first, therefore the Greek word, that is rendered effectualness, signifieth perfectness, to bring a thing to an end; so that faith is said to be effectual, that goes thorough with the work it undertakes; that is, when it sanctifieth the heart throughout, in respect of parts, and throughout in regard of time, when it brings a man to the end of his salvation, when it carries a man through all impediments, when it leaps over all difficulties; so that a growing, prevailing, overcoming faith, that is said to be an effectual faith, such a faith as leaves not the work half done; such a faith as leaves not the building in the beginning, in the rudiments, but sets it up, and puts the roof upon it; such a faith, which, though it may sink, as a Corke, for a time, yet it riseth again: such a faith as overcomes, and perfects the work of our salvation: in this sense faith must be effectual, and this differs from the other three: so that in these four senses faith is said to be effectual. And this is the first thing.

The second thing which we undertook, was to show you wherein the effectualness of faith consists. It consists in these four things. That which we said before to you, when we showed you the causes of the ineffectualness of faith, will make good way to this.

The first thing wherein the effectualness of it is seen, is in being well built; that is, when the preparation is sound, and full, that makes way for it.

The second is, when the understanding is clear, and a man believeth the promise of God upon sure and infallible grounds, when he seeth them perspicuously and distinctly.

The third is, when the will takes Christ, and takes him out of love, not out of fear, not out of love to the advantage only by him, not out of mistake:

The fourth is, when it turns not only the will, but all the affections, when it turns the whole man, when it shoots itself into life, and practice.

First, I say, faith is effectual, when there is a good way made for it, when the rubbish and false earth is taken away where it should be built; that is, when the humiliation is sound and good, when the preparation is perfect, when it is such as makes a man fit for the Kingdom of God: For I find that phrase used, He that puts his hand to the Plow, and looks back, is unfit for the Kingdom of God: As if he had said, there are certain men, which come to the profession of Christianity, as many come to husbandry, which is a hard employment; some there are which do this, and go back again. Why? Because they are not fit for the Kingdom of God, that is, they are not thoroughly prepared for it: that is to say, when a man is not thoroughly humbled to know what sin is, and what the wrath of God is, he is not fit for the Kingdom of God; but if he do come to Christ, if he do begin to believe, he will go back again. So a man is properly said not to be fit for the Kingdom of God, till he be thoroughly humbled, till he have tasted the bitterness of sin, till he have felt what the Devils yoke is. As it was with the Israelites, put the case they had been carried out of Egypt before the time that they were, indeed they had not been fit for the Land of Canaan, because they would have been ready to have turned back in their hearts into Egypt,

and though the Lord laid load on them, though their yoke were hard, though he caused them to wander up and down long, yet all was little enough, still they were lingering after Egypt, and if they had been taken out of Egypt, before the tale of Brick was required of them, without giving them straw, before the taskmasters had dealt hardly with them, what would they have done? Might it not truly be said of them, they would not have been fit for Canaan? So in this case, if a man will take Christ, it is a laborious work, as laborious as husbandry, as laborious as putting the hand to the Plow, as taking the yoke. Now before a man have felt how hard the yoke is that he hath already, (for there be many that wear the yoke of Satan, and see no hardness in it, but go in a fair course, their consciences are not wounded with the sense of their sins, they never had afflictions wherein they tasted the wrath of God) alas, such men may come to put their hand to the Plow, but when they come to see what work they have in hand, they go back, they are not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. Till a man be weary, and heavy laden, with the burden of Satan, till he see Satan's yoke to be intolerable, he will never continue under the yoke of Christ: therefore let us consider whether we be fitted or no: this fitness is first required.

So again, we may take example from the Prodigal son, he was in his Fathers house, but he would not continue there, when he was there at the first, and lived as the other son did, because he had not been abroad in the World, to find the misery of being away from his Father, he was never pinched with affliction, with want of meat, till he was from his Father, he never knew what it was to be at his Fathers finding, till he had his stock in his own hand; he was not fit, and, we see, he continued not there: So, take a man that is brought up in his Fathers House, as it were, that hath tasted nothing but the sweetness of the promises, and all is well with him, he hath

drunk in the truth of the Gospel with his education, you shall find that this will not usually hold out: because he hath not found what misery it is to be out of his Fathers House, therefore he prizeth it not, such a one is not fit to continue, he is unfit for the Kingdom of God. Therefore the first thing that is required to make faith effectual, wherein the effectualness of faith consists, by way of preparation, to make way for it, is, when a man is soundly humbled and prepared, when it is such as will make them continue: you have a phrase used, Rev. 2:25. Hold fast till I come that which thou hast already. As if he should say, Many have hold of the Truth, they have hold of Christ, they have hold of the promises, but they hold them not fast, they hold them a while, but they hold them not fast till I come: To him that overcometh, &c. and, him that continueth to the end, will I make ruler over the Nations, &c. So, I say, till a man be thus made fit, he may take hold for a while, but he shall not hold fast till Christ come, but he will let go his hold, because he is not prepared with humility. This is that which is required in that place I formerly named, Matth. 10:6. If there be any worthy, (saith he) let your peace come upon them. That is, if there be any, when you come to preach the Gospel, that are so far broken and humbled, if there be any that are so far convinced of their sins that they prize me indeed, so that they hold me, and will not let me go for anything, but they are content to let all go, rather than me, such a man is worthy of me, such a man prizeth and esteemeth me, and your peace shall come upon him: That is, it shall come effectually upon him, it shall abide with him, and save his soul forever. So, I say, when there is so much humiliation wrought in the heart, when the Spirit so far convinceth a man of sin, that he comes thus to prize Christ, this is the first thing wherein effectual faith consists: for though it be not the very

thing wherein believing consists, yet it is that preparation, without which faith can never be found sound and effectual.

Secondly, when this is done, this is not all, when there is such a preparation made, that a man is willing to take Christ upon any conditions, yet now, if he shall not be well built, if he see not just ground to take him, if his understanding shall not see the truth of the promise so clearly, that he can build on it, that he can rest on it, that all the arguments in the World cannot draw him from it again, his faith will not be effectual. Therefore the second thing wherein the effectualness of faith consists, is to have it well built in the mind and understanding of a man, when he clearly seeth the truth of the promise, that he can build upon it infallibly. For your better understanding of this, you must know that then a man is said to be well built, to be rooted and grounded in faith, when he hath the first ground right, that so he proceeds from one to another, that it is not a confused superficial knowledge, to assent to the truth, and promises that are delivered in the Word, but when he hath a sure ground, the first ground, and the next, and so he proceeds along. As, for example, the first thing that a man must do, is to believe the Scriptures, to know that they are true and infallible, that they are the sure Word of God, when a man can say, this I know, and this I build upon. And besides that, then we look upon the promises which the Scriptures contain, wherein Christ, and forgiveness of sins is offered. Now if the first ground fail you, that is the bottom upon which the promises stands; therefore have that sure: when that is sure, you must have the promises sure, that is, you must consider the promises, and examine them, and see if this be the sense of the Scriptures; If there be so much light in you, as to say, I find it so, I find the Scriptures true, I believe them, I find these promises in the Scriptures, I find Christ offered to every creature

under heaven, I find that I have a warrant to take him; when a man, out of himself, out of an inward principle, out of his own proper judgment seeth this, and is convinced of the truth of this, that the promises are so, and that they belong unto him, that he may justly, upon good ground, appropriate them to himself; so that when he looks round about him, and considers all the objections that may be made, yet he can answer all arguments; when he falls down, and is fully convinced, and perfectly persuaded in his own mind, when a man thus apprehends the promises, when his understanding is rooted and grounded in the faith; that is the second thing wherein the effectualness of faith consists: And we see that described Eph. 2. Saith the Apostle there, You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but Saints, of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone. Mark, (saith he) you are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets; that is, you that are Saints, must consider what ground you have to take that name to yourselves: Saith he, you are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets; that is, you are not built upon the foundation, upon the word of a man, you are not built upon this Doctrine that I teach, merely because I teach it, but you are built upon the foundation of the Prophets, and Apostles: that is, you see the Prophets and Apostles deliver this Doctrine. I, but one may seek a further ground then that: What foundation have the Prophets and Apostles? Saith he, Christ is the chief corner stone on which they are built. So that when you have this tract of consequence, I see the promise is sure, Why? Because it is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, they have affirmed it. But how shall I know that they are sure? Because Christ himself hath spoken by them, he is the chief corner stone, when faith is thus grounded, then we are truly said to be built, and rooted, and

grounded in faith. Therefore, as the Samaritans said, John. 4:44. We believe, not because thou toldest us, not for thy words, but we have heard him ourselves, and we know that he is the Messiah, and Savior of the World. Now, if those Samaritans had only believed because the Woman brought that relation, their faith might have failed them, but when they heard Christ themselves, when they saw him with their own eyes, when they could say, in good earnest, out of their own knowledge: we know, that this is Christ, the Savior of the World, that is such a faith as will hold out. So, when a man doth only take a persuasion out of the general preaching of the Word, without a certain ground, it proves ineffectual faith; but when men believe, because themselves have seen, and out of that knowledge can say, they know Christ to be the Messiah, when they know Christ to be theirs, when they know Christ to be the Savior of the World; and so, by consequence, of them which are a part of the World, then they may be truly said to be built, to be rooted and grounded in faith. This is that that Saint John saith, 1 John. 1:19. We know that we are of God, and that all the World lieth in wickedness. We know that we are of God; that is, it is not a thing that we are uncertainly persuaded of, but it is a thing that we know as certainly as any man knows a thing that is before his eyes, as a man knows a thing of which he doubts not; we know that although all the World be against us, though all the World run another way, though all the World condemn us for vain men, idle men, for trusting in Christ crucified, yet we know that we are of God, and that all the World lieth in wickedness. I say, when a man holds out thus, when he is put to the trial, when a man knows in his own knowledge, that it is so, as Peter saith to Christ, John. 6:68, many had taken Christ, that went away again. Saith Christ to his Disciples, Will you also go away? Mark the answer that Peter gives: No: saith he, Whither should we

go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. I know and believe that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. As if he should say, It is impossible that I should go away, for I know and believe; that is, I know upon good ground, I have another manner of ground then they had: If I had no more ground then the rest, I should go away as well as they, but I know and believe that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, therefore it is impossible that I should ever forsake thee, although all should forsake thee. This is to be rooted and grounded in faith, in this second sense, when we see an infallible ground, a sure Rock, upon which our faith is built, and we are willing to adventure ourselves upon it, to adventure our goods, our name, our life, our liberty, that if a man be brought to Martyrdom, he can adventure himself, and put all that he hath upon it. This ground will hold out, I say, when the understanding of a man is thus built upon the Word, when a man is examined every way, when he is able to answer all arguments, and all objections that may be brought against it. This is the second thing wherein the effectualness of faith consists. I should add more, but I must defer them till the afternoon.

FINIS.

SERMON II.

1 THESS. 1:3.

Remembering your effectual Faith, &c.

The third thing, wherein the efficacy of faith is seen, is when we take Christ; this is the action of the will; when we take him in a right manner, when we take him so as to hold him, when we take him in such a manner, as that we are knit and united to him. That this is required:

First, I will show it in the general: it is a point that we have often mentioned heretofore, but to all that I have said, I will add that in Heb. 10:22. Let us draw near with a true heart, and assurance of faith. Mark it, first there must be an assurance of faith, that is in the understanding and mind of a man, and to that must be added drawing near, and that is an act of the will: for when we are assured of the truth of the promises, and have appropriated them to ourselves, then follows the act of the will; therefore in ver. 38, of that chap. it is said, The just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. That Antithesis, that opposition, that is made in that withdrawing of a man's self from God, is

opposed to faith, to drawing near to him; when a man not only believeth the promises, but accepts and receives them. Now to do this in a right manner, is that wherein the efficacy of faith doth principally consist. Now what is that? It is to take Christ, to draw near to him in a right manner; and then it is done, when you so take him, that you bring Christ into your hearts, to dwell there, as it is expressed, Eph. 3:17, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. That is, when there is an union made between Christ and us, when he comes into the heart, when he dwells in us, and we in him; when Christ is so brought into our hearts, that he lives there, and when we are so united to him, that we live in him; when he grows in us, as the Vine in the branches; and we grow in him, as the branches in the Vine: when faith hath done this, then it is an effectual faith, when it knits and unites us to Christ, as he saith, I will come in, and sup with him. That is, I will continue with him, I will live in him, and rule over him.

Now when Christ is in the heart, he is not there to no purpose; but, as Paul saith, I live in Christ, and he in me. I say, when our taking of Christ shall proceed so far, as to make this union betwixt us, therein this efficacy lieth; when the heart is knit to him, as the soul of Jonathan was to David, and when Christ shall be knit to us again, that we shall be content to leave Father and Mother, and to become one spirit with him, as it is, Eph. 5:23. It is a similitude expressing the union betwixt Christ and the Church: A man shall forsake Father and Mother, and shall cleave to his Wife. The word in the Original signifieth to glue: if there be any conjunction that is nearer then other, it is signified in that word: there is not a word in all the Greek Language, that signifieth a nearer conjunction, then the word there used for cleaving, or glueing. When a man shall forsake all, even Father and Mother, the dearest things in the world, and shall cleave to Christ, (it is a repetition

of what is said Gen. 2:24, concerning Adam and Eve,) when faith hath done this work, it is an effectual faith.

But yet add this again, a man may take Christ, and seem to draw near to him, when it may be, it is done out of fear, it may be, out of love to his, and not out of love to him, it may be done out of mis-information, and mistake; but when we draw near to God, and do it out of love, (put these two together) that we so take Christ, as that there is an union made between us and him, and when it is done out of love; as that condition is put in, in 1 Tim. 1:5. The end of the Commandment is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. As if he should say, There is a double kind of faith, a false faith, and a faith that is not hypocritical, that is the word used in the Original. Now, saith he, the end of the Commandment is love, &c. That is, all that God looks for, is such a love as comes from a faith that is unfeigned, that is not counterfeit. Herein is faith seen not to be counterfeit, if it beget love, and out of that love we cleave to Christ. So that this is the third thing that makes faith effectual.

Fourthly, faith is then said to be effectual, when it hath not only done all this, when there is not only a good preparation made for it, when it is well built in the understanding, and when the will hath thus taken Christ, but there must be a further act, and that is the turning of the whole soul, and a seconding of it in our whole lives and practice, a seconding of it in our executions, and doing the things that Christ commands, as in Gal. 5. In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love. Such a faith as works, that is effectual faith. As if he should have said, Many will be ready to believe in Christ, but will do nothing for him, they will not work. (Now working is in doing, or in suffering: for in suffering there is a work as well as in doing, only it is a

work with more difficulty, a work with more impediments.) Again, if they will do anything for Christ, it is not out of love, but for other respects: perhaps out of some flash, or good mood, or some other respects; out to do it as being rooted and grounded in love, if faith have this work, it is effectual faith; and therefore when faith hath once taken Christ, it must shoot itself into all the affections: for when they are all set on work, endeavor will follow. If the will be so set on work indeed, the rest will follow after it. Love will follow, Desire after Christ will follow, Fear to offend him will follow, Repentance and turning from Satan will follow, bringing forth fruits worthy amendment of life, and obedience, &c. will follow. Therefore you shall find, that the promises are made promiscuously, sometimes to one thing, sometimes to another: sometimes, he that repenteth shall be saved: sometimes, he that believeth shall be saved: sometimes, he that obeyeth shall be saved: you shall find them promiscuously; because that when faith is effectual, it hath all these with it, it purifieth the heart, and bringeth forth fruit worthy amendment of life. Therefore this must be added, to show the efficacy of faith; and, if this be wanting, faith is not effectual; not that it can be disjoined from the other, but, that it is that wherein it consisteth with the rest.

And therefore it is God's usual manner, when men seem to take Christ, and to believe in him, he puts them to the trial, to see what they will do, whether their faith will work or no. Thus he did with Abraham, when he would prove him; he was a faithful man before, God had experience of him before, but yet he would prove Abraham by offering his son, and when he saw he did it, he concluded that he had faith: indeed it was a strong faith, for it endured the trial. I say, God will put men to it. So likewise those in John. 12:42. Many of the chief Rulers believed in him, but they durst not

confess him, for fear of the Jews, lest they should be cast out of the Synagogue. There was a faith in them, a taking of Christ, but when it came to the trial, it held not out, they durst not confess him, because they feared to be cast out of the Synagogue: that is, when they came to suffer a little for Christ's sake, when they came to such an action as confessing his Name, when they came to endure but such a thing as to be cast out of the Synagogue, they forsook him, which showed that their belief was ineffectual. So that, let a man seem to have all the other three, yet when the praise of men shall come in competition with any command of God, when God shall put him to do anything, to part with anything that is dear to him, as he did Abraham, if his faith work not, if his faith hold not out in the trial, but start aside, like a broken Bow, it is not effectual faith. So you see the things wherein the efficacy of faith consisteth.

First, in the soundness of the preparation.

Secondly, when the mind apprehends the promises, and sees good ground to pitch upon them.

Thirdly, when the will so takes Christ as to bring Christ into the heart, so that Christ lives in us, and that out of love.

And fourthly, when faith worketh, and that in the time of trial, when God shall put us to it. I say, when you find these four things, you may conclude that your faith is effectual.

The last thing I propounded, is to show how this is wrought, how our faith is made effectual. It is made effectual by the Spirit of God, it is not in our own power, we are not able to believe, nay, we are so far from it, that we strive against it, the spirit in us resists it; so that, if God himself put not his hand to the work, no man is able to believe.

You may think, when you see such general propositions as these, that Christ is offered to every creature under heaven, and that whosoever believeth shall be saved, you may think, I say, that it is easy to bring this home in particular, to say, Surely this pardon belongs to me. My Brethren, it is another thing for a man indeed to believe, for him to take Christ so as to deny himself for him, to take him so, as to mortify his lusts, so as to take up his cross, so as to obey Christ, to follow him in all things, this is a thing that no man is able to do, unless God enable him to it, with his almighty power. For the heart of every man, by nature, is so shut up against Christ, that it will give no entrance to him, he may stand and knock long enough; unless God himself shake off the bolts, and open the gates, and break open these everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in, we will not admit him, but keep him out.

Every man naturally hath a hard heart, that cannot repent, that cannot turn from sin, he will be content perhaps to take Christ for a Savior, but to take him so as to obey him, and fear him, so as to love him: this no man will do, or can do, unless the Holy Ghost enable him.

But, you will ask, How doth the Holy Ghost do it?

The Holy Ghost doth it by these three acts. First, by putting an efficacy into the Law, and making that powerful, to work on the heart, to make a man poor in spirit, that so he may be fit to receive the Gospel. For the Law, though it be fit to humble a man, yet it is no worker of sanctification. If a man were able to do anything, he were able to see the righteousness the Law requires, and how far he is from it, and to discern the curse upon the not doing of it, and yet this he is not able to do, without the spirit of bondage: the spirit of bondage must make the Law effectual, as well as the spirit of Adoption doth the Gospel. That is, except the Lord himself press

the Law on our hearts, so as to cause it to make sin appear to us, we, that are the Ministers of God, may discover your sins, we may show you the rectitude required in the Law, we may show you the danger, yet all will be to no purpose, unless God awaken you: if he will set sin upon the conscience to worry a man, to pluck him down, when God shall charge sin on him, that he shall feel the weight and burden of it, when he shall sharpen sin, and cause it to use its sting, this makes a man fit to receive Christ: otherwise, if the sons of Thunder should speak to men, if we should come in the spirit and power of Elijah, nay, if God himself should thunder from heaven, all would not move the heart of a man, all would not awaken him to see his sins, till God himself shake the heart.

To convert the Jailer, in Acts 16, the foundation of the Prison was shaken; which was a resemblance of the shaking of his heart: we may as well shake the Earth, as strike the heart of a sinner without the work of God. For, though the Law be a sword, yet unless God take that sword into his hand, and strike therewithal himself, it shall not be able to wound a sinner. Therefore the first work of the Holy Ghost is to awaken a sinner, to set sin upon him, that he may be fit to receive Christ.

Secondly, when this is done, that the heart is thus prepared by the Spirit, then the Holy Ghost shows us what we have by Christ, he shows the unsearchable riches of Christ, what is the hope of our calling, and the glorious inheritance prepared for the Saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power in them that believe. I say, we need the Spirit to show these things.

But, you will say, a man may see these things without the help of the Spirit.

It is true, in some manner you may, but not in such a manner as shall affect you. For there is a manner of seeing proper only to the Saints, and that is the proper work of the Spirit in them, when we shall so see them, as to be affected with them. Otherwise, you may read the Scriptures a thousand times over, you may understand them, yet you shall not be affected with them, till the Holy Ghost show them unto you. This is the secret of God, that he revealeth to those whom he meaneth to save; that is, when he presents these spiritual things prepared for us in Christ, in such a manner, as that we shall love them, and embrace them; when we shall not only see the truth of them, but the goodness of them, when God shall not only show us the advantages we have by Christ, but the excellency of Christ, so that we shall be in love with his person, as well as to be ready to receive the privileges with him.

Now this is done by the Spirit: 1 Cor. 2:12. We have received the Spirit of God, by which we know the things that are given us of God, and they are revealed to us by the Spirit. They are two or three times repeated in that Chapter; as if he should have said, If you saw them no more than other men do, then natural men do, you would be no more affected with them, then they are: but when you have the Spirit of God to show you the things that are given you of God, that is the thing that works upon you, and affects you. And so in John. 14:21, saith Christ, I will come to him, and show myself to him: When Christ showeth himself to a man, it is another thing then when the Ministers shall show him, or the Scriptures nakedly read do show him: for when Christ shall show himself by his Spirit, that showing draweth a man's heart to long after him, otherwise we may preach long enough, and show you that these spiritual things, these privileges are prepared for you in Christ, but it is the Holy Ghost that must write them in your hearts; we can

but write them in your heads: Therefore the Lord taketh that as peculiar to himself: I will write my Law in your hearts. That is, I will make you affected with the things that I show you, and this is the teaching of God. There is a teaching by men, and a teaching by God, that is, when God shall enable a man to see things in good earnest; otherwise it will be but as a man that sees a thing, when his mind is upon another matter: so, we shall see, and not see: but when the Holy Ghost shall show you these things, you shall see indeed, till then, you may hear oft enough of these things, but your hearts will be minding other matters; some about their profits, and some their pleasures, &c. but when the Holy Ghost shall show you these things; that is, when he presents them to us, that draweth the heart from minding other things, to seek after Christ, to long after him, and not to content yourselves, till you be united to him.

But, besides this, there is a third act of the Holy Ghost, by which he works it, and maketh this faith effectual, and that is the testimony that the Spirit gives to our spirits, telling us that these things are ours: when the heart is prepared by the Law, and when these things are so showed unto us, that we prize them, and long after them, yet there must be a third thing, that is, to take them to ourselves, to believe that they be ours; and there needeth a work of the Spirit for this too: for, though the promises be never so clear, yet, having nothing but the promises, you will find that you will never be able to apply them to yourselves: but when the Holy Ghost shall say, Christ is thine, and these things belong to thee, and God is thy Father; when the Spirit shall bear witness with our spirits, by an immediate work of his own, then we shall believe. This is necessarily required, and without this we shall not believe. It is true, the holiest man doth it two ways.

One is by clearing of the promises, shining into our hearts, by such a light as makes us able to discern them, and to believe them, and to assent to them.

But besides that, he doth it by an immediate voice, by which he speaketh immediately to our spirits, that we can say, as they said, John. 16. Now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no parable, we understand thee fully: so, till the Holy Ghost speak to us, we are in a Cloud, God is hid from us, we cannot see him clearly, but when we have this Spirit of Adoption, to give us this witness, then we believe plainly indeed. Therefore in Isaiah 57:19, saith the Lord, I create the fruit of the lips, Peace, &c. That is, the Ministers may speak peace to you, but unless I go and join with the Minister, except I add a power of mine own; that is, such an almighty power as I used in the Creation, it shall never bring peace to you. I create the fruit of the lips; that is, the words of the Minister to be peace, otherwise they would be ineffectual. Therefore, I say, there must be a work of the Spirit to persuade a man in such a case. And you shall find by experience, let a Minister come to them that are in despair, they will not apprehend the promises, though we use never so clear reasons, though we argue with them never so long, and never so strongly, we shall find that all will do nothing, it will be but labor spent in vain, till God himself open the Clouds, till he will smile on a man, and send his Spirit into the heart, to give a secret witness to him, till there be a work of his own joining with the promises, we find by experience that our labor is lost.

It is true, we ought to do this, and every man is bound to look to the Word: for, faith cometh by hearing; and to hearken to the Ministry; for it is God's ordinance to breed faith in the heart, but yet till there be a work of the

Spirit, a man shall never be so persuaded, as to have any sure and sound comfort by it.

Now all this is done by the Spirit, it is the wonderful work of God: for when Christ is propounded to men, when he is offered, (as we have often offered him to you, we have showed you what access you have to him, that no man is excluded, that he is offered to every creature under heaven, we have showed you the generality of the promise, that it takes in all, that you are contained under it, that you may apply it to yourselves; I say, when all this is done) yet when a man comes to perform this, to apply it to himself, he is no more able to do it, then a dead man is able to stir himself. Therefore the same power that raised Christ from the dead, is required to work faith in our hearts, as it is in Eph. 1:19. According to his mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. So that it is as great a work, to move a man's heart to Christ, as to put life into a dead man; we are as unapt and backward to it, as a dead man is to receive life. For what else is the reason, that when we preach Christ to you, when he is offered to you, that there be so few that are affected with him, that there be so few that take him? Doth it not show that you are dead? Yea, so dead, that unless God call you, and that there be a mighty work of the Spirit, the hearts of men will never answer unto us. Therefore that is required as a condition in all them who will come, Acts 2. So many as the Lord our God shall call. That is, when we preach, except there be a secret voice of the Spirit of Christ speaking to your hearts, as we do to your ears, and saying, Come and take Christ, no man will come. We see, Christ said to his Apostles, Follow me, and presently they followed him; (for it was not the outward voice that did it, there was a secret voice within) so, when God shall call men to take Christ, then they do it, but not before. That word that is used, Luk. 14:23.

Go and Compel them to come in, that my House may be full, it intimates a great backwardness in us. When men are compelled, it shows, that not only the arguments are strong, and forcible, but that there is a great backwardness in men, that they must (as it were) be constrained, that they must be put on it by force, and against their will; such is the unaptness that is in men.

So, saith Christ, no man comes to me, except the Father draw him. That phrase of the Holy Ghost shows, that there is an extreme backwardness, that, if they be not forced to come, (as it were) they will not do it: not but that when a man is once wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, he cometh of himself; but that phrase is used only to show that backwardness that is in man by nature. For, when the Holy Ghost hath wrought upon the will, and hath turned that, then a man cometh upon his own legs, and is moved from an inward principle of his own; therefore men are so drawn, that withal, they run after him, as it is, Cant. 1, but it shows this thing, for which I have used it, that there is a wondrous backwardness in all of us by nature, and that this must be done by a great work of the Spirit.

Therefore the Apostle Paul, in Eph. 1, in all the former part of the chapter, to the 18th ver., having declared the great Mystery of salvation, he takes himself upon the sudden, and begins to think with himself, though I show you all this, it is to no purpose, if God send not the Spirit of revelation, &c. Therefore he lifts up his heart to God, beseeching him to give them the Spirit of revelation, to open the eyes of their understanding, that they might see the hope of their Calling, and the riches of their inheritance with the Saints. So should Ministers learn to do, to pray for the people, that God would infuse and send his Spirit into their hearts, that they may be able to perceive these things effectually, with a right apprehension, to see the

secrets of God in them, you also should go to God, and beseech him to help you with his Spirit, that so you may be able to apprehend these things, and that they may be powerful, to work the same thing, for which we deliver them to you: and so we have showed you these three things; First, what effectual faith is: namely, in showing you why it is called effectual faith.

Secondly, wherein the efficacy of faith consists, and Thirdly, how it is wrought.

Now, last of all, we are to show you the reason, why God accepts no faith, but that which is effectual.

And there is good reason why no faith should be accepted of God, but that which is effectual.

First, because otherwise it is not faith at all, if it be not effectual; and if it be not faith, it is no wonder that he doth not accept of it. I say, it is no more faith, then a dead man is said to be a man: you give the name of a man to him, yet he is not a man; no more is faith that is not effectual, any faith; it hath only the name of faith, and there is no more in it: but as dead Drugs, which have no efficacy in them, or as dead Plants, or dead Wine, which is turned to Vinegar, it ceaseth to be Wine, it is no longer Wine, but Vinegar; so it may be said of ineffectual faith, it is not faith, it hath the name and the shadow of faith only, and therefore God accepts it not.

Again, God will save none, unless they be reconciled to him, and be such as love him, for that condition is everywhere put in. All things shall work together for good to them that love him: and he hath prepared a Crown for them that love him. Now, if faith be not effectual, there will be no love; and if love be necessarily required, God cannot accept that faith that is ineffectual.

Again, if God should accept of a faith that is ineffectual, the Devils have such a faith, by which they apprehend the Word, and a faith that brings forth effects: for they fear and tremble; but this is not the faith that purifieth the heart, it is not an effectual, it is not a purging, lively faith.

Again, Christ receives none but them that deny themselves, and are willing to take up their cross and to follow him, that mortify the deeds of the body by the Spirit. Now an ineffectual faith doth none of these, and therefore that faith that saveth, must be a working faith, or else these things should not be necessarily required.

Again, it was Christ's end in coming into the world, that he might destroy the works of the Devil, and for this end hath the grace of God appeared, that men should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts: and for this end did he give himself, to purify to himself a people zealous of good works, He comes to be a King, as well as a Savior, to rule among his people, to have men obey him, which could not be, if faith were not effectual, if it did not purify the heart, and enable men to deny all worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

And last of all, good works are required of necessity, as the way to salvation; Eph. 2:10. We are God's workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works, which he hath ordained that we should walk in them. Good works are required of necessity, God judgeth us according to our works, Rom. 2, and at the last day, the reward is pronounced, according to that which men have done: When I was in prison, you visited me; when I was naked, you clothed me, &c. And if they be required of necessity, then it is not a dead, liveliness, workless faith, but a powerful, energetical faith, a faith that is stirring and active, a faith that is effectual, which God requires, without which we cannot be saved.

We come now to make some Use of what hath been said.

First, If God accept no faith, but that which is effectual, it should teach us not to be deceived in a matter of so great moment; It should teach us to look to our faith, to consider whether it be a right faith or no. If a man have Evidences, upon which his lands, and whole estate dependeth, if one should come, and tell him that they were false Evidences, it would affect him; he would, at the least be ready to look, and to examine them, and yet these are matters of less moment.

If one be told that his Corn is blasted, that all the Trees in his Orchard are dead, that all his money is counterfeit, a man would look even to these things; a man would have that which he hath to be sound, and not counterfeit: and shall not we then look to the faith that we have, upon which the salvation of our souls depends? Seeing God accepteth none unless it be sound, and seeing there is so much counterfeit faith in the world. It should teach us to look about us, and consider what our faith is: For, as James saith, faith without works cannot save us. What availeth it, my Brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and hath not works, can his faith save him? So I say to every man, in such a case, thou that thinkest thou hast faith, if there be not works too, if it be not effectual, if it be not a lively faith, will such a faith save thee? If a man should come and say to one that brags of the Balsam or Drugs which he hath, (that are dead, and have lost their efficacy) Will such a Balsam heal thee? If a man have a gilded Target, made of paper, a man may say to him, Will that Target defend thee? And so I say, when a man hath a counterfeit faith, Will such a faith as this save thee? It will not save you; you may please yourselves in it, as a man is pleased with a false dream, but, when you are awaked, you will find that you are deceived. Learn therefore to consider of your faith, to see if it be effectual.

When the Lord proclaimed himself to be a merciful God, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; yet it is added, he will not hold the wicked innocent. So, when we have said so much of faith, and that faith saveth; yet know, that it must be a working faith that saveth us: It must be such a faith as purifieth the heart, it must be such a faith that may show itself in fruits worthy amendment of life. And therefore Saint James taketh so much pains in this case, as you shall find in his first Chapter, and the beginning of the second; he layeth down rules, and tells them, that if they keep the whole Law, and yet fail in one point, they are guilty of the whole.

Now having dealt so strictly, some might be ready to object: God is merciful, and I shall be saved through faith.

It is true, (saith he) if you have a right faith, you shall be saved by it; but yet know this, that unless your faith be such a faith as enableth you to do what I say, it is a faith that will do you no good, it will not save you: for, though faith saveth you, yet it must be such a faith as worketh. And that he proveth by many arguments; (it is a place worth the considering, and fit for this purpose) I say, he useth some arguments to prove, that that faith which is not effectual will not save us.

As first, Saith he, if a man should say to one, Be warmed, or, Be filled: as this is but vain liberality, when as yet a man doth nothing; so, for a man to profess that he believeth in Christ, and yet doth nothing for him, it is a vain faith.

Secondly, Some man might say, Thou hast faith, and I have works, show me thy faith by thy works. That is, if a man have faith, he will show it by his works. As if he should have said, If the Sun be the greatest light, let it give the greatest splendor; If the Loadstone be of such a virtue, let it show it, by attracting the Iron to it: So, if thy faith be effectual, show it by thy

works: that is, if thy faith be a true faith, it must be a working faith, or else it is nothing, God will not accept it.

Thirdly, unless it be a working faith, an effectual faith, the Devils have the same: thou believest that there is one God; the Devils do the same, and tremble.

Fourthly, If any man could be justified by faith without works, Abraham might have been so justified; but Abraham was justified by his works; that is, by such a faith as had works joined with it. And not Abraham only, but Rahab, (that is another example: for it might be objected, Abraham indeed believed, and was justified by works, but Rahab had no works, she was a wicked woman, and therefore was justified by faith? To this therefore he answereth, that) she had works, or else she could not have been saved, unless she had such a work as that in sending away the Messengers, her faith could not have justified her. Indeed, that was a great work; for she adventured her life in it.

And lastly, saith he, as the body, without the soul, is a dead body, a stinking carrion, there is no preciousness, nor no excellency in it; so faith without works is dead. Therefore look to your faith; do not think that a faith that merely taketh Christ, and believeth in him, that it is a faith that shall justify you. Let all these arguments persuade you, that if it be not a working faith, it shall do you no good. Therefore let this be the first Use, to consider your faith, whether it be effectual or no, by the working of it.

The second Use that we may make of it, is this: Hence we should learn to judge of our estates and conditions, by the efficacy of our faith: for, if no faith be received, but that which is effectual, then it behooves us to look to the working of our faith.

Again, if God accept no faith but that which is effectual, hence we may learn also not to believe all that say they have faith, nor to believe all those that say they have none. As for those that say they have no faith, yet, if we see the fruits of faith in them, that they have those things that faith brings forth: If you see a man that complaineth he believeth not, yet if he love the Saints, if he endeavor to keep God's Commandments, if he continue not in any known sin, if he do not dare to omit holy duties, nor to sleight them, certainly, this man hath faith: for we find the effects of it there: although he have lost one act of his faith, which is the comfortable assurance of a good estate; yet if the first act, by which he resteth upon Christ, and by which he taketh Christ to himself, be there, we may conclude there is faith. When we see smoke, and feel heat, we say, there is fire, though we see no flame: so, when we see these fruits in a man, we may boldly say, he hath faith, though he hath not such a reflect act, as to know in himself that he hath it, and so to have a comfortable assurance of his condition.

On the other side; if a man saith, he knoweth and is persuaded that his sins are forgiven, his conscience is at rest, and yet for all this, we find no works, I say, this man hath not faith: for there wants the efficacy of it: So that as the two sons in the Gospel; one said he would go into the Vineyard, and did not; the other said he would not go, yet afterwards he repented, and went: so it is with these two; the one saith he hath not faith, and yet for all that, we see, he doth the things that faith requireth, we see the efficacy of faith in him. Again, the other saith he hath faith, and yet doth not bring forth the fruits of faith, he doth not show the efficacy of faith in his life; the one shall be justified, the other shall be condemned.

As when we take two Drugs, or two Pearls, &c. the one hath lost his color, seemeth withered and dead, so that to the outward view, it hath lost all, yet

it hath its efficacy still, that such a thing should have; the other looks very fair, and hath a right color and smell, but it hath no efficacy in it; we say, one is a lively Drug, and a good one, and the other a counterfeit: so, when one man complains that he hath no grace, that he is an hypocrite, and yet he brings forth fruit worthy amendment of life, and we see the working of his faith; I say, this is true faith: On the other side, he that makes a show of faith, and yet wants the efficacy of it, he hath no faith. We should learn thus to judge, when men profess they have faith, and we find it not by their works. It should teach both civil men and hypocrites to know their estates: for it discovereth both. For when the civil man cometh, and seeth that he doth much of the second Table, and little of the first; and the hypocrite again, doth much of the first, and little of the second; let them consider that faith enableth a man to have respect to all God's Commandments: it works a general change. And as this is true, for the substance, so it is also for degrees: for, if God accepts only effectual faith, then so much efficacy, and so much working as you find in any man, so much faith there is. If there be no works, there is no faith; if the works be few, the faith is a languishing faith; if the works be many, the faith is great and strong. That is the second Use we should make, to learn to judge aright of ourselves and others.

Thirdly, if it be only an effectual faith, which God accepteth, then this justifieth our Doctrine against the Papists, that say, we teach that only faith justifieth, and require no good works. I say, we teach, that not a naked, but an effectual faith doth it. So that all the difference between them and us, is this; we agree both in this, that works are necessarily required to salvation, that no man shall see God without them, without pureness of heart, and integrity of life. We say, Except men mortify the deeds of the body by the Spirit, they shall die; and there is no condemnation to them that walk not

after the flesh, but after the Spirit: That is, there is a necessity put upon men to walk after the Spirit; in this we agree: but here is the difference: They say that faith and works both are required to justify; we say, that nothing is required but faith, and that works follow faith: we say, faith indeed is working, and produceth such effects; so that, whereas they say faith, and works; we say faith only, but it must be an effectual faith, a working faith.

If they object that place of James, we are not justified by faith, but by works.

I answer, that there is a double justification, there is a justification of the person; so was Abraham justified by faith, as Paul expresseth it, Rom. 4. But then there is a second justification, a justification of the faith that Abraham had, he justified his faith by his works, he showed that he had not a dead faith, a liveliness faith, a faith without works, but that he had a lively effectual faith: for he added works to his faith, his works wrought together with his faith. So that, if the question be, Whether Abraham was a hypocrite? His works justified him that he was none. If the question be, Whether Abraham was a sinner? His faith justifieth him, and shows that he was made righteous through faith. So, there is a justification of the person, and a justification of the faith of the person: as when a man is said to justify such an action, or such a cause, the meaning is not, that he will make that just which was unjust before, but he will make it appear to be just; so Abraham was declared to have a justifying faith, by that power and efficacy it wrought in him, in offering up his son.

Again, it is objected out of that place, that by works faith is made perfect; therefore it seems that faith is nothing alone, if works be not joined with it.

I answer, that when it is said that faith is made perfect by works, the meaning is, that faith is made good by works; the perfection of faith is

declared by works. As one that professeth that he hath an Art, and that he is able to do this and that; if he do the work wherein his Art is showed, if he make any artificial work, by that he maketh good his Art. Or, as when we say, these Trees are good, because they have sap in them, they are not dead Trees. Now the Tree is made perfect by the fruit; so faith by works is made perfect. Not that works put life into faith; the sap must first be in the Tree, and then it bringeth forth fruit: so there must first be a life in faith, and then it bringeth forth works. So that, when we say that faith is made perfect by works, the meaning is, that works declare faith to be right, as the fruit doth declare the Tree to have sap.

Again, if it be objected, (as it is by them) that works, and love, &c. are to faith, as the soul is to the body: for, as the body, without the soul is dead, so faith without works is dead: Hence they gather, that faith is as the body, and that love, and works are as the soul: therefore faith justifieth not but works.

To this I answer; They take the comparison amiss: For the scope of it is this; as a soulless body is nothing worth, it is dead, and no man regardeth it; so is a workless faith: The meaning is not, that works are as the soul, and faith as the body; but, as a man, when he looks upon a carcass, and seeth no life in it, no pulse, no motion, no sense, such a body is nothing worth; so when we see a faith without motion, that hath no pulses, that hath no expression of life in it, such a faith is of no worth.

But, you will say, if we be not justified by works, to what end are good works required?

I answer, there is end enough, there are motives enow: Is not love a ground strong enough to bring forth good works? When this objection was made to Paul, Rom. 6. If Grace abound, why may we not sin the more; for Grace aboundeth, as sin aboundeth? He might easily have answered, Except

you do good works, you cannot be saved; but he saith, How can we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? That is, when a man is once in Christ, there will be such a change wrought in him, that he shall find Christ killing sin in him, and he shall be raised again to newness of life, insomuch that he must of necessity do it; there will be love in his heart, that will set him awork, that will constrain him: therefore, saith he, are you not baptized into Christ's death? That is, when a man is in Christ, he is dead to sin, as Christ died for him: so that, though there be no such motive, as for a man to get Heaven by his works; yet, upon the taking of Christ, there is a love planted in the heart, there is a change wrought in the heart, so that there is an aptness in it to do good works; so that now a man delighteth in the Law of God concerning his inward man, he desires nothing more than to be employed in it, it is his meat and drink to do the will of God. Is not this enough to move us?

Again; though good works be not required for justification, yet this may be a motive: God rewards us, he chastens and afflicts us according to our works: 1 Pet. 1:15. We call him Father, that judgeth everyone according to his works: That is, if our works be good, he is ready to reward us; if we fail, he is ready to chastise us, as a Father doth his children: therefore let us pass the time of our dwelling here with fear. So that the Saints, after they are in the state of grace, they may contract a kind of guiltiness unto them, so that they may make their Father angry, they may feel many effects of his displeasure, though they shall not lose his favor forever: and the more our good works are, the greater is our reward.

Again; we require good works of necessity, as well as the Papists: we say, you must have good works, or else you cannot be saved; so that, except you

have repented, except you have love as well as faith, except there be a change of heart, Christ is not in you.

We require good works with the same necessity; only they have a different rise, they rise from different grounds. When the Papists are asked what should move a man to do good works? They say it is by way of merit, to get heaven; and that is it that maketh all their works to be of no worth. For, take any natural man, he that hath the most impure heart, may not he, to escape Hell, and to get Heaven, do all the works the Papists require, and for the same end that they require them? May he not give Alms, &c. But to do it out of love, that is a thing that no Hypocrite is able to reach unto: And therefore we say, that the meanest work, even the giving of a Cup of cold water, is a good work, if it proceed from love: whereas, take the fairest work, that hath the greatest glory, and splendor, though it be Martyrdom; if it come not from love, if it be not a fruit of faith, if a man give his body to be burned, and give all that he hath to feed the poor, if it come not from love, God accepts it not. So much for the second Use.

The third Use that we should make of it, is this: If nothing be accepted, but that faith that is effectual, we should learn hence, that, if we will grow in ability to work, if we will grow in obedience, we must grow in faith: for all efficacy must come from faith: for it is only the effectualness of faith that God requires. That is, if there be any effectualness in man, that comes not from faith, God requires it not: for it is the efficacy of faith which God requires. Therefore, if we will be enabled to do the duties of new obedience, labor to grow in faith, that must enable us to do what we do: if we have not the ground, all that we do is in vain. Therefore, when we find any coldness, any weakness in the Graces we have, any languishing; increase faith, and all other Graces will grow. If you find you cannot pray, when you find your

hands weak, and your knees feeble, that you cannot run the ways of God's Commandments, strengthen your faith, labor to increase your assurance. When the branches are weak and withering, we use to dung the root; so, in this case, labor to strengthen your faith: for that will enable you to do much; it is all in all.

This will be of much use to us in many cases. When a sin is committed, we should labor now to recover ourselves out of that relapse. What is the way? By laboring to get assurance of the forgiveness of it. Go to God to strengthen thy faith, that is the way to get out of sin.

If there be a strong lust, that thou art to grapple withal, and which thou canst not get the victory over, the way is to go and increase faith, to increase assurance: for, the more faith is increased, the more love, the more the heart is inclined to God: for faith turns the bent of the heart from pleasures, and profits, from a desire of the praise of men, to God: so that, the more faith, the more ability there is to strive against the corruption that is in you.

Again; if a man find he wants patience, he wants thankfulness, the way is, not to look on the Virtues, to read moral Writers, but go and strengthen thy faith, and that shall enable thee to do wonders: otherwise we water the branches, and let the root alone.

Thus should we Ministers do, lay this main foundation, to build up our hearers in this, and the rest will follow. This Paul did, that was the great Master-builder, he lays down in all his Epistles, the foundation of faith: in his Epistles to the Romans, to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, to the Galatians; and after that he deduceth particulars, and buildeth on it: so your main business is to consider whether you have faith, to get assurance of that, and when you have that, then strive against particular vices, and adorn yourselves with particular graces: For, because you labor not to have this

main grace, this root and foundation of all the rest, I say, this is the reason why those good motions that you have put into you by the Holy Ghost, those motions that you have in the hearing of the Word, and the good purposes that you take to yourselves, come to nothing, because they have not faith for their ground.

That general of Faith, must go before these particulars: Though the Plants be good, yet, if the ground be not good, and connatural, where they are planted, they will not grow. Therefore we find it ordinarily, that when men have resolutions to give over such and such sins, to leave such and such vices, their wicked company, drinking, gaming, and the like; it may be it holds for a day or two, yet this comes to nothing; because the main foundation is not laid, they go to work without faith: when the ground is flesh, and the work spiritual, how can it live? For everything lives in its own element; and these motions in them, are as the Fish is out of the water: and as the fire, when it is out of its place, dies and is extinguished; so these good purposes, when they are not particulars that arise from that general of faith, they are in the heart as a thing out of its own element, and therefore they perish. Therefore, when you have these purposes, know that they will come to nothing, if you take not the right course. Therefore labor to believe the promises, to be assured of salvation, that you are translated from death to life, by an effectual faith: when this is done, you shall find that your purposes will hold, and till then they are in vain.

And so again, this should teach us, seeing all depends upon faith, when we come to search, to consider what assurance we have, that so we may go the right way to work. For commonly, when we consider our estates, we look what fruits we have, what sincerity hath appeared in our life, and if we find that weak, we commonly conclude, that our faith is weak also, and so

the weakness of our sanctification weakeneth our assurance; but we should go another way to work: When we find a weakness, we should go to the promises, and strengthen our assurance: for there be two ways to increase assurance.

One is by the promises, the sure Word, on which faith is built.

The second is by the fruits of sanctification in ourselves.

Now when we find these languishing, we should go to the first, and the other will be increased by it. Faith worketh in you sanctification, and maketh you to believe the promise; as exercise begets health, and we are made fit by health for exercise: or as acts beget habits, and habits are means to exercise those acts: So assurance, grounded upon the promise, it enableth, and enlargeth, and increaseth sanctification, and sanctification increaseth assurance: but first see faith, and then the other as fruits of it. If you find a weakness in sanctification, labor to strengthen your faith, and that will increase it: for that is the ground of all.

FINIS.

SERMON III.

1 THESS. 1:3.
Remembering your effectual Faith, &c.

In the fifth place; If nothing please God, if he accepts of nothing but what comes from effectual faith; then we should learn hence to judge aright of our works: for what works soever we do, they please God no further then he seeth and findeth some faith in them. The Use before showed us how to judge aright of our faith; this teacheth you how to judge aright of all the works you do, that you do not mistake in them. For men are very apt to judge amiss of what they do in this case.

There be many works that have a specious and fair show in the view of men, and perhaps in your own opinion: But if there be not faith in those works, God regards them not: as, James 2:22, when Abraham did that great work, in offering his son, (which was the greatest work that ever he did, and the greatest work that is recorded in all the Book of God) yet, saith the Apostle there, Do ye not observe how faith wrought with his works? That is to say, If faith had not set him on work to do this, if faith had not been the

Spring to set this wheel on going, God had not accepted this. So, do whatsoever you will, further then faith works with you in all that you do, God regards it not.

Therefore you shall observe in Christ's answer to the Woman of Canaan, in her earnest prayer, in her coming to Christ, her fighting and striving against the Devil, her tenderness to her Daughter, her holding out so long as she did; all this Christ looks over: But when he comes to give his censure of her work, of her carriage, Oh Woman, great is thy faith, saith he. That was it that set a great price upon her work: Matth. 15:26,27. So, take the most excellent, the greatest work that can be performed, God sets them at no higher a price then he finds faith in them; he weighs them by that: so much faith as is in them, so far he accepts them, so far he regards them. Look in Heb. 11, you shall find many glorious works set down. All the great works that Samson did, all the works that David did, the works that Gideon did, the works that Baruch did, the works that Moses did, and so along, you shall see there, that there was nothing in all these works that was regarded, but their faith: all is imputed to faith. And therefore, when you go about anything, labor to see faith set you a work; and know, that as much faith as there is in any work, so much God regards it, and no further. Jacob had done many good things, that pleased God, yet God, when he would put a mark of his favor upon him, when he would call him Israel, when he would change his name, it was for that great work of faith, when he prayed all night, when he would not give over, when he would not let him go, when he prevailed with God by faith; now, saith God, thy name shall be called Israel. (As if he should say) Now I will put a name of honor upon thee. Why so? Not because there was more in that work, simply considered, as it was a work: but because there was more faith in it. And it must needs be so: for

God doth not as men do, who accept the giver for the gift. (If a man come to you with a great gift, you will accept his person for it.) But God accepts the gift for the givers sake: though the gift be never so small, if the giver be such as believes in him; if his affections be right, if he do it out of a right ground; that is, if he do it out of a ground of faith, he is accepted, whatsoever it be. Indeed, otherwise, whatsoever we do, we may call it by our own name; we may say, he is a patient man, or he is a temperate man, or these are works of Justice, or works of temperance: But we can never call it godliness, except it rise from faith, except it come from this ground; because indeed it is not done to God. (Mark it) I say, further then a man doth a thing out of faith, he doth it not to God. For, to do a thing out of faith, is nothing else, but when out of persuasion of God's love to me, I do this thing: merely for his sake whom I have chosen, to whom I give myself; one that I know loves me; and therefore, though there were no reward for it, I would serve him. This is a work of faith. Now, I say, this is properly godliness. And therefore, in 2 Pet. 1, when the Apostle had named Patience and Temperance, lest we should mistake, (as if he should say, There be many Virtues of this nature amongst men that belong not to God.) Therefore, saith he, Add Godliness; that is, Let it be such as becomes a godly man to do. Godliness is that which is done to God; such things and such qualities as have an eye and respect to him, such things please him. What if a man should do never so much, if it please not God, it is lost labor. It is said, Heb. 11:6, that Enoch pleased God. Mark how the Apostle reasons: (saith he) without faith it is impossible to please God: therefore, in that he is said to please God, it must needs be through faith. You know, it is said, Rom. 14, whatsoever a man doth, if it be not of faith, and love, God looks not to it; you know there can be no love without faith.

Consider but how it is with yourselves; If a man should do anything for you, you know, he may have many other ends, he may do you many a great good turn; yet, if you be persuaded this comes not out of love to me, nor of true respect to me, you regard it not, whatsoever it be. If it be but a small thing, if it be done out of love, you respect it. So it is with God; works that come from faith and love, (for those I reckon to be all one) those he respects wondrously. Therefore we should learn to judge aright of our works; it will help us against that position of the Papists, and also against the common opinion of men.

Every man thinks that Alms-deeds, doing good to the poor, and doing glorious things, &c. that these are good works, when as common actions they exclude, as if they were not good works: But it is not so; we may do the greatest works of this nature, and yet they may have no excellency in them at all.

Again, the very ordinary works of our Calling, ordinary things to men, ordinary service from day today, if it come from faith, if it be done as to the Lord, he accepts them, and they are good works indeed. This use we ought to make of it: If God regard not anything but faith, we should not be deceived in our works which we do.

Again, if faith be such a thing, that no works are accepted without it, that no branch will grow except it come from this root; if there be no salvation without it, if it be a thing that is most profitable for us; If thou sayest now, How may I know whether I have faith or no? I may be deceived in it. When we hang so much upon this peg, we had need be sure that it be strong, and that it will hold us. I will therefore make this present Use, in showing what the signs of this faith, and what the characters of it are, that you may learn

to judge aright, whether that faith that sets all the price upon your works, be a right faith, or no: You may know it by this:

Where there is a true faith, there is a secret persuasion wrought in the heart, whereby God assures you that he is yours, and you are his; as you have it, Rev. 2:17. To him that overcometh, will I give that hidden Manna, and a white stone with a new name written in it, that he only knows that receives it: (That is) That is one thing by which ye shall know whether you have true faith or no: Have you ever had any of that hidden Manna? (That is) Have you had such a secret persuasion, which hath been as sweet as Manna to you, which you have fed on, as they fed on Manna, which gives you life, as Manna gave life to them? Only he says it is a hidden Manna, it lies not abroad, others see it not, but it is Manna that your hearts secretly feed on. So that, wouldst thou know whether thou have faith? Hath God given thee such a stone with a new name written in it, that is the stone of absolution? As the manner was among the Athenians, among the old Grecians; that the sentence of absolution was given by white stones, as the sentence of condemnation was by black stones: So (saith he) God will give him such a secret testimony that he is acquitted, that when he is called in question, (as they were, that they knew not whether they should die or live; in that case, if they had the white stone, such a man was absolved: So, I say) Hath God given thee such a stone, with thy name upon it? Hath he given you such a stone, as you know in the secret of your heart, such as none knows, but God and yourself? (that is) Hath he ever opened the clouds? Hath he ever showed himself to you? Hath he cast a good look upon you? Hath he made your hearts glad with the light of his countenance in his Beloved? (for such a secret work there is of the Spirit, by which God cheereth and comforteth the heart of a man: that is his manner in working

faith. After the Law hath been a Schoolmaster to a man, after there hath been such an inditement, that he hath been brought in question of his life, when there hath been a great storm, then he comes into the heart, as he did into the Ship, and all is quiet. I say, that is his manner, he comes into the heart after such a manner, and speaks peace to a man.) Have you ever found this work in yourselves, that after much trouble and disquiet within, God hath spoken peace to you, that he hath said to your souls, I am thy salvation? Not that that is absolutely required, that there should be such a trouble going before, For, although it be true, that he never speaks peace, but when there hath gone some trouble, but when there hath gone some convincing of the spirit before, which convinceth a man of sin; yet this you must know, that still the promise is made to the coming, and not to the preparation. And therefore, if a man be at his journeys end, it is no matter how he came there. If a man find that he be in Christ, and hath had such a testimony from his Spirit, though he have not had such a work of humiliation as perhaps he expects, yet know, that the promise is made to that. And if you have that which the promise is made unto, is not that sufficient? It is true, as I said, you must have it really, you must have it in good earnest, there must go always a work of humiliation before the testimony of the Spirit. But mistake not: that turbulent sorrow, that violent disquiet of the mind goes not always before. For example; Take two men, the one is arrested, and condemned and brought to the point of death, he makes account of nothing else; A pardon comes to this man, and he is saved; there was great trouble went before, and he was wondrously affected when the pardon came: But now there is another man that is guilty of the same offense, and he knows certainly that he shall be called in question, and he is sure to lose his life, unless his peace be made. Now before this be

acted, before that indeed he be put in prison, before that indeed he be condemned, and before his head be brought to the block, he is certified that a Pardon is come out for him. This man knows his estate as well as the other, and he knows that he had perished without a Pardon, as well as the other; and he makes as much account of his Pardon as the other, and will not let it go for his life as well as the other.

Now, both these are pardoned, both are sure of life: but there is a different manner of doing it. The one man was affected and much stirred before, he was put into a wondrous affright before: The other man is convinced of the danger, he is in as well as he, although he be not put to that extremity of sorrow, though he be not brought to so near an exigent as the other: So, if a man be convinced of sin, if a man know in good earnest, thoroughly, what the danger is, that he must perish, if he have not this Pardon. Now, I say, if thou have such a testimony, build upon it: For it is true, that God, before he comes in the soft voice, he sends a Wind before, that rends the Rocks down, that brings down the Mountains there, so much as makes the way plain, before he can come in the soft voice. I say, if the Mountains be broken down, (after what manner soever it be) that is enough; do not stand on that; Be sure of this, that if there come a soft voice, thou hast reason to believe that, whatsoever preparations were before, which are diverse: for God works sometimes after one manner, sometimes after another.

But now, what is this soft voice? That I may a little further come to explain that: for certainly, if he come in the soft voice, that is, the voice of the Gospel, you are sure. But what is it?

I take it to be this. One thing is, when there is a clearing of the promise, (for the voice is the very Gospel itself:) Now, when we preach the Gospel to men, and open the promises of salvation, and of life, if God do not join with

us now, and clear them to you, by kindling a light within, that you see the meaning of them; except he, I say, do thus join with us, you shall not be able to build upon these promises. Therefore that is one thing that God must do: For, though it be true, the Word is near you, that you need not go up to heaven, nor down to hell to fetch it, (for saith Moses, the Word is near you, the promises are near, in your mouths, in the midst of you) yet, except God do show them, as clear as they be, you cannot see them. As when Jesus stood by Mary Magdalene, he was near enough, but till her eyes were opened, she saw him not. So Hagar, the Well was near enough to her, but till her eyes were opened, she could not see it. So, when we preach these promises, when we lay them open as near as we can, as near as may be, yet it must be the work of the Spirit to see the promises, to see them so as to believe them, and to rest on them. Therefore that is one part of this soft voice, to open the Gospel unto you. There is another, which is the immediate testimony of the Spirit, spoken of in Rom. 8. This Spirit beareth witness with our spirits: when God comes, and by a secret testimony of the Spirit, worketh such a persuasion in the heart, that he is a Father, that he is a friend, that he is reconciled to us.

But, you will say, this may be a delusion?

Therefore you must have both together: know that they are never disjoined: God never gives the secret witness of his Spirit, he never works such a persuasion, such an immediate testimony, but it hath always the testimony of the Word going with it; be sure to join them, be sure thou do not sever them one from the other. So that, if you would know now whether you have faith or no, consider whether ever God hath spoken this to you, or no; whether ever he hath wrought this work in you. For faith, you must know, is wrought in this manner: The Spirit comes, and shows Christ to

you, and not only shows you his merits, not only tells you that he will be a Savior, not only tells you of a Kingdom that you shall have by him; but shows you the beauty and excellency of Christ; it shows you what grace is, and makes you love it, and then he shows you mercy: Out of this you come to long after Christ, and to say, I would I had him; a man comes to love him as the Spouse loves her Husband.

Now to this work he adds a second: Christ comes and tells a man, I will have thee, he comes and shows himself; he discovers himself to a man, and speaks plainly, (as in that place we have often mentioned, John 19.) and saith to him, I am willing to marry thee. When this is done on the Holy Ghosts part, and we on our part come to resolve to take him, now the match is made between us, and this is faith indeed; when this work is done, a man may truly say, This day is salvation come to me. Now thou art sure that all thy sins are forgiven; now faith is wrought in thy heart. Therefore if thou wouldest know whether thou have faith or no, look back, reflect upon thine own heart, consider what actions have passed thorough there: for that is the next way to know what faith is, to look what actions have passed through a man's heart: a man may know what the actions of his soul are, for that is the benefit of a reasonable soul, that it is able to return upon itself, to see what it hath done, which the soul of a beast cannot do.

Now let a man consider whether such a thing have passed or no; that is, (mark it) whether on Christ's part there hath been such a clearing of the promise, that thou art so built, that, if an Angel from Heaven should come and preach another Gospel, if Paul himself should be living on the earth, and should preach the contrary, thou wouldest not believe him. Dost thou see the Word so clearly, art thou so set upon the Rock (as it were) that thou canst say in good earnest, as the Apostle said in Rom. 8. I know that neither

principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor anything in the world, shall ever separate me from the love of God in Christ, and that because I have his sure Word?

Again, when thou hast such a secret impression of assurance from his Spirit, which will not fail thee, when thou findest this, on God's part, and again when thou findest this act on thy own part; when thou sayest, I have resolved to take him, (for a man may know what he hath done) I have resolved to take him for my husband, I have resolved to prefer him before all things in the world, to be divorced from all things in the world, and to cleave to him: This I know, these acts have passed on God's part, and this I have done on my part; when thou findest this wrought in thyself, be assured there is faith wrought in thee: when the Law hath been a Schoolmaster to thee, and when Christ hath spoken peace, and when thou art built upon him again; consider if this hath been wrought.

This is the first means to try thy faith: but, because this may be an ambiguous means, a man may be deceived in it; therefore faith doth show itself by many other effects. And therefore we will add to this, (which is the very thing wherein faith consists) other signs; and they are five in number.

First, a man must know that there may be many delusions in this kind: many Hypocrites may have great raptures, they may have great joy, as if they were lift up into the third heaven, they may have a great and strong persuasion that their estate is good. Satan is very apt to delude us in this kind, to put a counterfeit upon us instead of true faith; Therefore we will not content ourselves with this, but give other marks, that will not deceive. At this time you are to consider, you that come to the Sacrament, Is it not a main thing to consider whether you have faith or no? What do you here else, you have nothing to do with Christ, you have no interest in him; and if

you have no interest in him, what do you with the Elements which represent his body and his blood? And therefore you have cause to attend to it. First, therefore, if thou find such a work in thy heart, (for if thou conclude that there is no such work, thou needest not examine further, thou mayest be sure that thou hast not faith, but if thou have such a work) if thou wouldst know whether it be really and truly, or whether it be a fancy or delusion, consider:

First, if it be true, it purifies the heart: in Acts 15:9, saith the Apostle Peter there, God hath put no difference between us and them, after that by faith he had purified their hearts. So in Acts 26:18. And thou shalt preach forgiveness of sins to those that are sanctified by faith. So that this you must take as a sure rule: If thy faith be true, it purifies thy heart, it sanctifies thee. And therefore you see, faith and repentance are always put together. Repent and believe: for they are never disjoined. If thou find the work of repentance be not wrought thoroughly and soundly in thee, if thou find thy heart not purified, if thou be not sanctified, if there be not a sanctified disposition in thee, be sure it is a delusion, it is not faith: or, if faith be (as you heard heretofore) a taking of Christ, not as a Savior only, but as a Priest; and not as a Priest only, but as a King too, it must needs be that there must be real obedience, or else it is not faith, thou hast not taken him: If there be nothing but a mere assent, as the Papists affirm in another case; For faith is a taking of Christ, and a giving of ourselves to him again; so that there is a match, there is a bargain, a Covenant between us, as he saith in Heb. 8:8. I will make a New Covenant with them. Now a Covenant hath two parts: If God do this for you, you must do somewhat on your part, you must love him, and obey him. As in a Marriage, the Husband doth not only take the Wife, but the Wife also takes the Husband. If faith be such a thing

as this, there must needs be a general reformation of the life, or else it is certain thou hast not taken him.

Therefore know, that as there is a lively hope, so there is a lively faith: And when it is said to be a lively faith, it intimates that there is another, that is a dead faith; that is, There is a kind of believing, a kind of taking Christ, a kind of giving a man's self to him: but yet, (mark it) saith he, it is such a one as breeds no life in thee. Mark, if thy faith be such a faith as hath brought Christ to dwell in thy heart, so as the soul dwells in the body, if it be such a dwelling in thy heart that there be life in thee: for Christ, when he dwells in us, he acts the soul, as the soul acts the body: As the body now, when the soul is there, is able to move, is able to stir, is able to do anything: So the soul of a man, it falls to the duties of godliness, and new obedience, to all good works; it is ready (as the Apostle saith) to every good work; it is nimble, and ready to go about them, you are alive to righteousness. Hath faith so brought Christ into thy heart, that he lives in thee, as he did in Paul, that thou canst find and say truly, I am dead to sin, and live to righteousness? That thou hast mortified the deeds of the body by the Spirit, that thou findest another life working in thee; except thou canst find this, it is not true faith: for true faith is such as brings Christ to dwell in thy heart, and he dwells there when he revives thy spirit; as it is, Isaiah 57:13,14. I dwell in the high Heavens, and with him also that is of a contrite spirit, to revive the Spirit of the humble; that is, he never dwells, but he gives life. And, if thou find not such a life in thyself, conclude that thy faith is not good. And this you ought the more to mark, because many thousands seem to take Christ, and to do much, and yet for all this, they have not life all the while.

Take two grafts, it may be there is incision made in both, both may be planted, as you often see in Plants, after they be planted, if you would know whether the grafting be true or no, if you come a while after, and see one of the grafts dead and withered, you say this grafting was not good, or the stock was not good, somewhat was amiss: and if you find it to bud, and that there be life in it, then you say it was grafted indeed, the grafting was good and right. So when a man comes and takes Christ, if thou see thou be grafted, if thou find thy life to be the same, if thou find thou art no more able to pray, nor no more able to do any duty then thou wast before, that thou livest in thy lusts as much as ever thou didst, thou hast not that new heart, that new spirit, and that new affection which the Scriptures speak of; be sure then, that thou art not grafted: for if thou wert grafted aright by faith, (for it is that which grafteth) there would be life.

When as the graft is taken out of the former Tree, it bears no more that fruit, but it lives, and bears another fruit; Therefore consider if this be so or no: and that is the reason of that answer of Philip to the Eunuch, in the 8th, of the Acts, ver. 37. The Eunuch professed to believe, and would have been baptized. Saith Philip, thou mayest, if thou believe with all thine heart. Thou mayest think it is nothing; but it is a resolving from time to time to give up thyself to be Christ's servant, to take his yoke, to wear his Livery and his Badge. Now Baptism is but a seal to confirm and testify this to thyself, and to the World, that thou hast given thyself to Christ: saith Philip, take heed to thyself: if it be a false taking, thou mayest not have him, but if thou believe with all thy heart, thou mayest be baptized. So I say to men, there is a kind of taking Christ, when a man takes him with some part of his heart, when he resolveth, I confess it is good, I have a present disposition to it, it will serve me for such a turn; I am afraid of Hell, it will deliver me

from that; in such an exigent, in such a cross, in such a trouble, that will come upon me, it will free me from that: but this is not enough; but, if thou believe with all thy heart, that is, when thou hast summed and reckoned all together, all reasons, and all objections to and fro, thou resolvest altogether to take him in all respects.

Again, when all thy heart shall come in, that is, when the understanding of a man is fully persuaded of these promises, that they are true, and that it is best for him to take Christ, if the persuasion be good, and the will follow: for that you may take for a sure rule, there is no man that is fully persuaded, and convinced every way that such a thing is best, but the will will follow. If the mind be right, the will will follow, and if the will follow, be sure the affections will follow. For, if a man wills a thing in good earnest, and resolve, I would have it indeed, then his desires will come and be earnest; and if he be in doubt, fear will come; and if anything hinder, anger will come and thrust away the impediments: and if he get the thing, there will be rejoicing; and so all the affections will follow; and then certainly, action and endeavor will follow. There is no man that desires a thing earnestly, but where the affections are strong and busy, action and endeavor will be answerable. Now, if thou take Christ with all thy heart, that there is no reservation, that it is not done by halves, then thou mayest have him, and the fruits, and all the privileges by him, so as thou shalt be saved by him. Consider whether this be done, or no.

When we preach faith, you may see what it is in Acts 26:17,18. Mark what the message was that Christ sends to Paul, nothing but to preach faith; but what was that? Saith he, to turn men from the power of Satan, to God, to turn men from darkness to light. That is, to cause them to forsake their former ways of darkness, that they have been led into by the Devil, and to

turn them to God, to seek him. So that then a man is said truly to believe, when his heart is turned to God; that is, when a man before was given to this pleasure or to that pleasure and commodity, his heart was wedded to it, he would have an estate in this world, and he would have credit in the world, and he would have place with men, and he would be some-body in the flesh; his heart was set on these things, he would follow them.

Now faith is nothing but this, we come and tell you that Christ is offered; if you will be content to let all these things go, and to turn your hearts to him that the whole bent of a man's mind is turned the contrary way, and set upon Christ, this is faith indeed, when there is this general turning of a man's mind from these things. Therefore know, that faith in Christ, and covetousness, cannot stand together. When thy mind goeth a whoring after thy wealth, what hast thou to do with Christ? That is not to take Christ. For, to take Christ, is to turn the mind from these things to seek him.

Again, if thou wilt have praise with men, thou canst not believe and have that too; it is impossible. And so for any pleasure, for any lust: dost thou think to follow thy pleasure, to seek that, to satisfy thy flesh, and to have Christ? No, it is another kind of taking; and this is not done with that slightness as they did, Jeremiah 3. You turned to me (saith the Lord) feignedly, and not with all your hearts: but it is to turn in good earnest, to turn to God upon sound ground. Therefore now let us come to the examination of this.

Now, if we were not mistaken in it, there would be no question of this: we think that faith is nothing but a persuasion that our sins are forgiven, a persuasion that the promises are true, a persuasion that the Scripture is true, a persuasion that Christ died for my sins: And thence it is, that men are apt to be deceived in it: If they took faith as it is in itself, a marrying of

ourselves to Christ, with all our heart and affections, when he hath given himself to us, as in marriage, and we are given to him, in doing this we should never be deceived.

If thou wouldest know now if thy faith be right, examine it as thou wouldest examine another thing.

If you take Wine, if you would know whether it be good Wine, if you find it flat and dead, if you drink it, and it heats you not, it warms you not at the heart, it quickens you not, it revives not your spirits; you will say, it is naught, if it were good Wine, it would do this.

If you come to look on Plants, if you find there no fruit, nor no leaves, you say, this Plant is dead.

So take a Jewel, and when it comes to the Touch-stone, or any way that you try it; you say, it is fair, but it is a counterfeit Jewel, it is a false Diamond, or whatsoever it be.

If you come to take a dram of Physic, if you take a Drug, if it do not work: Take Leaven and put it into your Dough, if it sour not the lump, you say, it is dead Leaven, it is a counterfeit thing:

So I say, If thou find not in faith this effect, this operation upon thy heart, that it works not this general change in thee, that it fires not thy soul with love to Christ, if thou find not life in it, and that it bring forth such fruits, if thou find it not grow, that it put another taste upon the whole soul, that it leavens it throughout; know that thou art deceived, rest not in it, cast it away, get a right faith, such as will not deceive thee. But I cannot stand upon this. This is the first sign of effectual faith.

Before I come to the second thing, know this, (by the way) you that receive the Sacrament, That, if you be unworthy receivers, you cannot do yourselves a worse turn, then to offer to come to the Sacrament without

faith, to provoke God more, to eat and drink your own damnation. Now examine yourselves by such rules as this: If you have changed your life; If you have received it heretofore, and continue still in your sins; If you say, it is true, I have done it, I have returned again to my gaming, I have returned again to my swearing, to my looseness, to my company-keeping; but yet I had a good meaning, I intended it at that time, well, that is not enough. If thou hadst faith, thou wouldest do it indeed; do not say, I had a good meaning: for, if thou hadst faith, it would not only work a good meaning in thee, but it would work power in thee to do this, that thou wouldest be able to mortify these affections, it would work a real and an effectual change in thee. Consider, how faith doth it: faith takes Christ; when you have taken Christ, as soon as ever you have him, he sends his Spirit into your hearts, and the Spirit is able to do all this, and doth as Saint Paul saith, when he had Christ once, I am able to do all things, through Christ that strengthens me. So certainly, when thou hast Christ, as thou comest to take the elements of Bread and Wine, if thou hadst taken him indeed, thou wouldest be strengthened to do all things, thou wouldest find thy heart able to do this, thou shouldest find a change in thy heart, that thou wouldest do it without difficulty, thou wouldest find thyself turned and changed, thou wouldest have new affections, and a new life. And if thou do not find this, know that thou hast nothing to do with the Sacrament, know it beforehand, and know that thou hast had warning given thee, that thou receivest unworthily, and art guilty of the body and blood of Christ; that is, thou committest such a sin as those did that killed Christ.

What was their sin that killed him?

They despised him, they mocked him, they knew him not to be Christ, they made no account of him; their greatest work in killing him, was, they

despised him, they mocked him: So thou comest and art bold with him here, it is a despising of Christ: If thou didst reverence him, if thou didst fear him, if thou didst tremble at him, if thou didst know him to be such a one as he is, thou wouldst not be bold to do it. And therefore, if thou wilt venture upon small grounds to go on in sin, and yet come and receive the Sacrament, the Apostle saith, thou art guilty of the body and blood of Christ: that is, thou committest a sin of that nature, and therefore look to it.

Secondly, if thou wouldst know whether thy faith be true or no, consider whether thou hast this consequent of it, the Spirit of Prayer: for wheresoever there is a Spirit of faith, there is also a Spirit of prayer: that is, (mark it, and you shall see the reason why I deliver this to be a sign of faith.) Faith, you know, is wrought in us by the Spirit of Adoption. Now what is the Spirit of Adoption, but the Spirit that tells you that ye are sons? As in Gal. 4:6. So many as are sons, receive the Spirit of sons. Now whensoever the Spirit tells a man he is a son; that is, works faith in his heart, the second thing that the Spirit doth, it teacheth him to pray: and therefore those words are added, that you cry Abba Father: that is, the Spirit never doth the one, but it doth the other; if it be the testimony of the Spirit. And therefore this is the second sign: If thou have such a persuasion that the Spirit have spoken to thee, if thou wouldst know whether this be a delusion or no, thou shalt know it by this: If thou have the Spirit, it will make thee able to cry Abba Father, it will make thee able to do two things.

First, it will make thee able to cry; that they shall be earnest prayers which thou makest; thy prayers shall be fervent; they were cold before, thou camest to perform lip-labor, thou camest to do the duty, to perform it, perhaps every day; but alas, what prayer was it? This shall make thee cry.

But again, which is the main, not only so, but thou shalt speak to him, as to a Father: that is, thou shalt go to God, and look upon him as one doth upon a Father, as one looks upon one whose love he is sure of, of whose favor he doubts not, one that he knows is ready to hear his requests. It may be thou hast prayed before, but not to him as to a Father all the while, that is the work of the Spirit; if it ever give thee testimony of thy sonship, it will make thee pray fervently, and it will make thee pray to God as to a Father: that is to be made able to pray.

But, you will say, everybody can pray: Is that such a sign, is that such a distinguishing mark and character, to be able to pray?

My brethren, be not deceived in it: you must know, that prayer is not a work of the memory, or a work of the wit. A man that hath a good wit, or a ready invention, or a voluble tongue, may make an excellent prayer, in his own esteem, and in the esteem of others, but this is not to pray. Prayer is the work of a sanctified heart, it is the work of God's Spirit: There is a double prayer, Rom. 8, there is one prayer, which is the voice of our own spirit; there is a second prayer, which is the voice of God's Spirit in us: that is, when the Holy Ghost hath so sanctified the heart, when he hath put it into such a whole frame of grace, that the heart comes to speak as it is quickened, as it is acted and moved from God's Spirit. Now, saith the Text there, God knows the voice of his own Spirit: for that makes requests according to his will, he hears that prayer: But now the prayers which are made by the voice of our own spirit, he knows not the meaning of them: that is, he hears them not, he hearkens not to them. Consider whether thy prayer be such or no; consider whether thy prayer be the voice of God's Spirit in thee.

But thou wilt say, How should I know that?

Thou shalt know it by this, as I said before, Dost thou come to him as to a Father? Another man prays to God, it may be, all his life, but he comes to him as to a stranger; yea, sometimes he may be very earnest, when it is no prayer, but when he is put to an exigent, he may be earnest, as a Thief is earnest with the Judge to spare him: there may be much earnestness, although this may be far off from prayer. But canst thou come to God as to a friend? Canst thou come to him as to one whose favor thou art assured of? Canst thou come to him as to a Father? Except thou canst do this, know that he regardeth not thy prayers.

And this, me thinks now, when we consider, we should not defer our repentance, and think with our selves, I will repent when I am sick, I will go to God in the time of extremity. Well, it may be thou mayest do it; but alas, canst thou come to speak to God now as to a friend, when as thou hast been a stranger to him, and he to thee, all thy life? Certainly thou canst not. And when thou comest and prayest earnestly, when some great cross is on thee, in some great exigent, in the day of death, in the time of thy sickness; know, that though thou pray never so fervently, although thou add fasting to quicken it, yet it is doubtful whether it be acceptable prayer at all in that exigent. The Scripture gives it another term, in Hosea 7:14. Saith he, You prayed not to me with your hearts, but you howled upon your beds: it came not out of any love to me, nor from any change of heart, it came not out of a holy disposition in you. Therefore you prayed not to me, when you howled upon your beds: that is, as if he should say, they were no more but howling's. Will not a dog, or a beast, or any other unreasonable creature, when they are pinched, when they are in extremity, will they not cry, will they not moan for help? Your prayers were no more, they were but howling's upon your beds. And what were they for? They were to be

delivered from the present affliction, they were to have Wine and Oil in that great dearth that was upon them: And so in those cases, your earnest prayers are but howling's upon your bed. And therefore think not that this is prayer, be not deceived in it. And therefore it is the manner of the Saints, if you would know it, when they come to pray, they come boldly to God, they come boldly to the Throne of Grace, as the Apostle saith, Eph. 3:7. By faith we have boldness, and entrance with confidence. Another man he prays earnestly, but examine his heart, and he must needs say, Indeed, God is a stranger to me, I cannot be confident; it may be he hears me, it may be he hears me not. Whereas we are required to lift up pure hands in every place, without wrath or doubting; we are required to come with boldness: And know this, that if otherwise thou pray morning and night, if thou make never so many prayers, from day today, if thou be never so constant in them, God regards them not, he takes them by weight, and not by number, not by labor, not by earnestness, which is a thing that may come from the flesh. If thy prayer come from his Spirit, he accepts of it; if not, be sure it is no prayer, and if there be no prayer, there is no faith.

Thirdly, if thou wouldest know whether thou hast faith or no, consider whether thou have peace: for faith pacifies the heart as well as purifies it, as the Apostle saith, Rom. 5:1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God. Now, if thou wouldest know whether thy faith which thou hast be right or no, consider if there be peace there: Hast thou that peace that passeth all understanding? You know now, if a man were in debt, and were ready to be cast into prison, and saw not how he should escape, and one should promise him an hundred pounds, which would deliver him; if he believe this friend, he is full of peace and quiet: if thou believe thy pardon to be good, there will be peace.

But, you will say to me, there is many a man hath peace, who hath no faith.

It is true: But I would ask this Question concerning this peace: Is it a peace that comes after War? Hast thou knowledge of that enmity between God and thee? Hast thou had the sense of it, and after this hast thou been reconciled again? Is it such a calm that followed after a storm going before? As I said before, when it hath been always so with thee, when thou hast had peace, and there hath been no difference with thee, certainly this is not peace, this is a blind peace, when a man is at peace, not because he hath escaped the danger, but because he never saw the danger, because he saw not what danger there was. Hence it is, that many men, yea many thousands of men, live peaceably all their lives, and die peaceably. Alas, the reason is, because they were never acquainted with the Doctrine of Justification, and of Sanctification, they are strangers to it; and hence it is that they die with as much confidence as the best Christians, they have no more trouble than holy men: for this is all one, to be sure that I am free from a danger, and not to know it; both breed alike confidence.

Again, know that there may be peace built on fancy, such contentment's as a man may find in a pleasant dream, he is as strongly persuaded as the waking man: So many hypocrites, that have had some trouble before, and come to have some peace after, they think it sure, when it is built upon a false ground, and not upon the sure Word. Therefore consider whether it be such a peace as is well built, whether it be such a Peace indeed that casts out Satan, and thou findest some assaults made by him again. For, be thou assured, if it be true peace, if Satan be cast out, he will not let thee alone, thou shalt be sure to have thy peace troubled, he will make many rebellions against thee by the flesh and the world: And therefore if thou find all quiet,

that there are no such assaults in thee, that there are no troubles or attempts made on thee, be thou assured it is counterfeited peace: But still keep this, that if there be faith, there will be peace; that is, the heart will be at rest, it will be quiet, there will be a certain security in God.

See it in other things. Take faith in anything else, and you shall see, so much faith, so much quiet in you. For example, Hannah, in 1 Sam. 1:18, when her petition was granted, that she believed it, saith the Text, she went away, and took meat, and looked no more sad. That was an argument that she believed, she took meat, and looked no more sad. Take Moses at the Red Sea, Exod. 14, you shall find that the people were all troubled and disquieted, and that they knew not what to do: But (mark how Moses carrieth himself) Moses was quiet, and stood still, he was not troubled: And why? Because he believed, and they did not; if they had believed as well as he, they would have been at rest as well as he: (Mark what he saith) Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord: and the Lord will fight for you; and therefore fear not: As if he should say, If you did but believe, you would be at quiet, you would stand still, you would not fear, you would not have your souls troubled. So, I say, so much faith, so much quiet. Look upon David, in Psal. 3, when he fled before Absalom, saith he, Thou art my Buckler, &c. And therefore I laid me down to rest and sleep: that is, I was as a man that sleeps quietly. One would think that that was a matter that would break a man's sleep, when he lay in that danger, that if Achitophel's council had taken effect, he had been destroyed: and yet now, saith he, I laid me down and slept: as if he should say, This is an argument of my faith, my heart is at rest and quiet, so that I can sleep quietly without stirring. And so Paul, see how he accounts it, how he behaved himself, when God told him that he should appear at Rome before Caesar he knew that he should be delivered

from Ship-wreck: and though forty men had bound themselves with a curse, that they would destroy him, and he was told of it, yet he made no great matter of it, but said, Go and carry this young man to the Captain. So, consider whether thy heart be quiet, and rest upon God or no: for so much faith, so much peace: as in particular, so in general, for matter of assurance; know, that there is a double peace or assurance: One peace that ariseth from the confidence in the creature, when a man thinks he is strong in his wealth, when he thinks he is at rest. The other is from assurance in God; I know that he will be as good as his word; I know whom I have trusted: Let security be built on this ground, and the more security, the more faith. Therefore examine thy faith by peace. I should add somewhat more in this, and some other signs, which I must reserve until the next time.

FINIS.

SERMON IV.

1 . THESS. 1:3.

Remembering your effectual Faith, &c.

The third Character of Faith, which I named in the morning, but did not fully finish, is this; If we have justifying faith, then we have peace. In this we should take heed. As it is a great mercy to have a true and sound peace; so to have a peace not well bottomed is the greatest judgment in the world; when God gives up a man, that he shall be secure and at rest, that he shall not have his mind occupied about sin, or about matters of salvation; I say, it is a sign that such a one God hates: if it continue so with him, it is a sign God will destroy him. But yet peace of conscience, upon a good ground, is a sign of faith; as I showed in Moses, Hannah, David, and the rest. So far we went in the morning.

Now you must know, that all those instances that we brought you, that where there is faith, there is peace and quiet; they were not only for resemblance, to show you, that as it is in those other things wherein we believe, so it is in the main; (as you do not believe any particular promise,

except you have some quiet in your mind after it;) but likewise to show you whether that peace be good or no, whether that faith be sure or no. For if you believe the main, certainly you will believe the less. Therefore consider with yourselves, (we will enlarge this sign so far) If thou wouldest know whether thy faith be good or no, whether thou have peace indeed concerning the main; Consider with thyself, whether thou art able to believe those promises which concern those particular things which thou hast daily use of. For there are many promises which thou hast use of continually in thy course: thou hast every day some occasion or other of trusting God: See in these how thou doest believe, whether thou hast peace, and know, that if thou have not peace in these, it is a sign thou hast not peace in the main. I will name but one place for it: Look in Phil. 4:6. In nothing be careful, but in all things let your requests be made unto God: And then, saith he, The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall preserve your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Mark the opposition; saith he, In nothing be careful, when matters of trouble come, when crosses come, when great businesses come, wherein thou knowest not which way to turn thee, (saith he) in such a case be not thou careful; do the thing, thou must have so much care as to set thy head awork, as to devise what to do, and to set thy hand awork to act it; but let there be no solicitude to disturb and disquiet thy affections within. Let thy request be made known to God; then, the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep thy heart and mind in Christ Jesus. As if he should say, if thou be not able to do this, it is an interruption of that peace, it is a contradiction to that peace, which passeth all understanding, that keeps thy heart in communion with Christ: if thou be not able to cast thy care on him for other things, that peace belongs not to thee. Where there is a secret intimation, not but that men may have this

peace, and be inordinately careful, but ordinarily it is not so. He speaks not of such infirmities as the Saints are subject unto by distemper, but of an ordinary course.

Consider now, what thou dost for the things of this life: Saith Christ, Matth. 6. Oh you of little faith! Why so? What was the sign of a little faith? Saith Christ, Doest thou think that he will clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the Oven? Doest thou think that he will provide for the young Ravens that call upon him, and wilt thou not believe that he will do so for thee? If thou do not believe this, thy faith is nothing. If thou believe little, thy faith is little. Consider that, consider how you carry yourselves for the things of this life: do you think that God will do the main, and will not do the less? Do you think that he will give you Christ, and will he not give you other things? The same faith, that takes hold of the main promise, is it not ready to take hold of the less, and to depend upon it? God is able to do the greatest, and is he not able to do the less? Therefore, I say, in such a case, as Christ saith, John. 3:12, to Nicodemus, If (saith he) I come and tell you of earthly things, and you believe me not, how would you believe, if I should tell you of heavenly things? So I say, if you will not believe God concerning earthly things, when he promiseth these, how will you believe him for the greatest matters of salvation? How will you believe in him for the giving of Christ? How will you believe in him for the raising of you up at the last day? Therefore, consider whether you be able to do this or no: and know, that if there be faith, if you have faith for the main, you will have faith in particular cases.

As for example, to give you some instance, Gen. 24:7, when Abraham had a particular occasion to send his servant to get a Wife for Isaac; saith the servant, Suppose the woman will not come with me: See now what

Abraham's answer was: That God which took me from my Fathers House, and hath made me many promises before, (that is; God, that hath done the greatest matters for me, that hath promised me the blessed seed, in which all the Nations of the World shall be blessed; doest thou think he will not help me in such a particular?) he will send his Angel before thee, and will certainly give thee good success.

Consider what you do in such cases as these: these are things which you have continual use of; you are put many times to such exigence, that you shall have somewhat to trust God for, and you will be tried in it.

So likewise Peter, that trusted God for the main, when it comes to the particular case, that he is bid to launch out into the deep, when he is commanded to draw out the Ship and to go a fishing; although he had no hope to do it, he trusted in those particulars, that Christ would not fail him: when he bade him go upon the water, he trusted that he would support him. Take David, see how he trusted in God, how many occasions had he to trust on him? As it is true for the main; so for the particulars. So Paul, did not he trust God for his maintenance? See in his Epistles, how careless he was that way. So it is with all the Saints. Consider what you do in these things: See whether your hearts be at peace in these things; whether you trust in God, or no, so that your hearts are at rest, that you can sit still, and commit your care to God; if so, it is a good argument that you rest in him for the main. So much for that.

The fourth sign or Character of faith, is, To hold out: and that you shall see in these three branches.

First, when it shall cleave to Christ constantly.

Secondly, when it will take no denial.

Thirdly, when it is content to wait in prayer, and not be weary and give over.

I say, if you would know whether your faith be effectual, you shall know it by your holding out, whether it cleave constantly to Christ. If thy faith be ineffectual, (as you have heard the last day) it comes either from mis-information, (you know not what Christ is, nor what it is to take him; you look for other things from him: when you see what it is, if your faith be not effectual, you will go back:) or else you take him out of fear, or out of love to his, and not to him; or else out of false and slender grounds. Now if you would know whether your faith be such a faith or no, consider if it hold out, if it cleave to him.

If thy faith come of mis-information, when thou hast experience of Christ, when thou seest what he requires at thy hands, when thou considerest and understandest what he puts thee to, there is an end, thou givest over.

If thy faith come of fear; as soon as the storm is over, as soon as those troubles in mind, those disquiets in conscience are past, there is an end, thy faith cleaves to Christ no longer.

If faith come out of love to his, of love to a Kingdom, nothing but Hell and Heaven and some present commodities that move thee; when better things are offered, that are more present commodities, there is an end of it.

Again, if it be out of false, slender, and slight grounds; when stronger reasons and objections come, that faith ceaseth likewise. But now then, when thou findest that thy faith holds out, when all these are past, when all these are taken away, when the fear is gone, when such an offer is made, when all the objections are made that can be, this argues that faith is sound and good. Consider therefore, whether thy faith cleave fast, and constantly to Christ, or no; whether it hold out, when those flashes and good moods

will not; whether it overcome, when it is assaulted by the Gates of Hell coming against it. That is, when a man's faith is good, it is built upon the Rock, upon such a Rock, that if the Devil himself, and principalities and powers come, with all their strength, and all their wit, with all their temptations, and devises, if faith be sound, it will hold out, the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. The Woman of Canaan, she had a shrewd trial, when Christ tells her she was a Dog, in plain terms, and when it came from Christ himself; and yet when her faith was good indeed, she could not choose but she must cleave to him, she would not give over, there was a strong faith, that did knit her heart secretly unto Christ, there was the ground that she held out, notwithstanding all objections; although, it may be, she knew not how to answer them, yet she let not go, and that was a sign her faith was good: So, consider whether thy faith hold out when thou art put to such trials as these.

Again, consider whether thou wilt receive no denial when thou comest and seekest to him; when thou comest to seek favor at God's hands, when thou comest to seek forgiveness of sins, consider whether thou art able to hold out, though he defer long before he grant it. There is no grace that God gives, but he hath trials for it afterward: He gives thee the grace of Patience, he will put thee to it, thou shalt have some cross, some affliction or other.

If he give thee Love, he will do as he did with David, he will see whether thou wilt forsake him, or no; he will make thee an offer of preferment, an offer of wealth, of praise, of somewhat or other, to see if thou wilt part with that for his sake, or no.

If he gives us Faith, he often tries us in this case, he denies us long, he wrestleth with us, as he did with Jacob, he makes many shows of going away. Thus, we know, he dealt with Daniel, as soon as he began to pray, the

answer comes, that his request was granted; but God would not let him know so much; he lets him go through with the work, he lets him seek earnestly, and then he reveals and makes it known unto him. So, perhaps God intends thee good, but he will put thee to the trial, consider therefore if thy faith hold out in such a case.

Again, when thou hast gotten an answer, perhaps, after thou hast gotten thine answers, thou must wait long before the thing it self be given thee: Therefore consider if thou be content to wait for it: for that is the property of faith, to be willing to wait, as David often repeats it, I waited upon the Lord. You know, Abraham, how God tried him that way, when he made him a promise of a seed, of a Son, you know how long he waited for the performance. So Isaac, he waited long, before he had those two sons, Jacob and Esau. So God will put thee to it to wait, it may be, for matter of justification; that is, he will not show himself, he will not speak peace unto thee, he will not give thee a good look; but yet he gives thee a secret strength that thou shalt wait, thou shalt not give over, thou shalt stay till he speak peace; that is, till thou have comfortable assurance, till thou have the full testimony of the Spirit, as thou hast a secret testimony at the first working of faith. And so for matter of sanctification; It may be, God will suffer some strong lust to wrestle with thee, to contend with thee, as he suffered in Paul, he will put thee to wait, before he will give thee victory over it. If thy faith be good now, thou wilt consider that he hath sworn, he hath made an absolute promise, that he will give the Holy Ghost to those that are in Christ, that no sin shall overcome them, or have dominion over them. If once thou come under grace, if thou have faith, thou wilt never give over, but wilt be content to wait, and to continue still striving and

wrestling with it, thou wilt never lay down the wasters, as a man that is overcome, as a man that is discouraged, as a man that is weary of the fight.

And so for matter of deliverance, perhaps God will let a cross lie longer upon thee: if thou have faith, thou wilt not make haste, thou wilt be content to wait: Hab. 2. The vision is for an appointed time, it will not lie: Therefore, saith he, wait, it will come, it will not stay. That is, there is a certain time that God hath appointed for thy deliverance, before he will give thee such a particular mercy; consider whether thou be able to wait in such a case: for, if there be faith, (mark it) a man will be sure to wait, and not to give over: as in Jam. 1, it is given there as a sign that faith is unsound; they had so much faith as to come to Christ; but that was a sign that their faith was faulty, and unsound faith, that it was not able to wait to the end, but gave over.

If a man were sure now, that such a man were in the house, that he must speak withal, he will wait till he come out, if he be sure he be there. If thou be sure of God, if thy faith be sound, though he do not answer thee presently, in many particulars, yet thou wilt be content to wait upon him. Therefore this will show that many a man's faith is unsound, slight, and ineffectual, that they have so soon done, that they are ready to do much in flashes, in some good moods, on a Sacrament day, it may be, or in the time of sickness, or when they are affected with some Sermon, or upon such an occasion; but, if thy faith were right, it would hold out, it would cleave to Christ, it would go through with all trials, thou wouldest receive no denial, it would continue waiting upon him. This is the fourth sign.

Last of all, you shall know faith by the concomitants of it; and they are four; Love, Hope, Joy, and Humility. If there be Faith, if thy Faith be good, it will always have Love joined with it; as the Apostle Peter saith, in 1 Pet.

1:8. Whom though you have not seen, yet you love him. And you know the place in Gal. 5. Faith which worketh by love. That is, Faith which begets Love, and such a Love as sets a man on work. But it is a thing that needeth no proving: you cannot deny it: you know how they are joined together in the first to the Corinthians, chap. 13. Faith, Hope, and Love. And it must needs be so, that, if thy faith be good, it will have Love joined with it. For, if thy faith be right, thou lookest on God as upon a friend, as upon a Father; now thou lookest upon Christ as on one that is married to thee; thou lookest on him as upon one that loves thee, and hath given himself for thee. Now if thou see this, and art persuaded of this indeed, if thou think and art persuaded indeed that he loves thee, love will beget love, as fire begets fire. Therefore, if thou wouldst know whether thou hast taken Christ indeed, consider whether thou love him or no.

But you will say you love Christ. I hope there is no great question of that.

Solomon saith, Every man will make show for fashions sake, of goodness, but where can you find a faithful man? So may I say of Love: Every man saith, he loves, but where shall one find one that doth love indeed? Therefore consider, doest thou love in good earnest.

You will say, How shall I know it?

It is not a place now to stand to give notes of Love: we will only show now, that Love is a sure companion of Faith, and that Faith is not good, if Love be not there, But yet I say, if thou love him, thou shalt find that in thine own heart, thou needest not go far for a trial of that.

Love is the most sensible, the most quick, and most active affection of all others. Consider, if thou love any creature, or anything, any man or woman, doest thou not feel thy affection stirring in thee? Doest thou not find thy heart thus longing after them whom thou affectest? Thou delightest to be in

their company, in their presence, thou desireth to be with them. So that, if a strangeness grow between you at any time, thy heart is not at ease till all be right again between you: So, doest thou love the Lord Jesus? Doest thou keep his Commandments? Doth a man profess to love God, and cares not to vex him, and anger him?

Again, Doest thou hate sin? Doest thou think to love God, and not to hate that, which he hateth? If a man love God, he is holy and pure, and there is no man that loves the one contrary, but he must needs hate the other. There is no man that loves light, but he must hate darkness. If thou love God, in his person, in his purity, in his holiness, thou must hate sin; and this hatred is general; thou wilt hate all sin, if thou hate any, and hatred will breed the destruction of a thing.

Again, Doest thou love God? Art thou willing to do anything for his sake? Doest thou reckon matters of greatest difficulty easy to do; as Jacob did make it a matter of ease because of love?

Again, Doest thou love the Saints, those that are like him, those that are of such a disposition as God is of? Shall a man say he loves the purity and the holiness of God, which he hath not seen, which is hidden from his eyes, when he doth not love the holiness and the purity that he sees in his Saints? For there it is taught in a visible manner in the creature, where you may see it more proportionable to you. It is a hundred times more easy to love godliness in the Saints, then in God himself, because he is remote far from us, and they are amongst us, and are visibly seen. Therefore, except thou love the Saints, which thou seest holiness in; except thou seest thy heart inwardly, to love them with a natural affection, as it were, that thou lovest them whether thou wilt or no, thou doest but pretend.

Again, Doest thou love Christ? Art thou willing to part with anything for his sake? Love is bountiful: Thou sayest thou lovest God: What if he will have some of thy wealth? What if he will have thy credit? What if he will have thy liberty for his sake? If thou love him, thou wilt be content to do it. Therefore, consider if faith have begotten such a love in thee, so that thou canst truly say, though thou hast not seen him, yet thou lovest him.

The second concomitant of Faith, is Hope: If thou hast Faith, thou hast Hope. And this distinguisheth a Christians faith from the faith of Reprobates, from the faith of Devils, from the temporary faith that others are capable of: you know, the Devils believe and tremble: He saith not, The Devils believe and hope; for that they do not, Hope is a property of Faith, where there is Faith there is Hope. Now you must know, that a man hath never faith to believe, but he hath hope, which makes him expect what he believes. If a man have a promise of so much money which he needs, he hopes for the performance of it, and quiets himself, when he casts his thoughts upon it, he is at rest: when a man believes it, he hopes for it. Take an Heir that hath such possessions, which is yet a Ward, and is young, he hath not the Land in possession; but (mark) what hope he hath, it is not a vain hope, but such a hope as puts other conceits in him then other men have, puts another fashion upon his actions, it makes him neglect many good things he would do; he will not be of such a calling, he will not be diligent: for he hopes, he makes account of it: See how such things work upon a man, which he is not to have in 7 or 8 years after, perhaps. So thou hopest for Heaven, it is not a vain hope, but it is a hope that will make thee carry thyself after another fashion, it will make thee so minded, that thou wilt have an eye to it, and every man that looks on thee, may see that thou hast an eye to it: So that faith is accompanied by Hope. But now you must

not say, that if a man hope, therefore there is no fear mingled with it: for you must know, that a man may have Hope that is true and good, and yet may have fear mingled with it. For this you must know, that if there be nothing but hope, it is a sign that that Hope is not good. And therefore thou hast so little reason to be discouraged, because thou hast some fear mingled with thy hope, that thou hast the more cause to hope, and to think that thy hope is good, because there is fear mingled with it: for know, that there is a certain sort of men, that have neither faith, hope, nor fear; as Atheists, that have some hope, but no fear; as Devils and desperate men, that have some fear, but no hope; as presumptuous men, which have but a shadow of faith: But those that have hope, and fear mingled with it; that is, those may rather hope, that that hope which they have, they may be so much the more confirmed in it, because they have some fear mingled with it.

Therefore consider, whether thou have hope or no: Consider in what manner it is joined with faith. When thou believest that Christ is thine, that Heaven is thine, that thy sins are forgiven, and that thou art a son of God, but these things thou hast not yet, thou art as any other man, there is no difference between thee and them, thou hast no more in possession then other men, that walk with thee; now comes in Hope, and that expecteth that which is to come, that holds up thy head, as it were, that, though you have nothing at all for the present, yet that Hope will comfort you, that though you have troubles, and crosses, and a thousand things more, to obscure and blot your faith, and the waves go over your head, that you are ready to be drowned, this hope holds you above the water, and makes you expect with comfort that which is to come: and not so only, but, I say, it is a lively hope, a hope that sets a man awork, a hope that purgeth him. For, you know, that

that a man hopes for, he will endeavor to bring it to pass, it is such a hope as will not fail you, but will continue as well as Faith itself.

Thirdly, the third concomitant of Faith is Joy: Romans 15:13. The God of hope fill you with joy, through believing. If you have believed, you have Joy. So in the first of Peter, chap. 1, ver. 8. In whom you have believed: (saith he) Whom, though you have not seen, yet you believe in him, and joy with joy unspeakable and glorious. (As if he should say) If you believe in him, you shall know it by this, Whether do you rejoice in him, or no? Consider that, where there is Faith, there is Joy. And it must needs be so: As, you know, he that had the Pearl went away rejoicing; and the Kingdom of God consisteth in Joy, and Peace, and Righteousness. And therefore, where there is Faith, there certainly is Joy. And therefore consider, and examine thine own case: Hast thou this rejoicing in Christ? This rejoicing in the Doctrine of Justification, and forgiveness of sins. If we should examine men's faith by this, we should find that there is but a little Faith in the World. Examine yourselves, you that now hear me, that hear this Doctrine of Faith; it may be it hath been burthensome unto you; it may be it is a thing you care not for; To hear of Justification, and forgiveness of sins, they are things at the least, that, it may be, you take no great pains for; you do not study them, you do not prize them much: but, if you were forgiven indeed, you would prefer it before all other joy, it would comfort you above anything. If you would say, what you would hear above all things else, you would hear of matter of forgiveness. A man now that hath known the bitterness of sin, and afterwards comes to the assurance of forgiveness, (that is) to have Faith indeed, I say, he will rejoice in it above all things else: all worldly joy would be nothing to it. Therefore consider whether thou have such a Faith or no; if thou have not, certainly thou hast not Faith; and it is a

sure sign that will not deceive you; There is no man that hath it, that hath not Faith; and wheresoever there is Faith indeed, there is extraordinary great rejoicing in Christ.

But, you will say, Many a man may have Joy; the second ground received the Word with joy: and those that followed John the Baptist, rejoiced in his light: and in Heb. 6, the Apostle saith, they have tasted of the good Word of God; they have tasted with sweetness; that is, they have had joy in it.

It is true, we confess there is a false joy: and therefore, if thou wouldst know whether the joy which thou hast be good or no, consider these three things.

First, consider whether thy joy hold out in tribulation or no. Therefore the Apostle adds, Rom. 5:3, not only so, but we rejoice also in tribulation. As if he should say, those that are hypocrites, those that have a false faith, there may be much rejoicing in them for a while, but we rejoice in tribulations; yea, we not only rejoice in tribulation, but our joy is increased by them, they are as fuel, they add to our joy: as in Acts 5, the Disciples went away rejoicing, because they were accounted worthy to suffer for Christ. Whereas the second ground, when persecution comes, there is an end of their joy. Therefore consider whether thy joy will hold out or no.

Again, consider the greatness thereof: you know those words are added, 1 Pet. 1:8, rejoicing with Joy unspeakable and glorious. If it be right Joy, it will be such a great Joy, it will exceed all other, it will be like to that joy in Harvest, as Isaiah speaks, it will be a Joy unspeakable for the greatness of it; such a Joy, that at the least is so great, that whatsoever comes, yet it exceeds it. The other temporary Christian may have joy, but it is not so great, but some other joy will come, and overcome it, and drown it, and put it out.

Therefore, in the second ground, as their humiliation was slight, so was their Faith, they had a little humiliation for their sins, and they took Christ in a more remiss manner. And as their Faith was, so was their joy, all slight. But now, when Faith is sound and good, that Joy is accordingly great; it is a great Joy, that, at the least, overcomes all other; that, take what joy you will, if a man could have an earthly Kingdom here, if a man could have as great pleasure here as man's nature is capable of, if he had never so much praise, and glory of men, (these things we naturally rejoice in) a right Christian, that hath Faith indeed, will not so rejoice in these, but that he will rejoice in Christ above them. If thy Joy therefore be so great, that it overcome and exceed all other, be sure that Joy is good. But yet we must have one thing more in Joy. In whom, though you have not seen, yet you joy with Joy unspeakable and glorious. That is, if it be such a Joy as is right indeed, which is a testimony of faith, that it is a sign thou believest, it is a Joy that is glorious, it is a Joy that is glorious and spiritual. Now a hypocrite may rejoice, he may rejoice in Christ, he may rejoice in the Kingdom of God, and the assurance he hath of it, and he may rejoice in the hope that he hath that his sins are forgiven; but all this while, he rejoiceth after a carnal manner: as, you know, a man may rejoice in spiritual things after a carnal manner, as a man may rejoice in a carnal thing after a spiritual manner. Therefore the joy of Hypocrites, when it is at the best, it is but a carnal joy; there is something there that his flesh is able to rejoice in, it may be he had some fear and terror in his conscience, and after this comes a persuasion perhaps that his sins are forgiven him, and that he is in a good estate, that same fleshly fear and grief before, that worldly fear and grief will have a Joy answerable to it, a natural joy, and yet it may be great, it may be a great flash of joy, that may be as a Land-flood, make a great show, which because

it hath no spring, is soon dried up, but it makes a great flash: and therefore in that, Heb. 6, they tasted of the good Word of God, and of the powers of the world to come. I take this to be the meaning of it, (not as it is commonly interpreted, That a Hypocrite may taste of the good Word of God, and of spiritual privileges, he may taste of them, but not drink deep of them, but this is certainly the meaning of the place,) They tasted some things in the good Word of God, which was sweet to them. Now, in such men there is nothing but flesh. (Mark) If a temporary Christian believes for a time, he hath ineffectual faith, in such a man there is nothing but flesh. That conclusion must be set down: and if there be nothing but flesh, there is nothing can taste but flesh; for there is nothing else to do it, and the flesh tastes nothing but objects that suit with itself. What shall we say then? There is somewhat in him that picks out, that in these spiritual comforts, in these spiritual blessings, in this good Word of God, he picks out that which suits with his flesh: That is, such a carnal man may be able to rejoice in the Word. Do you not think that such a good Word of God may make carnal men rejoice in it? May he not taste such sweetness, as to take upon him the profession of Religion, and to bring forth fruit, and to hold out long? No doubt there is. Are there not such things in that which we propound in the Gospel? To tell men of a Kingdom of salvation, of the love of God, of the precious promises, of an inheritance, of escaping of Hell; may not a fleshly man, a man unregenerate, may he not see, and rejoice in these? He may; and hath such a taste as is there expressed.

Consider now therefore if thy Joy be right; If it be a sign of faith, if it be good and sound, if it be a Joy that is spiritual and unspeakable; that is, if it be a Joy that is so great as that it exceeds all other joys; if this Joy do but hold out in tribulation, it is a certain sign thy faith is good.

Now, last of all, the last concomitant of Faith is Humility. If thy Faith be right, it will bring that with it, to make thee humble and vile in thine own eyes: For what is true faith? It is that which brings Christ into the heart, as you have heard oftentimes; that which knits Christ and the soul together, it is that which causeth him to come and dwell with thee. Now wheresoever Christ comes to dwell, he comes with a light, he shows the creature his vileness, he makes a man see his sin, he makes him see what creature he is; whereas another that hath great hope, and professeth that he hath much assurance, his heart is lifted up, and not cast down. Such are not men which think themselves vile, and naked, and miserable, but they think themselves better than other men, they are forwarder then others in anything, they think other men are not like them. And therefore they are ready to be more bold and venturous in anything, they are ready to take up opinions, they are ready to strike out this way or that way. But now a true Christian is humbled with it, because when Christ comes into the heart, he makes a man to see his vileness. As, you know, when God drew near to Job, when he came near him indeed, then he abhorred himself in dust and ashes, then he saw what a one he was, he saw not before, he thought the contrary, but when God drew near indeed, that made him manifest.

So it was with Isaiah, when he saw God upon his Throne, and the Angels about him, when he saw his holiness, then, Woe is me, I am undone, because I am a man of polluted lips: He was so before, but when he drew near to God, he saw it.

So Peter said, depart from me, I am a sinful man, when he saw Christ, when Christ came near him, when he manifested himself in his Divinity, that he saw God in him; for so he did by that Miracle that amazed Peter, and cast him down, and made him see what he was. So David, when God drew

near to him, and promised to build him an House, to give him a House that should be eternal, to give him the Messiah, whose Kingdom should never end, (for that is included in the giving him a Kingdom forever, and a House that should have no end:) when God vouchsafed him so great a favor, we see, David was never so cast down as then in the sight of his own vileness, he was never so little in his own eyes, he never said so much as he said then. Now, (saith he) what is David? What am I, or what is my Fathers house, that thou shouldst regard me thus, that thou shouldst bring me hitherto? This is God's manner, when he comes into a man's heart, when he speaks peace indeed, when Faith is a right Faith, that brings Christ to dwell there; I say, it makes a man exceeding humble. Therefore the spirit of Christians is a meek spirit, they are humble, and gentle, they are little in their own eyes. Consider whether thou hast such a disposition bred in thee, or no: it is a sign thy faith is good, if there be; if there be not, it is a sign thy faith is not true. So much for the signs of faith. I make haste, because I have one Use more to add.

If nothing be regarded of God but effectual faith; that is, if that be the virtue of faith to be effectual, or else it is nothing worth, then we should learn hence, not to let that be wanting to our faith which is the excellency of it, which is the virtue of it, which is the proper quality of it. As, if it be the virtue of a Horse to go well; If it be the virtue of a Knife to cut well; If it be the virtue of a Soldier to fight well; or whatsoever you will instance in, whatsoever virtue it be, or whatsoever thing, you labor to find that in it, whatsoever be wanting; (for everything hath some proper excellency, some special virtue wherein the thing consists.) Now, to be effectual, to be working, to be operative, If this be the virtue of Faith, (as it were) if this be the character and excellency of faith; Let not this therefore be wanting in

faith. What is that then thou shouldst do? Use thy faith, set faith awork, live by it.

You will say, This is more than I can do; this is God's action, he must set faith awork, and work this in me.

I say, thou art able to do this of thyself, when thou hast faith once. I speak to those that have it, and this exhortation is to you. If you have faith, use it: many have it, that do not use it. This is a thing that you are able to do: For though God work in you all the work of faith, as it is received; yet know, he doth not work in you only, but by you; he makes you instruments: you are not as dead instruments, but as living instruments, to move of yourselves. It is true, that before you have faith you are able to do nothing; but when you have it once, then you are able to use it. Before a man hath life, he is not able to stir, but when he hath life once, then he is able to move and stir himself, for there is life there. When the Lamp is once lighted, you know you may feed it with Oil, and if you put more Oil to it, you shall have the greater flame: There is light, and you may increase it; indeed the difficulty is to light it; and that is God's work; he kindles the first fire, he works faith in the heart: But now, when thou hast it, learn to use it. Dost thou think a necessity lies upon us to use other Talents that God hath put into our hands, and will he not require that thou shouldst use the Talent of Faith? Wilt thou wrap that in a Napkin, and let it lie dead by thee? Will not he call thee to an accompt for it? What folly is it, (my brethren) you have faith, which is so excellent a Grace, able to do so great things as it is, and yet you will not use it. There are many Christians that have Faith indeed, and yet will not set it on work. How great things would it do, what a reward would it bring? As Aristotle saith of habits, That if a man have no more but a habit, and use it not, there is no difference between the wisest man and a fool; for what are

habits for, but for action? What is the Tree for, but for fruit? The habit serves but for the act; and this is according to the judgment of Scripture, in Rom. 2. God rewards not men according to the habits they have, but according to their works. Therefore think not that thou shalt be rewarded according to thy habits of Faith which thou hast, though it be true that that sanctifies thee, but God doth reward us according to the use of our faith, according to the works that our Faith doth bring forth, according to the efficacy of our faith. It is true, the taking of Christ is one work of Faith, thou shouldst set it awork to do that; and besides that, all the works of sanctification are all works of Faith; all thy life long, every hour thou hast somewhat for Faith to do. Set thy faith awork, and thy reward shall be accordingly.

And again, if thou use not Faith, thou shalt have little enough of it; the using of it is that which strengthens Faith. It is God's usual manner, when he gives Faith to a man, to give him exercise, to keep his Faith breathing, as it were; he will be sure to have somewhat wherein he will put him to it, some tribulation, he will put fire to it, to cleanse it, and therefore we should learn to make use of our Faith, to set it on work.

It is a general Rule in all things, and as true in this, If a man have an estate, what is he the better to have it, if he do not use it? To have a friend, what is a man the better if he do not use him? Shall a man be a Favorite of a Prince, and get nothing by it? Faith makes a man a Favorite of God, a friend to God; and will you make no use of God? It is that which he expects at your hands; will you have God in vain? Shall he be your God, and will you make no use of his power, of his wisdom, of his ability to hold you up, to help you upon all occasions? You should make use of him; all that is his, is yours, if you make use of it by faith.

Again, shall men have such privileges as we have by faith, and shall not we comfort ourselves by them? What is it for a man to have great estates, great Titles of Honor, and Houses, and Lands, if a man do not think upon them, that these considerations may cheer him? We should do so with faith, this is the use of faith.

Again, if faith be used, it is able to do much for us, if it lie still, it will do nothing. You know what they did, Heb. 11. They having faith, it made them do that, it was but the use of their faith: So it is with us; Look how much thou usest thy faith, so much thou shalt be able to do. Therefore Christ saith, Be it according to thy faith: that is, not according to the habit of thy faith, that lies dead, as a Talent wrapped up there; but, be it unto thee according to the use of thy faith. If thou set faith on work, it will be able to do great things, it will be able to do wonders, it will be able to overcome the world, it is able to work righteousness, it is able to prevail with God and men, it is able to go through the greatest matters.

But, you will say, How shall I use it?

That is the thing indeed which I purposed now to have showed, how faith must be used, how we must live by faith: I should have showed how you should use it.

First, in comforting of our selves; for that is one use of Faith, thou shouldst set it awork to fill thy heart with joy, out of the assurance of the forgiveness of sin, and of the privileges which thou hast by Christ. When a man hath faith, and finds his heart no more affected than other men's, he finds no rejoicing there more than ordinary; Now set faith on work, learn to believe, and that thoroughly.

First set faith on work to believe, to trust perfectly, as the Apostle speaks, Gal. 3. In the grace revealed by Jesus Christ: trust perfectly; that is, thou

shouldst believe the full forgiveness of thy sins, thou must not believe it by halves, so that there should be a distance, as it were, between God and thee, some odd scores unacquitted, uncrossed; but thou shouldst believe so, that thy joy may be full, thou shouldst believe thoroughly, that thy sins are forgiven, that all are acquitted, thou must not limit God in his mercy at all, as thou shouldst not limit him in his power. Thus a man should set faith on work, that he may be able to say, My Beloved is mine, and I am his. I know there is a Match made between us. For unless you lay this ground, a man shall not rejoice. This is all, therefore now use thy faith. If Satan now come, and tell thee of some sins, and of some circumstances of those sins, and of some wants in thy repentance and humiliation, what serves faith for now? What serves all this for that you have learned here concerning the Doctrine of Faith, but to teach you that these should be no scruples, you should believe, and that perfectly? When this is done, that you see there is a Match, a Covenant made between God and you, now you must know, that all that Christ hath is yours; whatsoever he hath by Nature, you have it by Grace. If he be a Son, ye are sons; If he be an Heir, ye are heirs; and when ye have done this, then consider all the particulars of the wealth of a Christian, that all is yours, whether it be Paul or Apollos, or the world, &c. These things we have often spoken of, you should run through and consider of them: If a man will consider that he is a King, that the world is his, that whatsoever is in Christ belongs to him, and oweth him a good turn, and will do it at one time or other; when he considers all the precious promises. A man reckons his wealth not only by his money which he hath lying in his Coffers, that he hath present, but by Bills, and Bonds, and Leases, &c. See, how many promises thou hast, there is not a promise in the Book of God, but it is thine; set thy faith on work to consider this, and to rejoice in it; set faith on

work so to see them that thou mayest rejoice in them, and wean thee from the things of this world, not to regard them; for they are small things of no hold. Shall a King regard Cottages and trifles? No, if thou think in good earnest that thou art such a man, why doest thou regard trifles? Thou shouldst do this; when other men reckon their Lands, and their Houses, and their friends, a Christian reckons he hath God, he hath many good works in store, he hath so many precious promises laid up in the Land of the Living. Set thy faith on work thus, not only to rejoice, but to bring in a holy magnanimity, answerable to such a condition; and let not Faith give over till it have brought thee to this. Certainly, a man that believes he is a King, he will have another spirit: for there is no other reason wherefore it is said Saul had another spirit, but that when he came to be a King, he had a spirit answerable. When thou believest these privileges, when thou settest thy Faith on work to believe indeed, to believe them to be real things, and not fancies, and notions, there will be bred a disposition answerable, a carriage and spirit suitable; thou wilt not admit of things that are unfit for such a person, thou canst not do it; but as one that is a Prince, that hath those hopes actually, he cannot admit of thoughts that other men have; no more can a Christian, when he is borne from above by the immortal seed, there is such a disposition wrought in him, that, if he will set his faith on work to believe these things, he shall not be able to admit of those base things which he did before, and which others do.

Again, if a man set his Faith awork to believe these things, he would be able to use the World as if he used it not, he would not care for losses and crosses, he would not grieve for them, as one that is not able to bear them. Thus we should learn to set faith on work, in believing these privileges, that we may be able to walk with God, as Enoch did, and as Paul, and Moses

did; to walk with him in the upper Region, above the storms: There is much variety of weather when a man is below here, now it is fair, and then it is foul; if a man were above these, there is a continual serenity; So a man that hath his heart in Heaven, a man that walks with God, that hath his heart raised above others; if you would do this, if you would use Faith, if thou wouldest consider this, it would set thee aloft, above these things; thou wouldest soar aloft as the Eagle, thou wouldest care no more for these things, then the Eagle cares for the chirping of Sparrows: they are trifles, thou wouldest overlook them all. If we did consider this seriously, how would it alter our course? It would work another disposition, another affection in us. A man would consider, that if God be sure, what matter is it if a friend die? If I have God, what is the loss of any creature? And so, if a man suffer wrong in his name, what is it, if he have praise of God? If thou believe, and see God in his greatness, to have praise of such a one as he, will make thee to contemn the rest. And so for wealth: What is poverty? What account did Paul make of it? It is nothing to one that hath Treasure in Heaven, to one that believes indeed, to one that seeth he hath all God's Treasures opened to him. Thou shouldest learn to do this in good earnest. If a man would set this Faith awork to believe it, his heart would be fixed, he would be afraid of no evil tidings, he would say with himself, if there be no ill tidings from heaven, it is no matter from whence they come on earth. If a man would build, through faith, upon the promise, and consider it really. This is the use of Faith: thus a man's heart should be filled with joy, a man would be able to go through ill report and good report, through want and through abundance, without being much troubled with either; the one would not much puff him up, nor the other would not deject him, but he would go as a Giant, and march thorough the variety of conditions; he would pass

through them, that neither the one hand nor the other, the good success nor the ill success should work upon him much. This is a strong man: and this Faith will make thee able to do, if thou use Faith, and set it awork. But I am sorry the time hath cut me off: this is but an entrance, I give you but a little taste: There are many things wherein Faith stands us in much stead, wherein if we did use Faith, how much service would it do us? But for that which remains in this Doctrine of Faith, I had thought to have shut it up at this time, to show you how to use it, how to make it effectual, how to set it awork, how to walk by it, how to husband and improve this Talent for God's advantage and your own. But I cannot stand on it. So much for this time.

FINIS.

SERMON V.

1 THESS. 1:3.
Remembering your effectual Faith, &c.

The first thing wherein thou shouldest use Faith, is to comfort thyself by it. Therefore consider, you that doubt of this, you that make question, (I speak to those that have the work wrought, whom the Holy Ghost hath made to desire Christ above all things, I say) remember that God justifieth the ungodly, and that you have nothing to do, but to take him.

2. Remember that Christ is made righteousness to us, that no flesh might rejoice in his sight, but he that rejoiceth might rejoice in the Lord.

3. Remember that the pardon is general. Look to the promises of the Gospel; you shall find them without all exception. To us a Savior is borne, to take away the sins of his people; he came to take away sins of all sorts. Now, when God hath made no exception, why should we make any?

4. Consider that we have to do with a God, who delights to show mercy, it is a thing that he is not weary of, it is natural to him: And therefore as the eye is not weary of seeing, nor the ear of hearing, because it is natural to

them, no more is God weary of showing mercy. Nay, he delights in it, Mic. 7:8. Who is a God like unto thee, taking away iniquities, delighting to show mercy, &c. Why so? Because mercy pleaseth him. That is, there is no work that he is so much pleased in, as in showing mercy.

5. Consider thou, that art in such a case, consider that his mercy is as large as any other attribute. Every man thinks that this is no news; what need you tell us that God is infinite in mercy? I say, this is a thing that thou dost not consider: if thou diddest, thou wouldest not stick upon it as thou doest, If thou diddest believe that God were as merciful as he is; but we scant God according to our measure; we square God's mercy according to our own thoughts. Every man measures God's mercy, according to that which he can conceive. He thinks with himself, if a man commit one sin, it might be forgiven, but when his sins exceed, when they grow out of measure sinful, when they are sins so circumstantiated, as we say, that they are out of measure sinful, here a man stands at a stay: What is the reason of this? Because we draw a scantling of God's mercy, according to our own conceits. Whereas, if we considered that his mercy were as large as any other attribute, then we would consider that it hath no limits: and if it have no limits, then whatsoever thy sins are, it is all one.

6. Dost thou think that Christ came from heaven, and took flesh, and suffered death, to forgive small sins? No, it was to forgive the greatest; the work is large enough to match with the greatest sins. These, and such like reasons thou shouldest labor to bring to heart, that thou mayest believe perfectly and thoroughly, and give not over till thou have done it. Let not thy faith trust in Christ by halves, but trust thoroughly. Thou shouldest come to this disjunction: If I be out of the Covenant, why do I believe at all? Why do I receive any comfort? If I be in the Covenant, why do I not

believe perfectly? I say, give not over till thou have brought thy heart to a full assurance. Thus a man should do that yet doubts whether his estate be good, whether Christ be his, when he is his. For when a man is once in the Covenant, that the match is made between him and thee, why doest thou doubt? If thou be in the Covenant once, doubt not then that a sin or two, or daily failings, shall break the Covenant between God and thee, it is impossible. Thou must know that thou often breakest the Covenant; but except there be a quite turning back, except thou altogether forsake God, except thou leave God, and choose thee a new Master, (this indeed breaketh the Covenant) otherwise, if it be but a failing, if it be but a sin of infirmity, from day today, when as yet thou keepest God in thy heart, thou cleavest fast to him, thou intendest to serve him, and not to forsake him and give him over; think not that those sins, although they be great, break the Covenant. And therefore, Psal. 41:7, said the People of God there: Although these things be befallen us, yet have we not forgotten thee, nor dealt falsely concerning thy Covenant. Why; We have not turned back; although we have failed, and done many things amiss, yet have we not dealt falsely concerning thy Covenant. That is, we are not Hypocrites, our hearts are sincere.

How prove they that?

We have not turned back from thee, our feet have not gone out of thy ways. That is, we have not quite given over, as many men do that make their pleasure their God, when they make their profit their God, when they divorce themselves from God, then they break the Covenant; but else it is not a breaking of the Covenant. Know therefore for thy comfort, when thou considerest this, sum them up together, and see now whether thou hast put thy seal to the truth of God, that he is true; that is, whether thou believe the

promise, whether thou take and receive Christ: for that is it to put thy seal to the truth of God: when thou canst conclude that thou hast done that, then see if God hath put his seal to thee. There is a double seal:

One is, thou art sealed by the Spirit; that is, there is a secret witness of the Spirit, the sealing of the Spirit to the day of Redemption; the hidden Manna, the secret witness that God gives to every man's heart, as a privy Seal that God sets on thee, Grieve not the Spirit, by which ye are sealed to the day of Redemption. Now there is another seal, which is more manifest than this; as in 2 Tim. 2:19. The foundation of God remaineth sure, and hath this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his, and let everyone that calleth upon the Name of the Lord depart from iniquity. That is, there is another seal that God sets upon you, whereby he enables you to depart from iniquity: This is a more open seal then the other. If thou find that thou have put thy seal to God, to his promise, and thou findest again that he hath sealed thee by the inward witness of his Spirit, and hath sealed thee likewise by the fruit of amendment of life, with enabling thee to depart from iniquity; now what shouldst thou do then? Make no more question, take it for granted, that Christ belongs to thee, and thou to him; Trust perfectly to the grace revealed through Jesus Christ: A place that I have often named, 2 Pet. 1:13. Trust perfectly in the favor; that is, in the free favor, in the free promise revealed through Jesus Christ; that is, Do not mince the matter, and say, it may be God will forgive me, or it may be he will not; but do it perfectly, let nothing be wanting, do it perfectly, that thy joy may be full; if thou do it by halves, if thou do it but in part, thou shalt have but imperfect joy.

The use now that thou shouldest make of Faith, is to see thy joy may be full: if thou be not certainly persuaded, thou doest not use thy Faith as thou oughtest. When thou hast done this once, when thou hast settled upon this

conclusion, to say certainly Christ is mine, my sins are forgiven; now come to the privileges, consider them, and go through them all: (I have named them heretofore upon another occasion:) and labor to comfort thyself with them; labor to have thy heart filled with joy; at the least, get so much comfort as may overvalue any affliction in the World, that there may be a greater weight in the other Ballance, that though great afflictions do befall thee, yet thou art not drowned, thou art not swallowed up of affliction, that thy heart faints not; but set thy faith awork, that thou mayest have so much joy, as that thou mayest go through it. And again, get so much joy, as at least may overtop any prosperity outward, any comfort that thou mayest take in thy friends, or in thy wealth, or in those things that thou findest thy heart too much to cleave unto, that thou settest them at too high a rate; set thy Faith on work, that thy joy may be full, that thou mayest not prize those so much, but that thou mayest look upon them as trifles, as matters of nothing, in comparison of the joy that is prepared for thee in Heaven. Thus a man should use faith; that is, in any affliction, that he do not over-grieve; and that no outward comforts, whatsoever befall him, take not up his joy too much.

Thus our faith should pass through all conditions, to use the World as if we used it not: So, I say, set thy Faith on work. This is the first work that faith should do, to comfort a man's heart.

The second use we should make of Faith, should be to guide and direct our lives; that is, we should use Faith to be as the Rudder to the Ship, to turn our courses the right way upon all occasions in our conversation: For that is the office of Faith, to guide a man's life. For as it is in a way, so it is in our life; there are many turnings, it is not only a strait way, but there are many turnings, and when a man comes to a place where there are two ways

to turn to, that he knows not which way to go, now Faith comes and teacheth thee what thou shouldest do. That is, there are many difficult cases wherein a man knows not what to do, he is amazed at them; It may be God will lead thee through the way of the Philistines, through great persecutions, and troubles, which thou must wrestle with: Now set thy Faith awork, fight the good fight of faith; that is, thou must now overcome, thou must not balk the way of Religion, because of the troubles thou meetest withal, but pass thorough the troubles, that thou mayest keep thy way.

Again, it may be God will lead thee through pleasant ways, and not through the way of the Philistines, (as when the people came out of Egypt, the Lord led them not by the way of the Philistines.) If God give thee peace and prosperity, now set Faith awork, that this peace and prosperity that thou hast, that it soften not, that it loosen not the sinews of thy mind, that it dissolve not thy strength: but keep thy faith, and hold thy strength, that thou be not drawn to sin against God by such a condition. In all the turnings of a man's life, to be kept straight, a man must set his faith on work. It may be God will give thee peace for a time, take heed thou sit not down now and forget thy journey. As thou must not turn to the left hand, so thou must not turn to the right hand, but pass through all, that thou mayest approve thyself the servant of Christ in straits, in necessity, in tribulation, by the Armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; through honor and dishonor, by ill report and good report. That is, set Faith on work, in all the variety of conditions, to keep thee in the right way, that thou turn not out of it. It is faith that must do it: For example, put the case thou comest to Esthers condition; there was a turning of her mind, she had peace before, but when it comes to that, that she must venter her life for the Church, here she had use of faith. And so for Abraham, God bade him offer his son, he was at rest

a great while before, but now God tries him what he will do; here is a turning of his life, here was an Exigent, here was use for his faith, he did it, faith turned him this way; Another man would have turned another way, that hath not faith. So when God calls Moses, he was quiet before in Pharaoh's Court: now he must go to suffer affliction with the people of God, then what must he do in such a case? The Text saith, he did it by faith; by faith he forsook the glory of Pharaoh's Court, and chose rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season. There be many hundreds of such cases that befall continually. I say, thou shouldst use thy faith now, that it should lead thee in the right way, in all these difficult cases: for this is the use of faith. See now another man that hath not faith, take a false-hearted man, and say what you will to him when any such exigent comes, you shall never draw him from his wealth, from his friends, from his worldly credit, because he makes that his main, his heart secretly trusts in that, he thinks, if that be gone, he is as undone; that is his God, therefore you shall never draw him from that, for he wants faith to make God his God. Come to another man, let him come into such an exigent, and you shall not pull him from God, he is his trust, he is his hope, and if he loseth God's favor, he loseth life and all; and therefore that is the difference in all the passages of things in their conversation. This then is the second use we should make of faith, to guide and direct us in our lives. But because this is general, it may be it will not be enough: I will come a little to Instances.

Suppose a man come to such a turning as those in John 12:12. Many of the chief Rulers believed in him, but they durst not confess him, lest they should be cast out of the Synagogue. Put the case, that thou be in such a case, as that thou art brought now to such a trial: Now, if thy faith be such a

faith as they had, that is a sign that thou wantest faith indeed. Take two men, the one will be content to be cast out, he will confess Christ, come what will of it. Another man, when it comes to such a competition, that either he must be cast out of the Synagogue, or deny Christ, he will rather leave that then the other, he will rather part with Christ, he will rather forsake him, and the confession of him, then endure such trouble.

So again, come to a matter of praise of men, to a matter of credit, when a man sees that this is his condition in the place he lives in, and considers, If I serve God indeed, if I go through in my profession, I see I must be contemned, I must be despised, I must be trampled upon, I see, I must be hated of all men, as our Savior Christ saith, (for to be hated of some men, a man might bear it well enough) but to have all men's hands against him, to be excluded of all good company, (as they say) such a thing a man shall have much ado to bear, to lose all his worldly credit, all his friends; but when it comes to such a case, one man is willing to bear these, because he trusts in God: I know whom I have trusted, saith Paul: Therefore he was willing to undergo all shame, to endure imprisonment, to do anything: another man doth not trust in God, and therefore he will not endure he will leave Religion, he will not do the things that may breed this trouble, he will mince the matter, he will leave that, that he may secure himself, and keep his credit, that he hath amongst men.

So again, come to matter of commodity: Let matters of profit, or advantage in the World for a man's estate be offered, see the different condition now of a man that hath faith, and of a man that wants faith. See Saul, when he saw the fat Cattle, he took them, his faith was nothing but a notion: If he had believed in God, he would not have thought that the fat Cattle would have made him more happy, but because he saw them, and

thought they would be advantage to him, he saw them present, that was the thing he felt, he believed not the other, therefore he did that.

And so for Balaam; when the case comes, that either he must curse the people, or else forsake the wages of unrighteousness, surely he will have respect to the wages of unrighteousness: that is, though Balaam made a fair show, he would do anything rather than to go against God's Commandments, and yet he had an eye to the other all the while, and God saw that he secretly looked to himself. So, it may be, thou makest profession, thou makest a fair show, thou wilt do much. Remember this, it may be, it is but a high flying: The Eagle, though she fly high, yet she hath an eye to the prey below all the while: So many men, although they do much, yet they have a secret eye to the prey; that is, they want faith, and therefore they regard these things too much. And when the time comes, that they must stoop to it, the time of trial, when a man wants faith to magnify other things, he overvalueth those things, having nothing better to trust unto. In such a case, Judas his thirty-pence was a great matter: Gehazi's change of raiment, and Achan's wedge of Gold. I need name no more examples. But take a man that hath faith, and this is no difficulty to him, he will not only let go that wealth which he hath inordinately gotten, as Zacchaeus, but he will suffer the spoiling of his goods with joy, because he believes God, that he hath in heaven a more enduring substance. There is no Christian, no good man, but he would be content to gain as well as thou; what is the reason he takes it not? He believes that by forsaking that, he shall have a more enduring substance in Heaven. There is no man would forsake anything but for the better, and that is the reason we believe, and thou dost not.

And so come to matter of safety and danger, and there you shall see what difference faith makes between men, how it turns their course, when they come to such an exigent. See it in Saul, you know, he was commanded not to offer Sacrifice till Samuel came, God did put him to the trial, The Philistines were upon him, the day of Battle drew near, he saw the people shrink away, Saul was put to it now, whether he would trust God for his safety or no: If Saul had had faith now, and had thought with himself, If I keep the Commandment, is not God able to help me, what though the people shrink away; cannot God do as much with a few as with many? If he had believed, he would have done otherwise: But he did not believe, and therefore you see which way he turned.

The like we see in Joram, Jer. 42. This was his case, he was the Captain of those that were left behind in Captivity; If he had stayed in Jerusalem, he had had nothing to defend him, there was poverty and want of all things; if he went down into Egypt, that was a safe Country, as far as anyone could see, it lay far from all danger of War, there was plenty of all things, and he was a strong King, able to defend him; There comes Commandment from God, that he should keep himself still in Jerusalem, and should not go down into Egypt: It is a place worth the reading, Jer. 42 & 43. Joram, in this case, believed not that God would keep him safe where he saw no means of safety. Therefore, in that turning, you see what choice he made, which was his utter undoing; he went down into Egypt, and there the Sword and the Famine followed him, that God might make him know, that it was not any outward condition that could keep him safe, and that he was able to keep him safe in another place, where there seemed to be more danger,

On the other side, take those that trust in God, in any such case, when they are brought to any such difficulty, they are willing to venture to put

themselves upon God, to go any whither, as Luther went to Worms, they care not for any danger before them.

But some will say, it is true, if I had a Prophet sent to me, to tell me in such a case that I should be safe, I should trust on him.

Certainly, if thou hast not, yet if the cause be good, if it be a thing that God sets thee awork on, if thou go by a right rule, know, that in this case thou hast as true a promise of safety, that God will deal well with thee, as if thou haddest a Prophet sent immediately from God. Therefore I say to thee in such a case as Luther said to Melanchthon, which was a good reason when Melanchthon began to faint: Luther being afar off, wrote a Letter unto him, and tells him, saith he, if the Cause be not God's, why do not we give over? Why do we not shrink? Why do we do anything? And If it be God's Cause, why do we shrink? Why go we not thorough? He needed no more but to know that it was God's Cause: and after that, see how he exposed himself from time to time: and as no man was bolder than he, so no man had more comfort. It is with us in this case as it was with Jeremiah, Ier. 26. God bids him go and speak his Word to the people, all his words, and tells him that the people would be ready to put him to death; and so they were, they said he should die, but yet he obeyed God, because the Lord sent him; and see what was the issue of it, God turned the matter, and saved him. This is faith, when a man comes in that case to set his faith awork, that it may set him the right way that he is to go in, which way he is to turn.

And so, put the case that God brings thee to such a case, that thou art in danger of prison in danger of death, in danger of the greatest cross, of the greatest persecution and trouble, now one man consults with flesh, the other consults with the spirit, he sets faith awork to work his work for him: you see what Stephen did in such a case, and the reason of it, Acts 6. He was a

man full of faith, and therefore he feared not what they could do to him. See what Paul did, in such a case; you see what danger he was exposed unto, but he consulted not with flesh and blood, but what did he? He set faith on work, that it might guide him in all the way that he went, in all the turnings of his life.

And so, on the other side, for pleasure, there are two men that have pleasures propounded, the holiest man hath the same nature that others have, they would take the same delight that others do, as far as they are natural.

What is the reason then they do not? Why do such men turn from all sinful delights, and run another course?

It is nothing but faith that enableth them to do it. By faith Moses left Pharaoh's Court, and the pleasures of sin for a season, and chose adversity with the people of God: that is, as if he should say, If you would know why Moses did this, it was faith that enabled him: that is, he believed, that if he had enjoyed those pleasures of sin, he should have been a loser by them, he should have fared the worse for them. Again, he believed, that by his suffering adversity with the people of God, he should gain; it was only faith that made him do this. If thou haddest faith, thou wouldest forsake thy pleasures, and live a more strict life, as the Saints do. So that still you must keep that conclusion, that you must set faith awork in all the turnings and passages of your life, for that is it that guides you in the right way.

Again, Take two men that have both children to provide for, they have posterity to care for; the one man he reasons thus with himself; If I leave them not as good a stock as I would, yet I shall leave them God's blessing, which is able to make them prosper; and though I should leave them abundance, yet all that, without God's blessing, will not be able to do it.

Therefore such a man will be indifferent for matter of estate, he will leave a conveniency for them, if he can, but he takes no great care, he had rather lay-up faithful prayers in heaven, he had rather see them brought up in the fear of God, for he trust God, and he thinks that his blessing can do it, without means; and he knows that great means, without God's blessing, cannot do it. But when another man is in this case, he looks to that which is represented to his eyes: and therefore he will not have done till he have provided such a portion for such a child, till he have built him houses, till he have made them firm on every side, till he have added house to house; this is out of want of faith, he believes not: hence it is that these two run a different course.

So again, one man looks to his business, he will not spend time to examine his heart, he will not spend time in prayer from day today; he saith, my business will go at six and sevens, my business will not be done: when as another man, that hath chosen Mary's portion, is content to lose somewhat, he is content that many things should go amiss, he is content to lose somewhat of his estate, he is content to let his business lie undone, or not to be so well done, because he thinks, to be busy in good works, in prayer, and to have the favor of God, is greater advantage, he thinks he hath chosen the better part. Now it is faith that works this difference. What should I do? Why should I name anymore Instances? You may name more to yourselves, as you have faith, so it will guide you, it will turn you this way and that way in the turnings and passages of your life.

But now, because I am far in the point, (and I see the time runs fast away) before I leave, I would not only show you what faith is able to do, but I would work you to this a little.

You will say then, What is it to trust in God? For that is the reason of all the difference, you see: Therefore, saith Paul, 1 Tim. 4:10. We labor, and suffer rebuke, what is the reason? If you would know the cause, why we lead such a life, why we run another course then others, why we live a painful life in labor from day today; but if a man had good wages, he might well do that, we labor and suffer, and are rebuked, and have nothing but persecution for our pains; but, saith he, we do it, because we trust in the living God: therefore we labor, and suffer, and are rebuked, because we trust in the living God. I say, do this, and thou shalt be able to do the same that Moses did, thou shalt be able to do the same that Paul did, the same that all the Saints have done. If I could but persuade you now to trust in God, to set your faith awork thus far, There is no man that hears me this day, that is in any other course then in the ways of Religion and godliness, but he would turn his course: and therefore I will labor in this a little.

You will ask me then what it is to trust God?

I will show you a little what it is, because every man is ready to say, I trust in God, but I am not able to do this that you say, when I come to such a hard turning. Deceive not thyself, this is to trust in God, namely, to be unbottomed of thyself, and of every creature, and so to lean upon God, that, if he fail thee, thou sinkest. There is many a man, that pretends he trusts in God; but he so trusts God, that withal he will provide for himself: such a man saith, God's blessing is a good addition, but to have that for all, he will not, he will be sure he will be strong, he will make his Mountain strong about him, and he will have the blessings of God too: for faith in the promises, he makes them good notions; but for things to trust to, to rest on, it is a thing he will not be persuaded to. Now this is not to trust in God. But

this is to trust in him, when thou doest so cast thyself on him, that, if he should fail thee, thou wert undone by it.

To exemplify it to you: There was an action that Alexander the Great did, (I use it, only to express what I mean by trusting in God:) When he was sick, there comes a friend that was always close with him, that was a Physician, and he prepared him a Potion; but before the same came to him, there was a Letter delivered to him, to signify to him, that that very Potion was poison: when his friend came with his Potion in his hand, he takes the Letter that was sent to give him notice of the Treason, and drinks off the Cup with one hand, and reaches the Letter with the other, so he drank off the Cup before he showed the Letter. Here Alexander trusted him, if he had failed him, he had lost his life; he did not first show the Letter, and then hear his excuse for himself, but he showed that he trusted him. In such a case, if thou be able to trust God, if thou canst put thyself upon him, if he fail thee, thou art undone, in such a case; this is to trust in God.

To use another expression, that you may know what it is.

There was a King of this Land, that sent his servant, a General of his Army, to spare a City: he had command under the Broad Seal, from the Council, and from the Kings own hand, to do it: and to disobey this Warrant was death: But withal, the King sent him a secret message that he should destroy the City, and to trust him to save his life. The party did so: The Broad-Seal and Commission was to spare the City, to forbear it, The secret charge was to destroy it: This he did, and trusted the King for his life; if he had failed him, he had been destroyed. These similitudes show what it is to trust in God: If thou be brought to such an exigent, if thou wilt trust God in such a case, as wherein if he fail thee, thou art undone; This is to trust God, not to seek his blessing so as to make that an addition, but to put all upon

him. Therefore, that you may know that this is to trust in God, know, that except thou do it thus, God is not ready to answer thee. Therefore commonly, he puts not forth his strength to deliver men, or to bestow upon them any great blessing, but when he hath brought men to such an exigent. And because men will not trust in him commonly, while other props are taken away, (For we should trust in God in the midst of prosperity and happiness, but because men will not do it till then,) he strips them of all, that they may do it; he brings a man to such a case, that he shall have nothing else to trust unto.

What is the reason that Paul saith, 2 Cor. 1:10. We received the sentence of death, that we might learn not to trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead?

God meant to deliver him, when he saith he received the sentence of death; that is, there was no help in the World, that he could see, in himself, or in any other creature; Now he was brought to trust in him, and then God answered him in his trust: so you shall find, Zeph. 3:12. I will leave among you men that are humble and poor people, and they shall trust in the Name of the Lord.

Why did not these trust in the Lord while they were rich?

Our nature is so backward, and so exceeding deceitful, that we cannot till other helps are gone. I will leave among you a sort of poor people, and they shall trust in my Name. (As if he should say) When men are brought to that, that all other things are taken away, and till then they will not trust in him. Indeed, till then it is not trusting. And therefore in 1 Tim. 1:5. She that is a Widow is left alone, and trusts in God. Till she be left alone, till the other props be taken away, a man cannot trust in God. Hence it is, that commonly when men are brought to the lowest, they are nearest to God, they have best

access unto him; because when they are brought to such an exigent, then a man will pray best; and when he prays best, then he speeds best, then faith is set on work, and it works best when it is alone, when it is stripped of all other helps. And therefore you shall find in the Book of God, when men were lowest, they had nearest access to God. Asa, when he was come against with many thousands, he trusted upon God, though he went against them with half the number, and God delivered him, because he prayed and sought to God, and saw that he was not able to do anything, he trusted in God. Another time, when Asa had forgotten God, when he was strong, when he thought himself more able, when he was to deal with one that had a weaker Army a great deal, the King of Israel, he was overthrown, and shut up that he could not stir, because he sent to the King of Aram for help. It is God's manner to defer sending of help till a man be brought to the Mount, as he did with Abraham; he might have done it before; but, you know how he did with Abraham, he brought him to the last cast. And David, he was brought to the very point of perishing by the hands of Saul, before he delivered him. And so he did with Jacob, Esau comes against him with four hundred men, (with a full resolution to destroy him) before he would deliver him. It is God's manner to do thus. And so he did with Job, and other servants of his; his fashion is to do so, to bring men unto the very brow of the hill, till their feet be ready to slip, when they are even going, and then he delights to appear and deliver them. Therefore, in such cases, trust God, put all upon God; that is, when God, in any turning of thy life, brings thee to such an exigent, that thou seest all at the point to be lost, that thou art at the point to be utterly undone, learn to trust in God in good earnest, and that shall guide thee, and turn thee the right way, when thy flesh is ready to go another way.

What was the reason that Christ, when he was on earth, would do nothing except they believed in him?

When thou hast anything to do, if thou believe in God, that will make him ready to help thee, because then it is an acknowledging, and an attributing to his power. If he should do it in another case, he should lose his labor, he should lose his glory, men would not be built up in him by that which he did. Therefore, make use of faith, set faith on work, as I said. I should come to this now, to move you to trust in God in all cases. If I could persuade this, men would turn the courses of their lives, and would trust in him: for know, if thou trust in God, he never fails any that trust in him, as David saith, in Psal. 37. I never saw the righteous forsaken, &c. As if he should say, Ask all his servants, ask all men that ever have known him, all the men that have lived with him, that have finished their course with him; ask a servant of God, when he comes to die, how God hath dealt with him, whether he hath failed him all his life; I am persuaded that there is not a servant of God, but will say that he never failed him; and, if he were to leave an exhortation behind him, he would exhort others, from experience of his trust; It cannot be that God should fail thee, if thou rest upon him. Thinkest thou that God can fail thee, when he saith himself so often, he will never fail thee, nor those that trust in him? Will a man fail one that trusts in him? We use to say, Oh I will not fail him, for he trusts in me; and doest thou think that God will fail thee in such a case? If God should fail men in such cases, there is no man that would seek him. But, that men should be encouraged to serve him, he hath promised, not only, not to fail thee, but he is abundant in truth, he will be better than his word, he doth what he saith, and more too: If thou wouldest trust upon him in such a case, thou shouldst find that he will answer thee.

But thou wilt say, I see not how he will do it, the case is such a hard and difficult case.

Thou must know that there are strange passages in God's providence, he is able to bring things to pass, though thou know not how it should be. See his providence 2 Kings 5. The Woman there, the Shunamite, she believed the word that the Prophet had said, that there should be seven years Famine, she left her Land and Country, this was an act of Faith, that made her do this; See how this Woman believed now: she followed the direction of the Prophet, she did that which God appointed her to do: see how God brought it to pass, that the servant of Elisha, Gehazi, should be there with the King, and that he should be telling the King of Israel of the great act of Elisha, That there should be such a concurrence of all things, that she should come just at that time, and no other, when the man of God was there, yea, when he was telling of that very story, that then she should come in, and so she got her Land; or else it is likely that the Woman, having lived away so many years, it is likely she had had a hard suite of it; but God's providence brought these things together.

So again, look on Mordecai: It is a strange case: It was concluded, that he and all the Jews should be slain: The Decree was gone out, there was nothing in the World, for ought he saw, that could hinder it; the very night before Hester was to come to the King to make her request; if it had been but a night longer, perhaps it had failed: but that there might be a concurrence of all this, it is said in Esther 6. The King he could not sleep that night, and when he could not sleep, he might have called for another Book then the Book of the Chronicles; and when he had the Book brought, he might have fallen upon another place, and not upon that where Mordecai's act was recorded, but that there should be a concurrence of all

this in that very time. Is not God the same God? Why should not we be ready to trust in him still? Do we not see the same daily? If his Works were recorded and observed in our remembrance, certainly we should trust in God.

But, you will object, The Lord doth everything by means, he doth not work Wonders, he works not Miracles now a days: And, when I see no means, I hope you will not have me to expect Miracles at God's hands, to tempt him.

You must remember Ahaz his case, when God came to Ahaz, and told him by the Prophet Isaiah; Isa. 7. That Aram and Remaliah's son, those two smoking Fire-brands, should not have their wills, should be disappointed, that he would fight for him against them: Saith the Prophet to him, Ask a sign of the Lord in the Heaven above, or in the Deep below. No, saith he, Ahaz will not tempt God. What is the meaning of that? That is, I will provide for myself, I will not trust to his Word, I will look unto myself, I will provide an Army, I will not tempt God; That is, I will not go about it without means, I will look about me; And for such a sign as resting on that promise, If I should do this, I should tempt God.

See here is a fair excuse: Take heed of such excuses, say not, I shall tempt God. And know, that though there be not Miracles, yet God he works wonders now a days, as well as then, his hand is not shortened; now he is the same God, he is as powerful as he was. It is true now as it was in David's time, that wonderful are thy works. And Christ now in the time of the Gospel, his Name is wonderful. In Isai. 9. The government is upon his shoulders, and his Name shall be called wonderful; that is, in the government of his Church he doth wonderful things; that is, when a thing seems to be never so strong and well built, when the strength of the Enemy

seems to be never so great and invincible, he is wonderful to disappoint them.

Again, when the strength of the Church seems to be little, he can make that effectual to do great matters, it shall do wonders: and therefore I say, God is able to do wonderful things now.

Now those very things which seem wonders to men, are not Miracles, though they may be great works.

That Wonder that Elisha said, that the next day things should be so cheap, you see, that was reckoned so great a matter, yet it was done after an ordinary manner: There was but a false fear scattered in the Army, and it was done. Therefore, he that works wonders, he can do the same now.

That deliverance which the Jews had, it was a thing that may be done now.

So those wonders, those great acts which God did when men trusted in him, they are things which he doth daily now.

Therefore to answer punctually, because men do deceive themselves in that, when we exhort them to trust in God, they say still, we must use the means, I will give a threefold answer to it.

It is true that God useth means, but they are means of his own providing, and not the means, many times, that thou pitchest upon. For thus far it is true, God doth it not but by means; that is, he doth things by second causes, he doth them not by an immediate hand of his own, though he be able to do it: But now what those causes are, thou knowest not. Therefore this set down, that God doth it by means of his own, and not by those means thou seest. It may be thou pitchest upon some particular means, and thinkest, surely it must be done by this: and because thou seest no other, thou thinkest, if that fail, all is spoiled: But it is not so; God will not do it by

these, but God is so far from doing it, that his usual course is, when men have pitched upon particular means, and think surely the business must be brought to pass by this, or else all will fail; God many times useth not that, but a means which thou never thoughtest of.

In such a case, it fares with us as it did with Naaman the Assyrian; when he comes to the Prophet of God, he thought beforehand, that the Prophet would have spoken some words, and have healed him; but he bids him go and wash, which was a thing that he never thought of: So thou many times thinkest of these means, thou preconceivest things in thine own heart, thou thinkest thou art right, thou thinkest it must needs be done this way, thou seest no other means; but, it may be, God will not do it this way, but he will do it a way that thou thinkest not of.

So Joseph, when he was in favor with Pharaoh his Steward, one would think, that this should have been the means of Joseph's advancement, and of bringing to pass that promise; but this was not the means that God used.

Again, when that Pharaoh his chief Butler was delivered, one would think that that should have been the means to have wrought his exaltation; but yet these were not, there fell a means that Joseph thought not on, and so God doth daily.

Many times, the thing that we most trust unto, and put most confidence in, doth fail and deceive us, God dasheth in pieces such means, and useth other means to help, that never came into our hearts to think of. Do we not see it oftentimes?

Again, that means which we think will not do, oftentimes doth it. Therefore say not, I trust in God, that he will do it by means; for God delighteth to do it by means.

Men are ready to say, Oh, if had such a Physician, or if I had such air, or such means, I should do well enough: How doest thou know that? It may be, God will not use that.

So, those that are in distress; Oh if I had such a man to comfort me! Why thou knowest not whether that be the means that God will use, or no. Therefore say not, because I see not means, therefore I will not trust in God. I say, God will do it by means, but he useth means of his own providing, and not of thy seeking. This is the first answer to it.

The second answer: If thou say, that God doth it by means; yet remember, that it is his blessing or his curse, which makes those means on which thou art fixed effectual or ineffectual. The greatest means, the fairest, the most specious, and most probable to bring things to pass; remember, that if God do but say to that means, prosper not, (for that is the curse, when he bids a thing wither) thou shalt not do it.

Again, If it be weaker, if God say to such a thing, go and do this business, it shall be able to bring it to pass: this is his blessing and his curse; you should learn to have these words, not only in your mouths, but to know the meaning of them; and not only so, but to come to the practice; to say with yourselves, when things are fair and probable, Except God bid this do it, it shall not be effectual, if he curse it, it shall wither.

Thirdly, remember this, That his blessing is dispensed, not according to thy means, but according to the uprightness of thy heart, according to thy works. One would think, when he hath riches, then he should bring it to pass: but, saith the Prophet, Psal. 62. Riches belong to the Lord, they come neither from the North nor from the South: And, when riches increase, set not your heart upon them: Saith he, it is not riches that makes men happy; for that Objection will come in.

If I had riches, I should be able to do this or that, they are the means to make a man happy, though happiness consists not in them?

No, (saith he) when riches increase, set not your hearts upon them. (As if he should say) If wealth would do you good, I would give you leave to set your hearts upon it: but it is not in wealth or riches to make a man poor or rich, but that comes of the Lord. But now comes in the Objection.

Yea, but God doth it by means, the Lord doth it by riches.

No, God rewards men according to their works, not according to their wealth. So that, when thou trustest to the means, know that God blesseth thee according to thy works, not according to the outward condition thou art in. Thus we should learn to do, when we say God doth things by means, when a man sees the fairest means, yet, if thou find that thou hast not prayed, thou hast not sought to God, thou hast no secret assurance of his blessing, think not that such a business will be done.

Again, when the means are low, mean, and weak, yet, if thou have sought him earnestly, if thou hast had a secret assurance of him, that he will be with thee, let not thy heart be discouraged; do in this case, as David did, Psal. 31. (saith he) I heard the speaking against of great men, they sat and conspired against me, but I trusted in thee, I said, my times are in thy hands. (Mark:) When David saw the greatest means used against him as might be, They were great men set against him, and many of them, they joined together, they took council against him, he was not discouraged, but saith, my times are in thy hands. If my times were in their hands, they might make me miserable, I had reason to be discouraged at that; but my times are in thy hands: See if thou canst say this on both sides. When great men join for thy wealth, say not now, I shall be made a great man in the World; but say, My time is in God's hand, it is not in their power to do it.

Again, when great men seek and consult against thee, say not now, I shall be miserable, but consider thy times are in God's hands, it is not in their hands to do it.

FINIS.

SERMON VI.

1 THESS. 1:3.
Remembering your effectual Faith, &c.

We have already answered one Objection, that God works by means; we showed after what manner: Well, if this be so, (before we leave the point) take heed you deceive not yourselves; you commonly say, God works things by means: The saying is true, if thy heart be not false: for it is true, he works things by means; but if such means come in competition, (as God hath not appointed, that which is unlawful for thee to do) if it come in competition with that which God hath set apart, in such a case thou must let such means go, else thou mayest use that means, but it is the means alone, thou shalt have no encouragement in the use of them. If thou hast means, encourage not thyself so much because of them, but because thou hast God for thy friend; Let not the rich man rejoice in his riches, nor the strong man glory in his strength, or the wise man joy in his wisdom, Jer. 10, but let him that glorieth and rejoiceth, rejoice in the Lord. If they could do a man good, we might rejoice in them: The Lord requires nothing but that which is

reasonable; I dare be bold to declare it, that if the confidence in the strength of a man were able to do him good, he might rejoice in it. Therefore we see in that place, he saith, it comes of the Lord. As if he should say, We see by experience, when God will use them as instruments, it is otherwise, then they do that which of themselves they cannot; they do it no farther then God blesseth them, for else they hurt, and do no good to a man. Take heed therefore thy heart be not false, and deceive not thyself, that thou mingle by-respects in the business; but use the means, and depend and trust in God for the bringing it to pass; which thou shalt know by this, if thou draw near to God; for that is a trial, Jer. 17. Cursed is he that maketh flesh his arm: This draws the heart from God; you shall find that noted in 1 Tim. 1:6. The Widow that trusts in God prayeth day and night. Therefore when thou hast the best means, if thou be not slack in prayer, it argues thy trust in God; when thou goest to God, and strivest with him by prayer, and seekest not to the creature, to say thy wealth, or riches, or the like, shall help thee. So much for the answer to the first Objection.

Another thing that we are ready to object, is, But what if such a thing should come to pass? What if the evil that I fear should fall upon me? What if the business I go about proceed not, which is of that moment, I am undone, if it be not done?

Herein the heart of a man must be quiet.

First, It may be thou art too hasty in this kind; many times thou thinkest in such cases, that thou art without help and without hope, when it is not so: Know therefore, that a man may be under water and rise again, he may sink twice or thrice before he be drowned; thou mayest receive many foils, many blows, and yet not lose the victory. The best Saints have been under the cloud for a great while, but they were not destroyed, they perished not: So

was Joseph, so was David, so were all. Therefore put the case that thou fall into the particular ill, that the evil which thou fearest, fall upon thee, cast not away thy confidence, God may help thee, he may come between the cup and the lip, as often it is seen. It is his usual manner to appear in the Mount, and not before. It was a Proverb in Israel, The Lord will be seen in the Mount; not so much because it was a common speech, but because it was commonly done, it was a thing that God used to do. Therefore be not discouraged too soon, God may help thee, as low as thou art. Suppose this do come to pass, as a man's heart will never be at rest, till he suppose that which he would not be content should be so: and hence comes disquiet in a man's heart, if it do come, he hath not resolution to bear the perplexity. Therefore in such a case, if thou suppose it will be so, do as Hester did; resolve, If I perish, I perish. The meaning is, If I perish, I shall not perish: when she saith, If I perish, I perish, she means not such a matter as we say in our common speech; but, if it will come to pass, let it come to pass: so Hester, If I perish, I perish: She knew it was a good work that she went about, and she knew she should have a reward for it. It is not such a thing to lose the life, as men think it is: If we look upon it with the eye of faith, it is no such matter. And so the three Children, they care not what should become of them; They knew not whether God would deliver them, or no; but if he would not, they resolved to bear it, and so should we do.

But, you will say, a man is not able to do this.

If thou diddest know the reason, it would move thee. Therefore labor to work thy heart to consider, that all these worst things that befall thee, may be good enough; and if thou have not learned before, learn now: Mark what Paul saith, We are afflicted, but not overcome; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but we perish not; ever dying, but yet behold we live; sorry, and

yet we rejoice. That is, there is somewhat that sustains us in the worst dangers, somewhat that keeps us from sinking: And Paul, he is as good as his word; what he saith there, we see by his carriage; we see in what a manner he went through all, all was nothing, persecution was nothing, but what he did in such a case, he had God stood actually by him, and said, Fear not, Paul, I have much people there, when he sent him into Macedonia.

But thou sayest, thou hast nothing to bear it.

Consider, whatsoever thy case be, If the thing do so fall out, thou shouldest be ready to say, this is not so desperate, but it may be helped; it is not so heavy, but it may be borne; it is not so miserable a case, but it may be happy; and lastly, it is not so bad, but it may be good for me.

First, There is no case so desperate, but it may be helped. Put the case thy name, which is so tender a thing, which is like unto glass, which if it be broke, cannot be made up again; Suppose it be broken all in pieces in the World, God shall make it up. Joseph, his name could not be made up again, and he cleared as innocent of all; but God cleared him. David now by his great sins, he brake his good name, so that now it was not an easy thing to heal David's name; yet God did it abundantly, and he died full of riches and honor: It was forgotten as a thing that had never been; when he had gotten credit with God, he got credit with men.

And so for poverty: It is not easy for a man to be rich, riches have wings. It is true, riches have wings to fly to a man, if God bid them come, as well as they have wings to fly from a man, if God bid them leave him.

Again, what if such a man be thine enemy? There is no man that is such an enemy but God can soon make him a friend, as we see in Jacob and Esau. Let the case be what it will: you know Job's case, there was all

extremity of misery upon him, that, if a man should look upon him, he would think it impossible to help him, yet you see what God did.

Again, I say, it is not so heavy but it may be borne: we see how Paul bore all his afflictions, (we see it in other instances, which before we reckoned up:) in 2 Cor. 11. See how he was stoned, how he was scourged, and imprisoned, the troubles that he had within him: the care of all the Churches was upon him, and who was afflicted, and he did not burn? It was to him as a fire to a man, it scorched him; and yet you shall see, that he bore them in such a manner, that if a man were to choose Paul's comforts with his afflictions, he should make a good choice to take the one with the other. Paul, in the presence of Nero, is not daunted, who was a wicked Tyrant. So David, he was in a miserable case at Ziklag, he had lost his Wives, and all that he had, he had no help, but a few (600) men, and yet they would have stoned him too: this was nothing to him, when God had settled his spirit with comfort, he comforted himself in the Lord. So in any case, if God keep a whole spirit in thee, it is no matter.

Take a Plaster that is sharp, if you lay it to a sore place, it will smart and grieve it, but lay it to the whole flesh, it is nothing: So it is with afflictions, when thy soul is whole, it is like a whole shoulder; lay a heavy burden upon a whole shoulder, and it goes away with it well enough: But if the soul and spirit be broken, it is not fit to bear a cross. If God enable a man, it is another thing; then, disease is nothing, imprisonment is nothing, and disgrace is nothing; when God enables a man to bear it, it is nothing: therefore it is not so heavy but it may be borne.

Again, it is not so miserable, but thou mayest be happy in it. Why? The reason is in Rom. 8. Because, whatsoever it be, it shall not separate us from the love of God in Christ: neither principalities, nor powers, nor things

present, nor things to come, neither men, nor devils: In such a case, the Devil, with all his forces set against thee, shall not be able to make thee miserable, thou art a happy man notwithstanding, he shall not be able to hurt thee, God loves thee still, and loves thee tenderly, thou art dear to him at all times. Therefore whatsoever it is, it shall not separate thee from the love of God in Christ: and when he could name no more, he names in general; saith he, neither men, nor Devils, nor anything shall do it.

Again, it is not so bad, (I say) but it may be best for thee, it may do thee good: for our nature is so rebellious, and so set upon things of this world, that except God should take this course, to work a weariness in the World, to mortify our lusts, if God should not take such courses, our nature would be ready to rebel: therefore God dealeth so with men. Sometimes he afflicts thee with sickness, sharp sickness, which is irksome to thee; but know, that if that disease were taken from thee, thou knowest not what thy heart would do. Some men be afflicted with enmity of others; thou knowest not, if thou wert friends with all men, how thou shouldest be. Thou art afflicted in the world, in thy wife, in thy children, in thy neighbors, in thy name, in thy estate, and though thou think with thyself, If I were free from this, I should be happy, I should be humble, I should serve God the better; I say unto thee, thou knowest not what thou shouldest be: A man's mind doth not know what it would be in another estate, only he knows the present. If thou haddest such and such circumstances, if thou haddest wealth, if thou haddest such crosses removed, if all things should go well with thee, Oh then thou wouldest be happy: but thou knowest not what thou shouldest be. You know what the Prophet said to Hazael: (saith he) Doest thou know what thou shalt be when thou art King of Aram? Thou knowest how thou art affected now, but thou knowest not how thou shalt be then, when thou art a

King, then thou wilt be answerable to thy state and condition. So much for the second Objection.

Thirdly, it will be objected; It is true, if God did hear my prayers, or if he did usually hear the Prayers that the Saints make, that it were no more but seek and have, we would trust in God in difficult cases: But I find by experience, that I pray, and he doth not answer me: and it is not my experience only, but it is the experience of others likewise; they pray, and God doth not hear their prayers; what should sustain me therefore now?

To this I answer; It is certain that God always hears thy prayers, there is no doubt to be made of that; he is a God hearing prayers, and hath made a promise, that when they come, he will hear them: Be assured therefore that he hears. But now to answer thee.

First, there are many cases wherein God hears not: as first, it may be thou askest amiss.

But thou wilt say, My heart is right; and therefore I hope I ask not amiss.

Yes, though thy heart be right, thou mayest ask amiss, out of mistake, out of want of judgment; thou must not think with thyself, because thy affection is strong to such a thing, therefore it is lawful for thee, and meet for thee to have it. There are many things which a little child asketh, which are not meet for him; a wise Father will not second his child in all that he affects and desires: thou must think that God will not do it in these cases. And therefore learn in such a case when thou comest to God for outward things, or for the measure of grace, or for the present use of grace (as you shall hear hereafter) it may be he answers thee not; yet thou must acknowledge God to be only wise. If we could remember that in 1 Tim. 1:19. To the King only wise, be glory and immortality: we think our selves wise too, we think that we have some part of wisdom; but if we did believe that he were only wise,

that is, if thou diddest believe that none were wise but he, thou wouldest be content to resign thyself unto him, let him do with thee what he will, although thou see no reason, yet thou wouldest be content. Therefore when thou comest to ask at God's hands, thou shouldest be ready to say thus; Lord, I see no reason why this should not be good, and yet I may be deceived, I may be mistaken: Therefore I will not ask it absolutely; It may be the want of it is better for me then the enjoying of it; it may be, to be crossed in it, is better for me then to have success in it: thou art only wise, I am not able to judge: and therefore when we come to ask anything of God, thus we should do. Paul, when he comes to ask the mortification of his fleshly lusts, 2 Cor. 12, one would think he might have asked that absolutely, we cannot see how God should not hear that prayer, and yet in that case Paul was mistaken, God saw it was best to suffer that lust to continue upon him, and to contend with him; thou shalt not be free from this strong temptation; for, saith he, by this I will humble thee, thou shalt have a better grace then thou shouldest have if that lust were taken away: when Paul saw that the continuance of that upon him, it humbled him more, that it brought more glory to God, that it showed God's power in his weakness, he was content, he saw that he was deceived before: I say, in such a case a man may be deceived, much more in outward things. You know, the Disciples, when they came to ask fire to come down from Heaven, they thought it was a zealous request; but Christ tells them that they were deceived, they knew not from what Spirit that request did come; If it had come from God's Spirit, he would have heard it, but they were deceived: So if thou wouldest have God hear thy prayer, know whether they come from God's Spirit, whether thy prayers be the voice of thine own spirit, or of God's Spirit; if it be the voice of God's Spirit, he hears it

always, because it asks according to his will; our spirits may ask that which is good, but not that which is fit at this time.

Secondly, he will hear thee, but it may be, thou art not yet fit for the mercy, not because he doth not hear thy prayer, and tender thee in that case thou art in, but thou art not yet fit, herein God deals with us as the Physician deals with his Patient; The Patient earnestly desires such and such things; The Physician wants not will to give them him, but he resolves to give them as soon as he is fit: and therefore he makes him stay till he have purged him, and made him fit for it, till he be fit for such a Cordial, for such a Medicine, that it may not hurt him: it may be God stays thee for this end. So the men of Benjamin, they were fitted when they had fasted and prayed three times; when they had fasted once and twice, they adventured, and prevailed not till the third time. So God defers long: What if thou fast and pray, and God do not hear thee, yet conclude with thyself, that thou art not yet fit. There is somewhat more that must be done. David, a man would think that he had been fitted for the Kingdom before that time, but God deferred it until David was humbled enough, till he was broken enough, till God had provided a Kingdom, as he promised.

And so he did with Joseph, and so with the people of Israel; they were kept long in bondage, they were long pressed, before they were fit to be delivered: God tendered his people then, he had no delight in their afflictions. And so we may see in the whole Book of the Judges, how God suffered his people to be afflicted, to fit them for deliverance. So think with thyself, thou art not fitted yet; and if thou wouldst go by a rule, see the rule, 1 Pet. 5:6. Humble yourselves under his mighty hand that he may exalt you in due time. (Mark, whensoever God lays any affliction upon any man, his end is to humble him. And if the work be done, he will perform that which

he hath promised, as soon as thou art humbled, he will exalt thee: therefore that word is added, he will exalt you in due time, not when thou thinkest he will beforehand, for God is wise, and will do it in due time, if he should defer it beyond the time when thou art fitted, he should not do it in due time, but beyond the time.

Again, if he should send deliverance before thou art fit, it were not in due time, it would come too soon: But assure thyself, when thy heart is humbled and weaned from the world, when thy lusts are mortified, and when thou art made spiritual and heavenly-minded by such afflictions, be sure, God will not defer one jot, he will come in the exactness of time, that as it is said, in the fullness of time his Son came, so it is in the fullness of time before he will save thee, in the fittest time. Therefore I would say to thee, whosoever thou art, that suest to God for pleasure, for honor, it may be, to be relieved in thy state, for health, for life, or for comfort; I say, God hath made a promise, and it is impossible that he should fail in the performance of it, as Solomon saith, Prov. 22:4. Riches, and honor, and life shall he give; but to whom? To him that is humble, and that feareth the Lord. You must put in both the conditions. Many men fear the Lord, which are not humbled; and some men are humbled, but they have some secret way of wickedness, wherein they are indulgent to themselves; but they must go both together. Let a man be holy, that he may have no way of wickedness in himself, and let him be humbled, or else God may bestow wealth on thee, but if thy heart be not holy, thou wilt forget God in it. And if he give thee health, if thy heart be not humbled, thou wilt be ready to use it intemperately, thou knowest not thine own heart: but be assured, when thou comest to God, he hears the requests that are made by his Spirit, that if thou be prepared, he will not deny thee, the promise is absolute, let the condition be fulfilled: for

those are the words, The reward of humility, and the fear of God, is riches, and honor, and life: Expect not these, when there is not the precedent preparation: for it is not best for thee.

Thirdly, it may be God doth it not because there is a defect in thy prayer, he will have thee pray more fervently, that condition is put in, I am. 5. The prayer of the righteous availeth much, if it be fervent. Indeed God might bestow blessings upon us for the mere asking, if we did but make our requests known; yet he is pleased to require that condition that our prayers be fervent, and he defers the giving of the blessing until we be quickened: and therefore he defers oftentimes, to enhance, and to cause us to prize his blessings, (lightly come, lightly gone, as we use to say.) Things that come easily, we willingly part with, but God will have us prize them high: and therefore we must beg them earnestly, he holds them back to affect our appetites, to make us contend with him in prayer; or else why did he defer to grant the Woman of Canaan's request, why did he defer to give Jacob deliverance from his brother Esau? If he had done it in the beginning, Jacob had not so wrestled, he had not done that excellent duty of prayer all night. When Hannah comes to ask a son of the Lord, he hath given to many with less ado, but he would not grant it her till her spirit was troubled, till she prayed earnestly with contention and violence, that Eli thought she was drunk: No, said she, but I am a woman troubled in spirit: they must be earnest, those prayers that God will have at thy hands; and if thou be not heard, go and mend thy prayers that thou mayest mend thy speeding; quicken thy prayers, as thou laborest to make thy heart more righteous, that thou mayest be fit. The prayers of the righteous prevail much, if they be fervent: so pray more fervently.

Fourthly, it may be God hears thee, but it crosseth some other secret passage of his providence. There are many things that God the great Governor of the world must bring together; and though thou see no reason why he should not hear thee, yet it may be he will discover unto thee, that the sum of all things being put together, thou shalt see that it is not best for thee to be heard. David now, when he comes to ask a request at God's hands, that he might build him a Temple, it was a thing that he desired, and he made no question but that it was according to God's will, and Nathan was of that opinion too, Go, saith he, and do all that is in thine heart: David did not know what belonged to that business, because no man can judge of those things that God hath appointed to bring to pass, a man cannot see round about all the corners of God's providence, no man is able to see it: we see not the concurrence of things, how one thing stands with another. And therefore we ought not to look in such cases to be heard; as the Wisemen, they thought it fit to have returned by the way they came, but God saw a reason to turn them another way. Therefore be not hasty in thy requests, but know that God is wise, and will work all for the best, his glory must go in all, and one thing must be done, that his end may be brought to pass in all.

Again, it may be God will grant thy request; but for the manner, and the means by which he will do it, and for the time, it is in his own power. But because these things are known, I will not stand to press them farther: but now I come to the last Objection.

Last of all, you will be ready to say, It is true, I would trust in God, if he did always show mercy for my sake, If I saw the Saints always bring their enterprises to pass, If I did see it still well with them that trust in him, but I find it contrary for the most part: It is ill with them that trust in the Lord, and evil men prosper; and therefore what encouragement have I to trust in

God in this manner as you exhort me to do, when I am brought to such an exigent, to such a case that my life or my goods are in hazard, or my name, it is not my best way so to do: I see by experience, that those that are wise men, politic men, and those that have the greatest means, they prosper, when as other men that fear God, do not bring their devices to pass.

I will answer this, and so will have done with the point.

First, I answer, it is true, that ill men oftentimes do prosper, and that good men many times do not succeed; I say, we will not deny it: for we see the Scripture is plentiful, Psal. 37. Fear not the man that bringeth his enterprises to pass: where it is supposed that they do so. In Jer. 12:1. Why do the wicked prosper? Where the Prophet sets out in particular how they prosper; he saith, they grow and take root, they spring, and bring forth fruit. And you know what Solomon saith, who was a wise man, and looked through many events that fall out under the Sun: Eccl. 8:14. I have seen this vanity, (saith he) that where should have been Justice, there hath been wickedness, and it hath come unto the just as unto the wicked: I have seen the Battle hath not been to the strong, nor bread to the wise. And so he goes along, as you know well. He sets out in that Book plentifully, that evil men may prosper long, and may exceedingly bring their enterprises to pass.

Again, on the other side, the Saints may not prosper, and that in those things which they do according to God's will. When Christ sent his Disciples over the Water, and bade them go to the other side, yet they rowed all night, there was a great storm, that they could do no good, so that they were in great jeopardy and danger, and yet it was his own appointment: So, I say, thou mayest go about a business, and yet find such storms, such contrary winds and waves, such streams running against thee, that thou mayest be exceedingly hazarded, though God himself set thee on work.

When Paul went to Macedonia, you see God called him from another place, and bade him go thither: you shall not find that Paul was the better used; nay, you shall find, that for the time, he seemed to do less good there of any place, there were few that believed in God. And Peter, when he came to Christ on the water, he had a warrant for it, he did that which was a fruit of his faith, yet for all that he sunk, he began to sink, till Christ put forth his hand, and was saine to help him. Therefore I say, you may go about God's business, and yet it may not prosper. Therefore we must set down that conclusion; it is a great light to know that it is so. The Wiseman gives the reason of it, Eccl. 7:14. (Saith he) Thou shalt find great variety, thou shalt find sometimes, good times: and in the day of wealth, when thou hast it, rejoice.

Again, another time afflictions will come, know that God hath done this for some purpose: He hath made this contrary to that, that thou shouldst find nothing after him. That is, that all the world may see that his ways and his actions are past finding out. If God should deal always after this manner, you might know where to have him in his ways: If he should always give affliction to sinners, a man might say, surely God will do this: but it is not so, he hath made this contrary to the other; that is, he takes different courses with men, he hath made this contrary to that, that men should not find the print of his footsteps: to say that God will certainly do this another time. Therefore he addeth those words, which do immediately follow, that none might find out anything after him: I have seen the just perish in his Justice, and I have seen a wicked man go on long in his malice. This God hath done, that men might know to fear before him, that men might learn to cry out with Paul, Oh the depth of his wisdom, and understanding, and his ways are past finding out; that men might tremble before God, and acknowledge his

wisdom. But I come now to a particular answer: for it is a point worthy the answering, it is a point that will stand us in much stead, when we meet with many such objections as man's heart will have in that case. Therefore I answer particularly and briefly.

First, though God do so, yet remember that thou must not judge anything, till thou see he have finished the work: thou wilt not judge a man's work till he have done it: If a man go about to build, judge not his work till it be done, because thou seest not for what end many things are framed and made, wilt thou therefore say that he is an unskillful builder? It were folly to do so, but stay till he have finished work, and then see how one part answers with another, and in what proportion. So in all the works of God, if thou see it go well with those that are ill, and those that are good are afflicted, stay till thou see God have finished his work.

And therefore I say to thee in this case, as Saint James saith; Know ye not what end the Lord made with Job? So mark what end the Lord makes, as with Job, so with all the Saints; know what is their ends. And otherwise take all the evil men, as Jeroboam and Saul, and see what end the Lord made with them; their prosperity was as a pleasant Dream, which was soon gone; as the flower of the grass upon the house top, which withereth: Look to the end of things. I cannot stand on it.

Secondly, though the wicked prosper, yet their prosperity hurts them as much as affliction and adversity doth good to the godly, their prosperity slayeth them, whereas the afflictions of the other benefits them: if thou find this to be thy case, that thou prosper, and that thou seest thou goest on in sin, thou hast no cause to rejoice in this; or if thou seest other men prosper, think them not happy for this, it is out of mistake, It is the miserablest condition in the world; you know what God did to Hophni and Phineas, he

did not afflict them, he let them go long, he sent them no disease, he interrupted not their course: What was the reason? He had a purpose to destroy them.

So again when thou dost not succeed in thy matters, but art crossed, yet so long as that will do thee good, what needest thou care?

But, you will object, My afflictions are great, and many, and therefore how shall I bear them?

I will instruct thee; I say thou hast need of strong afflictions. Some Colts are so untamed, they must needs be broken so some corruptions are so unruly, that they will not be wrought out without great afflictions.

Again, thou needest many afflictions, because the corruptions of thy heart are of diverse sorts, and if there were but one affliction, it would not serve the turn.

Again, thou hast need that afflictions should continue long, because sin is very natural; some are hidden, and long a breeding, and cannot easily be removed. Therefore what though thy afflictions be so, as it is said, Dan. 11:7. They shall fall by the Sword, by the Famine, by Captivity many days. These were men of understanding, holy men, yet they had great afflictions of diverse sorts, Sword and Famine, such as James speaks of, and long afflictions for many days. Now all this was to do them good, to try them, to purge them, to make them white. So when those afflictions are to do thee good, and their prosperity for their hurt, let this satisfy thee.

Thirdly consider, that though they do prosper, and godly men do not so, yet their low estate, their imprisonment, their poverty, their obscurity, the disgrace which they are under, this is better to them, then the honor, and the pomp, the titles and the riches that evil men have. I can but name these things. Psal. 37. A little that the righteous hath, is better than the riches of

many wicked. What is the meaning of that? That is, they have more comfort in that little, then the other have in their fair Palaces, in their great states; thou mayest have more comfort in a little, then they have in their abundance; thou mayest have more comfort in obscurity, as Paul saith, as not known, though a man be obscure, yet if he be known to God, and to men's consciences, he is of greater eminency then those that are in the highest place. So though thou have poor possessions in outward things, though thou be melancholic, and always sorry, yet that little, that very condition is better to thee then the outward condition is to the other.

Fourthly, in perilous times this is a great difference: for though a man have prosperity, yet certainly, a hard time will come, a time of sickness, and of temptation, and of death will befall us: Psal. 37. In perilous times they shall be confounded: here is the difference: and they shall melt as fat: that is, In such a time their hearts shall faint, and such men have nothing to sustain them; they shall be confounded in such a time, they shall not know what to do.

But now you will say, What perilous time is that, when God will deal so with them, you will say, in those perilous times, for ought we see, the Sword devours one as well as another; captivity, it sweeps away one as well as another: Sickness, when it comes, it sweeps away one as well as another: And therefore in the perilous time, I see no difference between the godly and the wicked.

I answer, There is difference when the same affliction falls upon both. Look in Jer. 24, you shall find there, that both were carried away captives, good men and bad men, the whole Chapter is spent in it; it is but a short Chapter: See there what is the difference there is in the same afflictions which fell to both: saith he, There were two Baskets, the one was full of

good Figs, the other was full of bad, which could not be eaten for badness, look in the Text, you shall find that both were carried away captive, but here is the difference, they were carried both in an indifferent manner, (saith he) you shall be carried captive as well as the other, the good Figs in the Basket, but I will know you, mine eyes shall be upon you to do you good, and I will bring you back in due season, and I will plant you in captivity, and you shall grow; and I will build you, and you shall not be destroyed; and I will give you a heart to know me in that condition; and I will be your God, and you shall be my people: all this will I do to you, although you be in the same affliction. And what will he do to the other? They shall be carried in a Basket into captivity, but, saith the Lord, I will make you a reproach, I will make you a curse, I will make you a common talk, I will destroy you when you come into captivity, with the Sword, with Famine, with Pestilence, mine eyes shall be on you for ill in such a case. So I say, the same Besom of destruction may sweep away both, the same Sword may devour both, the same disease may seize upon both, there is no great difference outwardly in the same affliction; both may die, and is there not great difference in their death? Both may be sick, and is there not a great difference? In the one his heart is made glad and light in God's countenance, in his Beloved; when as the other hath nothing to hold him up: The one hath the consolation of the Spirit, the other wants it.

Again, consider in affliction there is great difference, as you shall find this difference between the condition of the Saints and others, although their outward condition seem to be alike; The evil man stands in slippery places, and his condition is uncertain, and it is a great misery to be uncertain, for a man's condition to be ready to be blown down with such a wind, he knows not how long he shall continue and stand; so they stand in slippery places.

The other, those that are built on Christ, are like the house built on the Rock, they are sure it shall be well with them.

Again, afflictions that come to the wicked, they come suddenly. Therefore it is a thing proper to the wicked, Prov. 1:27. Their desolation shall come suddenly, and their destruction as a whirlwind: Why, is it not so with the godly? Do not they often perish by sudden death? Doth it not fall on them? Do not sudden changes come to them as well as to the others? No: Things are sudden, not from their suddenness, but from the want of the preparation of the person that they fall upon: therefore God will not send affliction upon his children till he have prepared them; he will prepare them, and then it is no matter if they come suddenly, it is no matter though he strike them suddenly before they be aware; when he hath fitted them, it comes not suddenly, Death comes not upon them as a snare: that is to be taken in a snare properly, when the Beast is taken in a snare by the Huntsman, or by the Fowler, who means their destruction; so afflictions come upon evil men as a snare, when as they are taken in an evil Net, Satan takes them there to destroy them eternally.

Again, the afflictions of the godly are not so heavy to them, as the afflictions of the wicked are; God afflicts them in the branches, not in the root; they drink of the Cup, but not of the dregs; but as for the wicked, he smites them so, as that he smites them not the second time, that they roar for his wrath: Psal. 31:24. The godly, though he fall, yet shall he rise again, he shall not be cast off, the Lord puts under his hand: That is, though the godly fall into affliction, yet he is not broken in the fall, God puts under his hand, he falls soft, he falls not so as to break his neck, to be undone; so there is that difference. So that, though God do the same act to both, yet he doth it to the one for love, to the other he doth the same act for destruction.

Like to a man that lops Trees; there is a certain season in the year, when if he lop his Trees, they will be the better for it, if they be lopped in due season, they are the better; lop them at another time, and they will wither: So God comes to the wicked man in the unfittest time to him, a time when they look not for him, a time that the wicked men fear least, then he comes just as a Thief doth in the worst, and most dangerous time of all for the owner of the house, then comes the Thief, he picks out that time: So God comes upon the wicked, and afflicts them when they are in peace and prosperity: take heed that he lop thee not at that time when thou shalt wither to destruction, when thou art not prepared. So the Scripture saith, sudden destruction comes upon wicked men: So that suddenness is when men are not prepared. And so when God saith he will free the godly from sudden death, his meaning is, he will prepare him, and fit him for death. Put all these together, That the wicked bring their enterprises to pass, that the godly are crossed and afflicted, that God hath a special end in this, that death, affliction, and sickness come suddenly upon none but wicked men, and it will give satisfaction to any man. I should come now to press the point, but the time is past, I cannot do it. So much shall serve for the second Use, for the answering of the Objections.

The third thing to set faith on work in, is to sanctify you, to mortify your lusts, to revive and strengthen you in the inward man, and to make it quick in every good work. This point I intended to handle at this time. Faith is exceeding effectual to do this. I will touch it but in one word, I will not hold you long. Set faith a work to sanctify thy heart.

You will ask me, How shall I do it?

Faith doth it diverse ways, I cannot go through them: Set faith a work, to believe the forgiveness of thy sins, to believe the love of God towards thee,

to believe the promises, and thou shalt find that these will sanctify thy heart, this act of faith will purify thy-heart. But how can that be? Because this shall turn thy heart from thy sins, to God: for there is no way to mortify lusts, and to quicken thy heart, but by causing thee to delight in God. No man can have his heart weaned from sin, divorced from sin which he hath been wedded to all his life, except he find another Husband, in whom he may delight more. Now the more thou believest that God is thine, the more thou believest that thy sins are forgiven, the more thou canst set faith on work to do this, the more victory thou shalt get over thy sins, that is the nature of man's disposition, that still it desires that object that is amiable and pleasant. Now if thou look on God as a Judge, that will turn thee away from him, that makes thee continue still in sin; but when thou lookest upon him as upon one that loves thee, as one that favoereth thee, as one that is thy friend, that accepts thee, this will win thine heart, this will cause a man's heart to turn from sin, to turn from darkness to light, it will make him to leave the ways wherein he delighted before, it will divorce a man's heart from the sin wherein it hath taken pleasure a long time, so that it shall never get the victory over it. Therefore the best way in such a case, is to set faith awork to believe the forgiveness of sins; remember the promises of God, those promises you have heard often, that God will forgive thy sins, that he will pardon thee, take these promises, and apply them; see God ready to forgive, this will turn thy heart from sin, thou shalt find sin die and wither in thee, and thy heart to grow and be quickened in grace: you know, that to get a loving heart, is to believe that God loves us, to believe that our sins are forgiven. Now I say, there is nothing that weakeneth sin indeed, but to love God; whatsoever sin is weakened by other means then by love to God, by turning the heart to him by repentance and mortification, that sin lieth

hid, though it seem no way to increase: this increaseth love, when we believe the promise of God, that he is ready to forgive, that is effectual for this purpose. When Christ came to Peter, and said unto him, Lovest thou me? Then, saith he, feed my Sheep. So after this manner, when thou once believest that God loves thee, and canst bring thy heart to love him again, if now Christ should come to thee, and say, Lovest thou me, who loved thee, and gave myself for thee? If thou doest love me, disdain such a thing which I hate, do not such things as will grieve me; keep my Commandments, keep my Sabbaths; if thou lovest me, let not thy conversation be in wantonness, in strife and envying; if thou love me, labor to bring some glory to my Name, and to do some good to mankind; if thou love me, be diligent in thy Calling; if thou love me, honor me, do good to others, do good to thyself with it. Let a man go through all the particulars of sin, and he would abstain from it, if he would set faith on work this way to sanctify his heart.

Again, faith doth it by overcoming the World, that when a man is drawn, one of these two things draws him, Either some offer of some great benefit, or some great evil which he is put in fear of: now when he looks, and seeth that God is able to keep him when men do their worst, and that he can give him a heavenly Kingdom, when he looks to the promise, he is above the World.

Again, he not only overcomes riches, but he makes advantage of them; he not only loves them as a slave, but he gets the victory over them, and he gets service from them. And so when men can make their recreations to serve their turns for better purposes, when a man not only overcomes them, gets the victory of them, but makes them serviceable, so a man make advantage of the World.

Again, when thou wouldest have thy sanctification increased, increase thy faith. The more thou believest, the more the Spirit of Christ is conveyed into thy heart. The stronger thy faith is, the more the wind of grace, the sap shall flow from Christ into thy heart. As old Adams corruption, it is with the grace of Christ, when thou comest near, thou art ingraft into the similitude of his death; that is, there comes a gift from him, he sends his Spirit into thy heart, that doth make thee joy in him, that causeth thee to die to sin, and to live to righteousness. This I thought to have opened: But so much shall serve for this time, and for this Text.

FINIS.

Part III. Of Love.

SERMON I.

GAL. 5:6.
For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by Love.

In the fourth verse of this chapter the Apostle affirms, that there is no justification by the law; for, saith he, If you be justified by the law, you are fallen from grace: that is, you cannot be partakers of that justification which is by grace: Because for to have it by the law, and to have it by grace are opposite. And he gives a reason for it, because, saith he, Through the Spirit we wait for the hope of that righteousness which is by faith, and not by the law. When he had expressed himself so far, which is the righteousness received by faith, that is, that righteousness which is freely given by God, offered to us, wrought by Christ, but taken by faith on our parts: Thus saith he, you must be justified. Now to confirm this, he gives a reason in this verse that I have read; for, saith he, In Christ Jesus, (that is, to put a man into Christ Jesus, or to make him acceptable to God through Christ Jesus, to do this) neither circumcision availeth anything, or uncircumcision: (That is,

neither the keeping of any part of the ceremonial law, or the omission of it, nor the keeping of the moral law, or the breaking of it will help to engraft a man into Christ, or to make him acceptable to God through Christ: What will do it then? Nothing saith he) but only faith. Now lest we should be mistaken in this, as if he should require nothing at their hands but an empty idle faith, he addeth further, it must be such a faith as is effectual, as is working: And that is not enough, but it must be such a faith as works by love. So that you have two parts in this Text: One is a removal or a negation of that which doth not engraft us into Christ, or that makes us not acceptable to God through Christ; it is not being circumcised or uncircumcised, or anything of that nature: The other is the affirmative part; What is it that doth it, that makes us in a glorious condition, that makes us sons of God? Saith he, it is only faith and love, it is such a faith as is accompanied with love and good works; so that you see he removes all works of ours, all works of the ceremonial law, circumcision is nothing, it is as good as if you were not circumcised, it is all one. And by the same reason that circumcision is excluded, all other is. And not only works of the ceremonial law, but all the works of the moral law also considered as the means of justification; because they are opposite to faith, they exclude faith, and faith excludes them, so as they are as well to be shut out as the works of the ceremonial law. None of these saith the Apostle, will do it. For you must know the way to salvation is contrary to that of damnation: Look how you lost the kingdom of God, so you must get it, look what gate you went out at, by the same gate (as it were) you must come in at. What was it that lost all mankind the kingdom of heaven? You know it was not our particular breaches of the moral law, but it was the fall of Adam, and when the root was dead, you know, all the branches died with it. Well, what way is there

then to regain this loss? We must go in again into Paradise by the same way that we went out, that is, by being borne of the second Adam, and by being made partakers of his righteousness: By being borne of him, or engrafted into him. As you communicate of the sin of the other, because you are his children, so you must partake of his righteousness. Again, saith the Apostle, it is the Lord's pleasure that you should be saved after this manner, because he would have it to be of grace. If you should have been saved by any works of your own, you would have imputed it to yourselves, and to your own strength: But the Lord would have it to be of grace, of his free will, and therefore he will have it merely of faith, by taking the righteousness of the second Adam which he hath wrought for you. Again, he would have it sure to all your seed: if it had been by works, it would never have been sure unto you, you could never have kept the law so exactly: But since Christ hath wrought righteousness, and you have no more to do but to take it, now it is sure, or else it would never have been sure. Again, if it had been by works, the flesh had had wherein to rejoice, it might have something to boast of: But the Lord will have no man to rejoice in the flesh; but let him that rejoiceth, rejoice in the Lord. Now if it had been by works, if it had been by any inherent righteousness, by any ornament of grace that the Lord had beautified us with, we had had rejoicing in ourselves; but now that it is by the second Adam, by coming home to him, by taking him, by applying his righteousness: Now no flesh can rejoice in itself, but now whosoever rejoiceth, rejoiceth in the Lord. Therefore saith the Apostle, you must know this truth, you can never be saved by doing these actions, no nor you shall not lose salvation by omitting them, for this is not the way that the Lord hath appointed mankind to be saved by: But the way by which mankind must be saved, is by receiving Jesus Christ and his righteousness. But you

must remember that you must take him so as to love him. And it must be such a love as is fruitful in good works, and not an empty and idle love, that is, a love in show only, but it must be a love in deed and in truth. Now in the handling of these words we will begin with the affirmative part, because though the other be put first, yet the affirmatiō you know in order of nature, is before the negation: therefore I will begin with this, what it is that puts us into the happy estate of life and salvation, Faith. But it is faith that works by love.

This is enough to make this clear to you, that these two great radical virtues faith and love, are the two pillars, as it were, upon which our salvation is built. The first of them we have handled at large, Faith: and the efficacy of it in the Text we handled of effectual faith: Now the other remains, of Love; whence we will deliver this point to you; that,

Whosoever loves not, whatsoever else he find in himself, whosoever loves not the Lord Jesus, is not in Christ, and by consequent, in a cursed and damnable estate.

Because this is necessarily required that you have faith, and love, or else you can have no salvation; or else you are not in Christ, and cannot be acceptable of God through Christ. So our business will be to open unto you this grace of love, that you may know what it is. And that you may know it, we must first declare unto you a little in general, what this affection of love is.

All affections, as you know, are nothing else but the diverse motions and turnings of the will, as the will turns it self this way or that way, so a man is said to be affected to love or to hate, to grieve or to rejoice. Now love is that act of the will, whereby it turns itself to a thing, as hatred is that whereby it turns itself from a thing: And that which is the object of this affection of

love is something that is good; for that which is true, and that which is beautiful is not the proper object of love, that is the object of the intuitive understanding: but it is no further the object of love than it is good. For this take for a general rule, We love nothing but as it is good; And a thing is said to be good, when it is suitable, proportionable and agreeable to us, for that is the definition of a good thing. There may be many things that are excellent, that are not good to us, we say not that anything is good, but that which suits and is agreeable to us, and convenient for us. So that if you take the definition of this affection in general of love, Love is nothing else but a disposition of the will, whereby it cleaves or makes forward to some good that is agreeable to itself: I say, it is a disposition of the will whereby it cleaves to, and makes forward to some good thing agreeable to itself, which you must mark, for we shall have use of all this in the sequel of this tract.

Now this love shows itself by two effects: it would have the thing it loves to be preserved.

And secondly, a man that loves, would have it his, and therefore he draws near to it, or else he draws the thing near to him. For I take it not to be true that is commonly taken for granted, that love is a desire of union, for we do not always desire, that the thing should be united to us that we love, (for a thing may be too near us, as letters may be too near the eye, as well as too far off:) But we would have things in such a distance as is most agreeable to us, as we love fire for our use, but it may be too near us, and we love a knife for our use, but it may be too near: So by the way mark it, It is not always a desire of union, but it is a desire to have the thing it loves in such a distance, as is most agreeable to us: but still remember this, that love shows itself by these two effects: It desires the preservation of the thing: Secondly, he would that what he loves might be his. As when a man loves an

unreasonable creature, when he loves a glass, when he loves a horse, he preserves the glass, he keeps the horse strong and fair, and if he can he would have them for his use. So a man that loves riches, or honor, or that loves a good name, he preserves them, he would have them his: that is, he would have them at his own arbitrement, for his own turn and service: So a man that loves his son or his friend, he desires the preservation of them, and withal he would have them his; that is, he would have them so sure united to him, as may stand with his conveniency. This is the nature of love; one thing more know of it, it is a commanding affection: Love and hatred are as it were the great Lord's and Masters that divide the rest of the affections between them, as when a man loves, he desires, he goes and makes forward towards the thing he loves; if he obtain it, he rejoiceth in it; if he do not obtain it, yet if there be probability, then he hopes, if there be no probability, then he despairs; if there be any inconvenience and impediment that hinders him in his prosecution, he is angry with it, and desires to remove it: thus these affections hang on love. Again, on the other side, as love desires the preservation of the thing in a nearness and union of it: so hatred desires the destruction of the thing, and the separation from it. And upon this affection likewise hang the others, when a man hates a thing, he flies from it; if it overtakes him, he grieves; if it be likely it will overtake him, though it be not yet on him, he fears: if he think he is strong enough to resist it, he is bold and confident. So these two affections (I say) divide the rest. Now I will add but this further, that I may declare to you the general nature of this affection, that is, the kinds of love: And you shall find these kinds of love. I will name them briefly.

First, there is a love of pity, as when you love a thing, you know, you desire the preservation of it; when you find anything lie upon it that

destroys it, you pity the thing you love, and desire to remove it: So a father pities his son when he is sick, when he is vicious and untoward, he loves him now with a love of pity, he desires to remove the thing that hurts it.

Secondly, there is a love of concupiscence, that is, when a man desires the thing that he is said to love merely for his use. As when you love an inanimate creature, or any other creature for your use, you are said to love it with a love of concupiscential desire: and this in common men is a suitableness between the object and the lower faculties.

Thirdly, there is a love of complacency, when a man is well pleased with the thing, that is, when the object is somewhat adequate to the higher faculties of the will and understanding, that there is some agreeableness between the thing loved, and the frame of the soul, so that when he looks on it he is well pleased with it: So the master loves his scholar that is every way towardly: so the father loves his son as one in whom he is well pleased.

Fourthly, there is a love of friendship that goes beyond this love of complacency, because in the love of friendship there is a reciprocation of affections, when a man both loves and is beloved again: So a man loves his friend, and is loved again by his friend.

Lastly, there is a love of dependence, when one loves one upon whom all his good depends, so we are said to love God, we love him as one upon whom all our good and happiness, all our comfort and hope depends. Now, as you shall see after, with these three last loves, we are said to love the Lord, we love him with the love of complacency, because he is a full adequate object to the soul: and we love him with a love of friendship, because there is a mutual love, he loves us, and we love him; as the spouse saith, My Beloved is mine, and I am his. Again, we love him with a love of dependence, for we hang and rely upon him for all our happiness and

comfort. Now this love wherewith we love any object that is suitable to us, it hath degrees, and that love is stronger, as the object of that love is more adequate and full. Again, as it is more free from mixture; for all things that we love in this world, we know there is some mixture of evil in them, and therefore our love is less.

Again, as the thing we love is more high and supernatural; as we hang and depend upon it more, so we love it more; and these you shall find in God. Now lay these general principles, and we will make use of it afterwards: Only this observe more, before I pass from the general description of it, That there is a natural love that God hath placed in the heart of every man, and that love wherewith every man loves himself, such a love as every man hath to his children, such a love as wherewith a man loves his wealth, or anything by nature that is good to him.

Now this natural love hath two other loves hanging on both sides of it:

One is a vicious and sinful love, that carries it the wrong way to love sinful things.

The second is a spiritual love, which sets limits to this natural love, that sets banks, as it were, to the stream of natural affection, that suffers it not to run over, and not so only, but gives a higher rise to this natural love, and pitcheth it on higher ends, it elevates natural love, and makes it a holy love. So that all natural love is to be subordinate to this, otherwise it is not good; for natural love is but given us to help us to go that way that spiritual love should carry us, even as the wind helps the ship, whereas otherwise it should have been driven with oars: And therefore the Lord, to help us to love our selves, and to love our children, and to love those things that are suitable and convenient to us, he hath in mercy, and for a help to us, put a

natural affection into our hearts, which yet is to be guided by spiritual love, that we are now to speak of.

So the next thing is to show, what is this spiritual love, this love of God, this love of Christ Jesus.

And first we will show how it is wrought, and withal what it is. For you must know, that every man by nature hates God, by reason of that opposition and contrariety which is between God and every man by nature, for all love comes from similitude and agreeableness: And therefore where there are two of a contrary disposition, there must needs be hatred. Now the pure nature of God is contrary to us, and therefore every man by nature hates God. And therefore that love may be wrought in the heart of man towards God, this sinful nature of ours must be broken in pieces, and subdued. And again, it must be new molded and framed before that can ever be fit to love God. Therefore, if you would know how this love of God is wrought in us, it is done by these two things:

First, by breaking our nature in pieces as it were, that is, by humiliation, and by the law.

Again, by molding it anew, which is done by faith and by the Gospel: For when we come and propound Christ to men to be taken, and to be received and loved by them, what is the answer we have from them? Most men, either mind him not, or regard not at all this invitation to come to Christ, but they deal with us as those that were invited to the marriage, saith the Text, they made light of it, they cared not for the invitation, it was a thing they looked not after: or again, if they do, yet they mind them not enough, because they do not prize Christ enough. Therefore the first thing the Lord doth to prepare men's hearts to love him, is to send the law to humble them, to discover to men what need they are in, to make an impression on their

hearts of that bond of damnation that they are subject unto when the law is broken, that men's eyes may be opened to see their sins; then a man begins to look toward Christ, to look on him as the captive looks on his Redeemer, as a condemned man looks on him that brings him a pardon, as a widow that is miserable and poor, indebted and undone, looks upon her husband that will make her rich and honorable, that will pay all her debts, I say, when a man's heart is thus humbled and broken by the law, by sound humiliation, then he begins to look towards Jesus Christ. But I say men do fail, partly that they have no sense of their sins, or else they have a sense of their sins, but not enough to bring them home to Christ, for that was the fault of the second and third ground; there was impression made in them, that they prized Christ, but there was not so deep a preparation as to love Christ indeed, so as to prefer him above all things, so as to cleave to him, so as they will let him go for nothing. And therefore this is required that our natures be broken all in pieces, that is, that the humiliation be deep enough, not a little light impression, a little hanging down of the head, a little sense of sin, but so far as it may be to purpose, that he looks to Christ as to the greatest good in the world, that he will rather undergo anything than miss of him, that he will rather part with all his pleasure than he will go without him. That is the first thing that must be done to prepare our hearts, for this love our hearts must be humbled by the law.

Now when this is done, they must be made up again, as I told you, they must be molded anew, and that is done by the Gospel and by faith: For when the heart is thus prepared, now let the Gospel come and welcome: Now a man's heart is fit to be wrought on: Why? What doeth the Gospel? The Gospel comes and tells you, that the Lord Jesus is willing to be your Redeemer, is willing to be your Lord, he is content to be yours.

If you will take him, you shall have him and all his.

Now when a man's heart is broken, you cannot bring him better news; Indeed till then you may go and preach the Gospel long enough, you may propound Christ to men, they will not take him: But when we propound him thus to a heart prepared, thus to him that is poor in spirit, to him that hath his heart wounded in the sense of his sins and of God's wrath, now I say he is willing to come in, he is willing to take Christ as a Lord, as a husband: when that is done, that Christ hath discovered his will to take them, and they resolve to take him, then there ariseth a holy, a constant conjugal love wherein they are rooted and grounded. This is the love we are now to speak of. So that to prepare us to love Christ, we must come to look on him as upon that which is suitable and agreeable to us. And again, as one that is willing to receive us: And that you must mark diligently. Therefore we will give you this definition of love out of that which hath been said: It is an holy disposition of the heart rising from faith, whereby we cleave to the Lord with a purpose of heart to serve him and to please him in all things.

When these two things are joined, that a man is humbled, and looks on Christ as one that is now fit for him: And secondly he is persuaded that Christ is willing to take him, when this is done, a man receives Christ by faith: And from this faith this love issues. Whence this is specially to be marked, and it is a matter of much moment, That to love the Lord, it is not only required that you be persuaded that he is well affected to you, that he is willing to receive you, (for that men may have, which say that Christ is merciful and ready to forgive, and so they think; but yet they love him not: Therefore I say, it is not only required that you look on Christ as upon one that is well affected and propitious to you) but also that you look on him as one that is suitable and agreeable to you, for both these must concur to

incline your hearts to love him: you must, I say, both look on him as one that is fit for you, as a good that is agreeable to you: And also you must be persuaded that he is willing to receive you. Now the first indeed is the main. This second, that Christ is willing to forgive you, and to receive you, though it be weak, it may be such as is a true faith, and may beget love: when a man looks on any other men that he loves, if he see so much excellency in them, as that he longs after them and desires them, though he thinks there be a backwardness in them to love him, yet if there be some probability that they are likely to love him, he may come so far as to embrace them in his affections, and have a desire to them, though it be true, as that persuasion is stronger, so their love is more near, for faith and love grow together: Indeed if there were an utter averseness, if there were enmity, as it were impossible to remove it, then we could not love, but hate even as Cain and Judas did. But, I say, that is a thing you must especially mark, that faith doth not consist in being persuaded that Christ, or God through Christ is willing to forgive you your sins, or to receive you to mercy, but in this your judgment must be rectified, that is, to know that you are to look on Christ as one that is suitable and agreeable to you, as one to whom you have an inward inclination, as one that is fit for you. This is the main thing, the other easily follows, to be persuaded that he is willing to forgive us, and that he is willing to love us: therefore whereas, it may be, you have thought, that to believe that God is willing to forgive you your sins, is faith: I dare be bold to say, it is not full faith, you may have it, and yet not savingly believe, you may have it, and yet not be true believers. This I make clear by this argument: That which begets no love, is not faith. But you may be persuaded that Christ is willing to forgive you your sins, and yet not love him, as a prisoner may be persuaded that the Judge is willing to pardon him,

and yet for all this he may not love the Judge; for love as I told you comes from some suitableness, some agreeableness between the party that loves, and the party that is loved. Again, you shall find this by experience. A man may be persuaded that he is in a good estate, that he shall be saved, and that his sins are forgiven him, and yet for all this, he may be an unregenerate man, he may be a man that hath no life of grace in him: I say, we see oft in experience, many men applaud themselves in their good persuasion, and they die peaceably and quietly, and all is well, they think God hath forgiven them; and yet we find there is no love in them, nor no fruit of love. Again, on the other side, a man that hath his heart broken with the sense of his sins, may hunger after righteousness and after Christ, he may long after the Lord himself, that he desires him more than anything in the world; and yet there is but a weak persuasion that the Lord will receive him, and forgive him his sins: I say, this man may be a true believer, though he be not yet so fully persuaded that Christ will forgive him, when the other is no true believer, as I said to you before. As when one loves another man or woman, if he look on him as one that is suitable to him, if he think it be but by good probability and likelihood, I shall obtain their love, though I have not yet a full assurance of it; I say, there may be an affection of love. And thence I confirm that which I said to you, that faith that hath been joined with it is true; and that faith that is disjoined from love is not true. So I say, such a disposition of heart as looks on Christ as one whom he longs after, he looks on him as on a husband, as one whom he is willing to match with, that he can say truly, This is the best husband for me in all the world, though yet I have not wooed him, though yet I have not a full assurance of his affection to me, as I would have; I say, this will certify your judgment, and withal it will comfort you, that though your faith be weak, yet he belongs to you, it is

a true faith. Again, it shuts out those that have false hearts; although thou thinkest thy persuasion be full, that Christ belongs to thee, yet if thy heart be not thus prepared to seek him, and to esteem him, thy faith is not true. I can stay no longer in the opening of this, so much shall serve to show you what this love is: You see what love is in general, and this love to the Lord, this love to Christ.

Now I come to prosecute the point, having gone thus far in the explication of it; I say, this love is so necessary to salvation, as that he that hath it not is in a cursed and damnable condition; he is not in Christ, if he do not love, that as the Apostle saith, he that believes not shall be damned: we may say as well of love, for there is a tie between all these, faith, repentance and love. And therefore we find these words put promiscuously, sometimes he that believes not shall not be saved, sometimes he that repents not shall not be saved, sometimes he that obeys not, sometimes he that loves not shall not be saved: and therefore the Scripture is clear in it, and there is good reason for it.

First, because if a man love not, there is a curse, there is a woe due to him, for wheresoever there is not love, a man is an hypocrite, as our Savior saith to the Scribes and Pharisees, Woe be to you Scribes and Pharisees hypocrites, that is because you are hypocrites. Now wheresoever love is not, there is nothing but hypocrisy in such a man's heart. For what is hypocrisy? Hypocrisy is nothing but to do the outward action without the inward sincerity; as we say it is counterfeit gold, when it hath the form and color of gold, but in the inside is base: as we say he is a false Hector, when he acts the part of Hector, but is not so indeed: So hypocrisy is to do the outward act without the inward sincerity. Now to do them without inward sincerity is to do them without love; for to do a thing in love is to do it in

sincerity. And indeed there is no other definition of sincerity, that is the best way to know it by: A man that doeth much to God, and not out of love, all that he doth is out of hypocrisy, he is an hypocrite, and there is a woe belongs to him. So that as we deal with counterfeit wares, we break them in pieces, or we set marks upon them, as we do with counterfeit pieces of gold and silver, we bore holes in them, as condemned pieces; so the Lord proposeth a woe to such as love him not, for in that hypocrisy consists, when a man doth much, and doth it not out of love.

Again, he that breaks the law, you know there is a curse belongs to him: Now there is a double keeping of the law, a strict and exact keeping of it, and there is an Evangelical keeping of it, that is, when you desire and endeavor to fulfill the law in all things: and accordingly there is a double curse, there is a curse that follows the breach of the moral law that belongs to all mankind, till they be in Christ; there is besides an Evangelical curse that follows upon the Evangelical breach of the law. Now when a man loves not, he breaks the whole law: for as love is the keeping of the whole law, so the want of love is the breach of the whole law; because though he may do many things of the law, though he may keep the sabbath, though he may deal justly, though he may hear the word, and do many things, yet because it is not out of love he breaks the whole law. When he breaks the law thus, there is a curse belongs to him, and it is the curse of the Gospel that cannot be repealed, it is more terrible than the curse of the law. And therefore he that loves not, is in a cursed and damnable condition.

Again, you know, in the law of God an Adulterer ought to die, as in the law of trial, when the woman was to drink the cursed water, if she were an Adulteress, it was a curse to her, the Lord appointed it to be death to her. Now he that loves not the Lord is an Adulterer, that is, he is false to the

Lord that should be his husband. And when he loves not the Lord, he doth love somewhat else: And doth it not deserve a curse to prefer their pelf before the Lord? That he should love pleasures more than God? That he should love the praise of men more than the praise of God? And this is the case of every man that loves not the Lord, he loves the world: and he that loves the world is an Adulterer and an Adulteress, saith St. James.

Lastly, when the Lord shall be a suitor to us, when God shall offer his own Son to us in marriage, and we refuse him; when Christ shall come from heaven to show us the way to salvation, and to guide our feet into the way of peace, and we shall either be careless or resist it, do you not think the Lord will be filled with indignation against such a man? Will he not be angry with such a man? Is not the Son angry when he is not received? Kiss the Son lest he be angry: Will he not lay the axe to the root of the tree, and cut off such a man, as men do briers and thorns, whose end is damnation? This is the case of all those that love not, when they reject the Lord, and the Lord shall come to be a suitor to them, and they will have none of him. This is enough to clear this to you, That whosoever loves not, is in an evil condition, in a state of damnation, he is not in Christ, he is a man without the Covenant. We come to make some use of this.

If it be of such moment to love the Lord, then let every man look to himself, and consider whether he have in his heart this love to the Lord Jesus; for as it is with men, although you may do them many kindnesses, yet if it proceed not from love, they regard it not: so it is with the Lord, whatsoever you do, though you may do much, though you pray never so constantly, though you sanctify the Sabbath never so diligently, do what you will, yet if you love him not, he regards it not: Neither circumcision is anything, nor uncircumcision is anything, but love. Indeed, when a man

doth love him, the Lord bears with much, as you see he did with David, because he was one that loved him. But when you love him not, perform never so much, he rejects all, he heeds it not: As you see it was with Amaziah, you know how much he did, yet it was not accepted, he did it not with a perfect heart, that is, he did it not out of love. And therefore the Lord doth with us as we do with men, when men have false hearts, we see they love us not, we say they do but complement. So the Lord Jesus doth. This should help us to discover ourselves, there is no way to discover hypocrisy, none so sure a sign of it, as where love is not.

And therefore learn by this to know yourselves, and to judge of your condition: It may be, when we confess our sins, we have not thought of this, that we love not Christ, or at the least, we have not considered what a sin it is, but you may know what a sin it is by the punishment of it: 1 Cor. 16:22. Let him be accursed that loves not the Lord Jesus. You may know the greatness of the sin by the greatness of the punishment; for the punishment is the measure of the sin, and (mark it) he doth not say, if you believe not in the Lord Jesus, or if you do nor obey him; but if you love not the Lord Jesus: That is, if there be an omission but of this one thing, that you love not, let such a man be accursed, yea let him be had in execration to the death. Therefore consider this, how great a sin it is, not to love the Lord. And when you consider your sins, and make a catalogue of them, look on this, as that which discovers to us the vileness of our natures, as Paul saith of lust, I knew not that it was sin, but by the law: but when sin began to live, he died: So I may say of this, it may be men take not this into consideration, this sin, that they have not loved the Lord; and therefore learn to know it. When we consider this, that he is accursed who loves not Christ, it may open a crevice of light unto us, to see what condition we are

in, how cursed our nature is, how heinous this sin is, when a man sees that there is a cursed man, a man whom the Lord sets himself against, a man whom the Lord is an enemy to, whom he puts all the strength and power he hath to confound, when he sees there is a man whom the Gospel curseth, which is more terrible than the Law, because the curse of the Law may be repealed, there is a remedy for that in the Gospel: But the Gospel, if that curse a man, there is no remedy: This should humble us; for the Gospel should humble us as well as the Law. And there are sins against the Gospel as well as against the Law, and whatsoever is sin should humble us, yea the sins against the Gospel are greater than the sins against the Law: And therefore in this sense the Gospel is fitter to humble us. Now when a man comes to consider his sin, it may be possibly, he looks to sins especially against the moral Law; but you must learn to do more than that: Begin to think, Have I received the Lord Jesus? Have I believed in Christ? These are great sins against the Gospel: and these sins should chiefly humble us. If you think I press this too hard, consider the words of the Apostle I named, Let him be accursed that loves not the Lord Jesus: Let these words be sounding in your ears, compare your hearts to them, sometimes cast your eye on the one, and sometimes on the other, and see if it be not absolutely required to love the Lord. And again, reflect on your hearts, and see if you be in the number of those that do love him.

And take heed herein that you deceive not yourselves, for it is the manner, when we press the love of Christ upon them, they are ready to say, I hope I love the Lord, I hope I am not such a miscreant as not to love him; yea but consider whether thou do or no: it is true, thou mayest deceive me or another man when thou professest love to God, but in this thou canst not deceive thyself; for a man knows what he loves, love is a very sensible and

quick affection. When a man loves anything, when he loves his wife, loves his friend, loves his son, loves his sport, his recreation, he knows he loves it, he hath the sense of that love in himself. Therefore consider with thyself whether thou hast any such stirring affection towards the Lord Jesus or no; doest thou feel thy heart so possessed with him? Art thou sick of love, as the Spouse saith in the Canticles, I am sick of love? That is, are you grieved when he is absent? Are you glad when you have him? When you can get into his presence? For there is a kind of painfulness in love: and all painfulness is of a quick sense. When it is said, the Church was sick of love, sickness is painful: And therefore when you want the Lord, when there is a distance between him and you, when he doth not look on you as he was wont, there will be painfulness in it and grief.

Again, there will be much joy and gladness when you have him. Therefore let it be one way to examine yourselves, if you feel such a love towards him or no.

Besides that, let me ask thee if thou walk with the Lord, if thou converse with him, if thou be perfect in his presence, if thou do as Enoch did, walk with the Lord from day today; as it is an argument of an evil man, that he walks not with the Lord, that he restrains prayer from the Almighty, that is, that he doth not converse with him: So is it a great argument of love to desire God's company, to desire to be with him, to walk with God: (to use that phrase.) You will say, What is that to walk with him? To walk with him is to observe the Lord's dealing with you, and to observe your carriage and dealing to him again, that there may be continual commerce and intercourse every day, that continually every hour, every moment, you would consider and think what the Lord doth to you, what his carriage is to you, what passages of his providence concern you. Again consider what you do to

him, what carriage there is between you: I say this conversing is an argument of love. Shall a wife profess love to her husband, and never come where he is, never be within doors, and never be in his company? So, will you say you love Christ, and not be frequent in prayer, or neglect and slight that duty, seldom converse with him, and seldom speak of him? When you love your friend, you are with him as much as you can, you love to speak with him, and to speak of him: So it is with the Lord, if you love him, certainly you will love his company, you will love his presence.

Besides, if you love the Lord, you know love is a diligent thing: and therefore it is called diligent love, 1 Thess. 1:4. Effectual faith, and diligent love: that is, when a man loves a thing, he is diligent to obtain, he spares no labor, no cost, he cares not what he doth so he may get it; much labor seems little to him, many years seem a few days, he cares not what he doth so he obtain it, he is diligent and laborious. Do you take this pains to draw near to God, to get grace, to excel in it? Are you willing to put yourselves to it, to deny yourselves in your ease, to take some time from other businesses, and to bestow it this way? Are you content to put yourselves to a harder task, to forbear things that are pleasant according to the flesh, to take pains for the Lord? If you love God, it will make you diligent. A man will take pains to get the thing he loves.

Besides, love is an affection that would enjoy presently the thing it loves, it cannot endure deferring. And therefore when a man professeth he loves the Lord, and yet will defer to come in, saying, I will serve the Lord perfectly, but not yet, not till my youth be a little more over, not till things be thus and thus with me, then I will; it is certain thou lovest him not: for it is true of every affection, that which is a true and right affection, that which is an hearty affection, it is present. If a man desire anything, he would have

it presently, hope would be presently satisfied: and therefore hope deferred is grief, and love deferred is a great grief: So that if you find a disposition to put it off in yourselves, I will do it, but not yet; certainly you love not the Lord. It may be, if you were sure to die within a week or a month, what men would you be? How perfectly would you walk with God? How would you have your hearts weaned from the world more than they be? Well, if you love the Lord, you will do as much presently, though much of your life remain; for love is a present affection, it cannot endure deferring, but it would have full communion, and that speedily and presently: so is it with that affection where you find it.

Again, if you examine yourselves further, if you have this love in you, you may know it by this, Love is a thing that is well pleased with itself, as we say, Love desires no wages, that is, it carries meat in the mouth of it, it is wages enough to itself, it hath sweetness enough in itself, it desires no addition: So it is when a man loves, Love pays itself, I say, it is its own wages. And therefore if you love the Lord, you shall know it by this; you serve him, and serve him with all your might, with all your strength, though he should give you no wages. Jacob, as you know, served for Rachel, the very having her was wages enough: So if you love the Lord, the very enjoying of the Lord, the very having communion with the Lord, the very having the assurance of his favor, that you might say, My Beloved is mine, and I am my Beloveds: this is wages enough to a man that loves indeed, to such a man, though there were not heaven to follow, though there were not a present reward, nor a future, yet he would love the Lord; and if he love him, there will be a delight to serve him: and enough to him is the Lord's favor, as Christ saith, It is my meat and drink to do my Fathers will: that is, though there were no other meat and drink, though there were no other

wages, yet this was as pleasant to him as eating and drinking. Ask thine own breast, whether in anything thou lovest, if the very enjoying of that, though there were no other wages superadded, if that were not motive enough, if it were not comfort enough, and wages enough to you to do it?

But besides all this, to name one more, if you love the Lord, it will make you, it will constrain you to please him, it will put such necessity upon you to obey him in all things, to do what he requires, whatsoever is for his advantage, that you cannot choose but do it; as the Apostle saith, 2 Cor. 5. The Love of Christ constrains us: What is the meaning of that? That is, I cannot choose but do it, it makes a man do it whether he will or no; it is like fire in his breast, he cares for no shame, it makes him go through thick and thin, the love of Christ constrains us. It is true, I confess, I may lose my reputation, you may reckon me a mad man, some men do think me so, but that is all one, I must do it, the love of Christ constrains me. So that where love is, it is such a strong impulsive in the heart, it carries one on to serve and please the Lord in all things, that he cannot choose but do it. As a man that is carried in a strong stream, or as one that is carried in a crowd, or as one that is carried in the hands of a strong man, so a man is carried with this affection that he cannot choose. You will say, this is strange that love should compel, it doth nothing less. It is true: You must know, when the Apostle saith, The love of Christ constrains me, it is a Metonymy from the effect, that is, love makes me do it in that manner as a man that is compelled, that is the meaning of it: so it hath the same effect that compulsion hath, though there be nothing more different from compulsion than love. And therefore know that of love, that it is such a change as draws one to serve the Lord out of an inward attractive, thence I take that note of love, such a thing as puts it on, such a thing as riseth from an inward inclination of the mind,

from an inward principle, so that there is no other spur, no other attractive, but the amiableness of the object.

Now when a man shall find this in himself, that he hath all these, he finds that he hath such a sensible love, that he knows he loves the Lord Jesus: Again, he finds an earnest desire to be in company with him, to walk with the Lord from day today: Again, he is exceeding laborious and diligent to get this love, to get this assurance of favor, and to excel in that grace, without which he knows he cannot please him: Again, when the affection is present, you would have communion with the Lord, and you would not have it deferred: Again, when a man shall be well pleased with that he doth, it is enough that he hath the Lord himself, though there were no other wages: And when he finds such a strong impulsive in him, in his own heart, that carries him on to serve the Lord, that he cannot choose but do it; then you love the Lord: And if you love the Lord, you are in Christ. But if these things be not in you, you do not love him: and then, what is your condition? You know what the Apostle saith, He that loves not, let him be accursed, let him be had in execration to the death. I should prosecute it further, and show the reasons why we should love the Lord, as there is great reason: But that I must defer till the afternoon.

FINIS.

SERMON II.

GAL. 5:6.

For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by Love.

The last trial of our love to Christ was its constraining virtue, love will constrain you to serve him, you cannot choose but do it, it so constrains a man, as the weight of a stone compelleth it to go to the center, as the lightness of the fire compels it to ascend up: for such a thing is love, a strong inclination of the heart, when the soul puts itself on anything from an inward principle, from a bottom of its own, when it is carried on with no other motive but the amiableness of the object.

Now to conclude this, we must beseech you to consider your own condition, and examine yourselves by these rules, that you may be able to say as Peter said, Lord thou knowest I love thee: that is, to have such an assurance, that your hearts may be well affected towards Christ Jesus, that you may love him, that you may be able to say to God, who knows our hearts, searcheth our reins, that knows all the windings and turnings of your

souls, Lord thou knowest that I love thee. Since it is a matter of such moment, we should be careful to examine, if we find that we have not yet this love: for we must know, that all that we have, all that we do, it will nothing avail us, but faith which worketh by love. And if you object, why do ye preach damnation to us? Do you tell us we are in an evil condition for want of this love? I answer, it is profitable for you, while you are in such a condition, to have it preached, it is good for you to speak this damnation to yourselves, that while yet there is hope you may seek to be healed, that you may be translated into another condition, that you may not perish in the evil day, when there shall be neither hope nor help for you. For you must know, that when we deliver you these signs of examining yourselves, our end is not to grieve you, this doctrine tends not to destruction, but to discover to you your own hearts, that you may know your own condition, that if you want it, you may seek after it. If therefore you find a want of this love, that we will do next, shall be to show you what reason you have to love the Lord Jesus: for there is no better way to get it in you, than to describe him to you, to show you what cause there is of loving him: if we were able to present him to you as he is, we should effect this thing, but that must be the work of the holy Ghost; notwithstanding we will briefly open to you such reasons as we find used in the Scriptures.

And first, let this move you to love him, that he is worthy to be beloved, as David speaks, Psal. 18:3. The Lord is worthy to be praised: so we may say, the Lord is worthy to be loved: for what is it that makes anything worthy of love, it is the excellency that we find there. Now in the Lord there is all kind of excellency: whatsoever there is that is amiable under the Sun, all that you shall find in him more abundantly: If ever you see anything in any creature, anything amiable in man, if ever you saw any beauty, any

virtue, any excellency, all these must be more abundant in him that made these creatures. And therefore if you have a love, as there is no man without some love or other, some creature seems beautiful to you, think with yourselves, this is more in the Lord. If ever you see excellency in any man, if ever you see any nobleness, any holiness, any excellency of disposition, know that it is more abundant in the Lord Jesus: Let these rivers lead you to that Ocean, to that abundance of excellency that is in the Lord. And if you love any creature, let it be with a little love, let your affection be proportionable to the object; as it exceeds in the Lord, so let your love exceed towards him, to love him with all your soul and all your strength: And know this, that he hath not only that in an omnipotent manner, that is but sprinkled among the creatures, they have but a spark, but a drop of it; but also there is this in the Lord, that there is nothing in him but that which is amiable: every creature hath some imperfection in it, there is somewhat in it may cause aversation in you, there is no man but hath some weakness, but hath some infirmity, there is no creature but it hath some want, some defect in it: but in the Lord there is no want, there is nothing to put you off; but as the Church saith, Cant. 5. He is wholly delectable: that is, there is nothing in him but that which is amiable. That would be a very profitable thing for us in this case often to think on the Lord Jesus, to present him to ourselves in our thoughts, as the Spouse doth, Cant. 5, she considers her well-beloved is the fairest of ten thousand: so we should behold the person of our husband. You know it is but a harlotry love to consider what we have by our husband, to consider what riches he brings, what honor, and not often to contemplate upon his person, and upon his virtue and excellency: we should learn to do this with the Lord, that we may love him. Therefore that we may help you a little in this contemplation, we will show you how

the Lord hath described himself: Exod. 34:4, when the Lord describes himself to Moses, thus he declares his own name, The Lord Jehovah, strong, merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abundant in kindness and in truth, reserving mercies for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, &c. We will a little open to you this description that the Lord gives us of himself, that so you may learn to know what he is; for the way to love the Lord is to know him: and indeed therefore we love him not, because we know him not; there is no other reason, why in heaven, when we shall come to be present with him, we shall love him so abundantly, but because we shall know him face to face; that is the reason the Angels and the Saints love most: And of every man amongst the Saints he that knows most loves most. Therefore it should be your labor to know the Lord. But to open, as I say, this description unto you,

First, he is Jehovah, that is, he is a constant friend to whomsoever he is a friend, he is always the same; for that is another name, by which the Lord describes himself to Moses, when he sends him to Egypt, I am that I am, saith he, say, I am hath sent me: I take this word, that it comes from the same root, Jehovah is described by that I am, and by that it is best understood, when the Lord calls himself I am, whereas every man may say, I was, and I shall be, this every creature may say; but the Lord saith, I am: that is, whatsoever the Lord was from eternity, the same he is to eternity, there is no change in him: And that is a great excellency in him that may move us exceedingly to love him. You know when we meet with a friend that is constant, that hath no alteration in him, that is a sure friend, have him once and have him forever, it sets a higher price on him. When we can consider what the Lord is, that he hath dealt thus and thus with us, that he hath loved us; and when we consider he is constant in it, that he embraceth

them with the sure mercies of David, as they are called; that is, his compassions fail not, but when he hath once begun to love, he loves forever: it is not so with men, if they love us at one time, they forget us again, as the Butler forgot Joseph; when they are in prosperity they forget us, but the Lord knows us in all our conditions; thou hast known my soul in adversity. When we are in a strait, friends oft times are backward to help us, but the Lord in such an exigent he is the same; he appears in the Mount when there is no help in man; I say, this constancy, that God is always the same to us, that his mercies are sure, for they are called the sure mercies of David. He showed mercies to Saul too, but they were another kind of mercies; Saul was not one that he had chosen to himself, and therefore his mercies continued not, for indeed he never loved Saul with that unchangeable love: But when he loves any man as he loved David, his mercies are sure as they were to David. David was ready to step aside often as well as Saul, he let Saul go, but he carried David along, they were sure mercies: and such he shows to all those that he hath begun to love. That is the first, I am, or Jehovah.

Secondly, he is strong, Jehovah, strong, merciful and gracious, &c. that is, Almighty. What is the meaning of that, that he is almighty? The meaning of it is this, that the Lord hath all the excellencies; those which we call graces and virtues, and qualities in men, all these abound in the Lord; for what serves any virtue for, or any quality that you have, but to enable you to do something: if a man have any science or art, that is but to enable him to do that which without it he cannot do: if a man hath the art of Arithmetic, he is able to number, or if he have the art of Logic, he is able to dispute: come to all moral virtues, What is temperance, but that which enableth us to do such and such things upon such and such occasions? What is patience, but that

which enableth us to endure afflictions? So all that is excellent in man, all those amiable, those beautiful qualities wherewith the soul is adorned, are but so far good as they enable a man to do this or that. Now when the Lord is said to be almighty, the meaning is, he hath all excellency in him, and he hath it in the highest degree, for in this sense God is able to do more than any man, in regard of excellency; whatsoever a man is able to do, you know how infinitely the Lord hath it beyond him, he is able to do so much more as he is beyond any man: For that power, that attribute, that quality that is in man, it is not a quality in him, he hath it beyond any man. Again, when a man is able to do one thing, yet he is not able to do another, one creature is able to do this, another that: But the Lord is Almighty, therefore he is able to do all things. And therefore this is a kind of excellency, that is the second description, he is Jehovah, and he is Almighty.

But now when you hear that the Lord is thus constant, and thus exceeding in excellency, a man will be ready to say, what is this to me? I am a sinful man, there is nothing in me but that which may turn away the Lord from me, and cause him to abhor me: Well saith he, to comfort you, know that I am merciful, exceeding pitiful, exceeding ready to forgive, though your sins be exceeding many, though they be exceeding great, yet the Lord he is merciful: he is ready to pass by all those infirmities. And that is another of his excellencies. You know we reckon it a very amiable thing in a man when we see him pitiful. This doth more abound in the Lord, than in any creature, there is no man in the world so ready to forgive as God. If he were not God, if he were as man, my brethren, could he bear with us as he doth? Let us do to a man injuries, and injuries again and again, and never give over, what man can bear it, doth he not in the end withdraw himself, and will no more be reconciled? But it is not so with the Lord, when we have

done all, Yet return to me, saith the Lord, Jer. 3:2. Well, but if we have such sins in us, suppose the Lord is merciful and ready to forgive, but yet there is no goodness in us, we have nothing in us why he should regard us, and why he should look after us: To that it is answered, the Lord is gracious, that is, though there be no worth found in you, yet he is ready to do you good: as grace you know is proper to a Prince or a great man, that is said to be gracious to his subject, or to one that is very inferior, because he can do nothing to deserve it, it is called grace, for grace you know is nothing but freeness, and to be gracious is to do things freely, when there is no motive, no wages, when there is nothing to win him, but of free grace he doth it. So the Lord doth what he doth of his free grace, he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, that is, when all men did stand before him alike, though there were nothing, when there was no cause why the Lord should regard them more than another, yet He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, that is, he is gracious, though there be nothing in us to win that love at his hands. Well, but yet we may be ready to object, it is true, the Lord hath been thus to me, he hath ben very merciful to forgive me my sins, he hath been very gracious to me to show me favor when I never deserved it, but after, I was put into such a condition, I provoked him to anger by relapsing into sin again and again after I have been in a good estate, I have broken the covenant with him, I continued not in that good estate that out of his mercy he hath put me into.

To this he answers, He is long suffering, that is, though you provoke him out of measure, though you have done it again and again, he continues patient, you cannot weary him out, but his mercy endures forever: you know that if there were an end of his mercy, that on your sinning, he should give over to be merciful, his mercy did not endure forever, therefore it is

said, He is long suffering, because though your sins be often repeated, yet the Lord as often repeats his mercy, therefore there is a multitude of mercies in him, as there is a multitude of sins in you, there is a spring of mercy in him, that is renewed every day, he opens a spring for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in, it is not a Cistern but a Spring, that is renewed as much as your sins, that as you are defiled daily, so the Lord's mercy is renewed to wash away those sins, he is long suffering. But besides all this he goes yet one step further; he is abundant in kindness and in truth, that is, if you would know the Lord yet further, whereas you may think He is a terrible God, because of his great Majesty, and power, and therefore that those dishearten you, as wheresoever you find terribleness, that (you know) puts off, it is contrary to love: and therefore the Lord to win us the more, tells us: that though he be so great a God as he is, yet he is abundant in kindness, that is, He is exceeding ready to bear with us, that look what you find in a kind Husband, in a kind Father, or in a kind friend, that you shall find in the Lord, he is exceeding kind to you, he is not harsh, he is not stiff, he is not ready to observe all that you do amiss, if you will ask anything at his hands, if you want it, (as therein kindness doth consist) he is ready to do it, whatsoever it is, he is a God hearing prayer, he saith, whatsoever you ask at his hands he will do it, can you have a greater kindness than this? If kindness be an attractive to win love, he is kind, and he is abundant in it. If you will not believe this assertion, this affirmation, this description of himself, he tells you he hath promised, and he will be as good as his word, he is abundant in truth, that is as if he should say, I am not only of such a nature and disposition as I have described myself to be, but besides this I am engaged to you, you have many promises I have made you, I have sworn I will do thus and thus: Therefore I will add this to this disposition, I

am abundant in truth, that is, you shall find me as good as my word; and not so only, but I will be better than my word: I am abundant in truth: that is, his performances exceed, they run over, whatsoever he hath said, he will surely do it. Consider this, consider how many precious promises you have, consider what the Lord hath said he will do for you, how full is the Scripture of promises everywhere; remember this, the Lord is abundant in truth, he will do them and overdo them, he will fulfill every word that he hath said. And that he may give you a proof of it, he adds, that he reserves mercy for thousands, that shows he is abundant in kindness and in truth: as if he should say, when any of you do me service, when you are faithful as Abraham my servant was, I am bound no more but to reward yourselves, but I am abundant in mercy and forgiveness, reserving mercy for thousands: The Lord cannot content himself to do good to a man's own person, but to his children, to his generation. As David when he loved Barzillay and Jonathan, it extended to their posterity, when his love was abundant: so the Lord reserves mercy for thousands.

Lastly, because the objection still comes in when you have such a description of the Lord: I but my sins are still repeated; he adds in the conclusion, he is a God still forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. Why are those three words put in? That you may know that he forgives sins of all sorts; for every man is ready to find some peculiarity in his sins, he thinks such and such sins cannot be forgiven, sins that I have committed thus and thus: Nay, saith the Lord, what sins soever they are, of what nature soever, he forgives iniquity, he forgives natural corruption, he forgives less infirmities, he forgives greater rebellions; and he is still doing it, for so the word signifieth, he is still and still forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. So we have showed you what the Lord is, that you may learn to know him:

therefore we will conclude this first, and say to you as the Spouse saith, Cant. 5. Such a one is the Lord, and such a one is our well-beloved, oh you daughters of Jerusalem, that is, he is wholly delectable: if we were able to show him to you, it must be your labor to consider him, that you may learn to know him, and to love him.

Secondly, when you know this and consider what the Lord is, and what excellency is in him, consider in the next place the greatness of the Lord, and know that this great God is suitor to you for your love, that is, he that makes towards you: If a great King, or if your potent neighbor should sue to you for love, would not that move you? You know the weaker should seek to the stronger, men of meaner condition should seek to him of higher place; when the great God beseecheth us to be reconciled to him, when he desires to be at peace with us, and to be friends with us, I say, the greatness of God is a great argument to move us to love him: as you have that Deut. 10:17, when the Lord reasons there with the people to persuade them to love him, saith he, I am the God of God's, the Lord of Lord's, mighty and terrible: as if he should say; this great God hath done all this for you: and this he requires at thy hands, that thou shouldest love him, when he shall desire but this, refuse it not. If one that we contemn, one that is beneath us should seek our love, we are not so ready to return love again, for we say he is below: But when we consider God in his majesty and greatness, that he should seek to be reconciled to us, that should move us, that should win our hearts to him.

Besides, consider what the Lord might have required of you; you know you are his creatures, you know what a distance there is between the Lord and you, if he had put you on a harder task, you ought to have done it, if he had said to us, you shall offer your children to me in sacrifice, you shall

give your own bodies to be burned, you shall be my slaves, who could have said anything to that, for he is the Lord, the great God, our sovereign Creator: But now when the Lord comes and asks no more at our hands but this, you shall love me, will you deny it him? This is effectually urged in the same Chapter, Deut. 10:14, where Moses (mark the manner of urging it) had described to them what the Lord had done for them, that he had brought them into that good land, &c. And now, saith he, what doth the Lord require of thee for all this, but only this, that thou love the Lord thy God? As if he should say, the Lord might ask much more at thy hands; if he had, thou hadst no reason to deny it; but all that he requires is that thou love him: and wilt thou deny this unto him?

Besides, consider who it is that hath planted this love in the heart, is it not the Lord that gives thee this very affection? And when he calls for this love again at thy hands, doth he call for more than his own? Shall he not gather the grapes of his own Vineyard? And shall he not eat the fruit of his own Orchard? Hath not he planted in us these affections? And ought they not to be returned to him, to serve him and to pitch on him?

Besides consider, you are engaged to love the Lord, and that should be a great motive to us: in Josh. 24:12. You are witnesses that you have chosen the Lord this day to serve him: And they said, we are witnesses: that is Joshua's speech to the people: As if he should say to them, you are not now to choose, you are now engaged, you cannot go back, you have professed you have chosen the Lord to serve him, therefore you are witnesses against yourselves. So I may say to every man that hears me, you are engaged to love the Lord: Why? Because you have chosen him for your husband, you are baptized in his name, you have taken him for your Master, and for your Father, therefore he may challenge it at your hands as right, for he is your

Father: and where is his honor then? He is your Master, and where is his fear then? That is, you are engaged, he may challenge it justly, you are his, he hath bought you, yea he hath overbought you, he hath paid a price more worth than we, he hath bought us with his blood: And what hath he bought us for but to be his, that is, to love him? Therefore when we love him not, we rob God of ourselves, we do an unnatural thing, it is treachery and injustice in us. As you know, it is one thing in a woman that is free from an husband to neglect a man that is a friend, but when she hath engaged herself, and the match is made, now it is adultery: So everyone of us that loves not the Lord, sins the more, because he is engaged to him: Deut. 32:13, Thou forsookest the strong God of thy salvation, thou forsakest him to whom thou art engaged, he is the strong God of thy salvation, he hath done thus and thus for thee. Therefore consider this, for seeing you have such an affection as love is, you must bestow it somewhere, somewhat you must love: and you must know again it is the best thing you have to bestow, for that commands all in you; and where will you bestow it? Can you find any creature upon whom to bestow it rather than the Lord? Will you bestow it upon any man? The Lord exceeds them, as David saith, Who among the gods is like thee? That is, take the most excellent among them, that therefore are reckoned as gods, yet who among them is like unto thee? Or whom will you bestow your love upon, your wealth, or your pleasures or your phantasies? You must think the Lord will take this exceeding evil at your hands, that you should bestow this affection elsewhere than on him whom you are engaged unto, to whom you are bound so much, who hath done so much for you.

But that which moves us most is particulars, if a man consider what the Lord hath done for him in particular, remember what passage hath been

between the Lord and you from the beginning of your youth. Jer. 2. Neither said they where is the Lord that brought you out of the land of Egypt through the wilderness: I remember thee from the land of Egypt, &c. That is, let a man consider God's particular dealing with him, for when the Lord would stir up David, and melt his heart, and bring it to a kindly sorrow for his sins, he takes that course: 2 Sam. 12:7, it is Nathan's speech to him, saith he, Did not the Lord do thus and thus? Did he not make thee King of Judah and Israel? Did not he give thy Masters wives and thy Masters houses into thy bosom? And if that had not been enough, he would have done thus and thus. So let every man recount the particular kindnesses and mercies he hath received from the Lord; and when we consider that it is he that doth all, that it is he that feeds us, that it is he that clothes us, we have not a nights sleep but he gives it to us, we have not a blessing but it is from his hand, there is not a judgment that we escape but it is through his providence: I say the consideration of these particulars should be as so many sparks, to breed in us a flame of love towards the Lord, to think with yourselves when you have done all, how unreasonable a thing it is, how unequal a thing that you should forget this God, that you should never think on him, that you should not love him, he that hath done thus much for you.

And last of all consider, that the Lord loves you, for that is the greatest motive to win us to love him; for as fire begets fire, so love begets love. This was the cause that Paul loved the Lord, Gal. 2:20. He that loved me, and gave himself for me, saith he, I will not live anymore to myself, but to him, he hath loved me, and gave himself for me, he hath loved me: and there was that testimony of his love, he gave himself. I say consider this love of the Lord, and let this beget in you a reciprocal affection towards him: Put all together, and consider the Lord is worthy to be beloved, that he

that is so great sues to you for your love, that he that is God, that planted that love in your hearts, and therefore he doth but call for his own, that he that hath done you so many kindnesses, that you are so engaged to him, that you are now bound unto, you are not now to choose; at the least come to this, to say he is worthy to be beloved, bring your hearts to this, to desire to love him.

You will say, we may desire long enough, but how shall we be able to do it?

I will tell you in a word, and so conclude. First, you must pray for it, it is a lovely suite, when we come to the Lord and tell him, that we desire to love him, that we would fain do it if we could, and beseech him not to deny us that request, that we know is according to his will: do you think that the Lord will refuse you in that case, especially if you beg it importunately at his hands?

For if you object and say, we have prayed and have not obtained it; know, that to love the Lord is a precious thing: and therefore the Apostle reckons it so.

You will say, How doth this prayer do it? I say that it doth it partly by obtaining at God's hands; for when you cry earnestly, he cannot deny you: But as he did with the lame and the blind when they were importunate, he never neglected any but healed them. When you cry to the Lord, and say, I would fain love thee, but I cannot, will he not be as willing to heal thy soul, to give thee legs to run after him, and eyes to see him, as he was to heal the lame and the blind, certainly he will not deny thee.

But besides that, prayer doth it, because it brings us to converse and to have communion with him; by prayer we are familiar with God, by that

means love grows between us: as you know when you converse with men, it is a means to get love.

Again, prayer doth it, because when we are much in calling upon God, the Lord delights to show himself to such a man, yea at such a time, for the most part, as he showed himself to Christ when he was praying, as he did to Moses, and to Cornelius and others.

And again, prayer it exerciseth this love, it blows up the spark of this love, and makes a flame of it; therefore much prayer begets much love: If you would be abundant in love, be fervent and frequent in this duty of prayer, pray much and you shall find this effect of it, it will beget love in you: You will say prayer is a general means for other things: Why do you put it as a peculiar means to get love?

The reason is, because love in an especial manner is a gift of the Spirit, a fruit of the holy Ghost; and it is true, it must be a peculiar work of the Spirit to beget love. It is true, faith comes by hearing, and hearing begets faith, it is done likewise by the Spirit; but love is more peculiarly than other graces, the gift of the holy Ghost. And therefore 2 Thess. 4, saith the Apostle, You are taught of God to love one another: That is, it is such a thing as God teacheth, or else our teaching will never do it: that which he saith of love to the brethren, we may say of the love of God; the Lord hath put love into man, man loves many times, and knows not why, many times he hath reason that he should love, and yet he cannot, because it is a peculiar gift of God. That natural affection for a man to love his children, all the world cannot do it, all the arguments in the world cannot persuade a man: for if arguments could do it, we might persuade others to do so; but none can love so as the father doth his child: and why? But because the Lord works that in men. So the love of God is a peculiar work of the holy Ghost, none are able

to love Jesus, but he in whom the Lord hath wrought it, in whom the holy Ghost hath planted this affection: Therefore the way to get it is earnestly to pray, to acknowledge the power of the holy Ghost, to go to him, and say, Lord I am not able to do it: this acknowledgement of the power of the holy Ghost is the way to prevail. Besides, you know the power of God is so transcendent beyond the pitch of our nature, that except the holy Ghost work more than nature, we shall never be brought together in agreeableness and suitableness, we are no more able to love the Lord, than cold water is able to heat itself: there must be somewhat to breed heat in that water, so the holy Ghost must breed that fire of love in us, it must be kindled from heaven, or else we shall never have it.

Secondly, another special means to enable you to love the Lord, is to consider your own condition, to consider your sins, what you are, what hearts you have, and what lives you have led?

You will say, how doth this beget love?

Yes, this is a great means: Mary loved much, because much was forgiven her, that is, Mary Magdalene had great sense of her sins, the Lord had opened her eyes to see what a one she had been, what sins she had committed: And because she had that sense of her sins, her eyes were open to see her own vileness: thence it is, saith he, she loved much. For when we are humble and poor in spirit, when we are little in our own eyes, then the Lord will come and show mercy on us; when a man shall see his sin, and shall think with himself, I am worthy to be destroyed, I can expect nothing but death, then the Lord shall come suddenly as it were, and shall tell us you shall live, and shall reconcile himself to us, this will command love. We shall never receive the Gospel as to love Christ, till we come to poverty of spirit, till we be thus humbled: as in the first of Luke, it is the speech of

Mary, My soul doth magnify the Lord: and why? Because he had respect to the poor estate of his handmaiden: When she was little in her own eyes, and made no account of herself, and thought not herself worthy to be looked after, the Lord comes and takes her, and vouchsafes her such an honor as to cause his own Son to be borne of her: now she could not hold, but that was it that enflamed her heart with love to the Lord, my soul doth magnify the Lord, because he had respect to the poor estate of his handmaid: So we see in David, you never find a greater expression of love in David, than at that time when he was most humbled, when the Prophet came to him and told him what the Lord would do for him, that he would build him a house; David begins to consider what he was, what is David, saith he, What am I, or what is my fathers house? That is, I am but a poor miserable man, I am but thus borne, what have I done that the Lord should respect me so far? If David had not been so little and so vile in his own eyes, those great mercies had never so wrought on his heart. And therefore I say, the way to make us abundant in love is to consider our sins, to be humbled, to consider what we are, and to conceive from thence the kindness of the Lord: you know how it affected Saul when he came into the hands of David, that he had power to kill him, he considered what he had done to David, how he had used himself to him, and he saw David's kindness again to him, but unexpected and undeserved it was, it melted his heart, it dissolved him into tears. So the love of the Lord, when we consider how we have behaved ourselves to him, and yet he hath offered us peace, and yet he saith, Return and I will forgive you, I say, this would work on the hardest heart: And therefore consider your sins, it is not enough to say I am a sinner, perhaps you are ready to do so: But come to particular sins, consider wherein you have offended the Lord, say you have done thus and thus, as Paul reasons with himself, I was

a blasphemer, I was a persecutor, an oppressor, and yet the Lord had mercy on me: so be ready to say, I have committed such and such sins, it may be uncleanness, it may be Sabbath-breaking and swearing, &c. yet the Lord hath been merciful or willing to receive me to mercy: as that place, Jer. 3:1. If a man's wife play the harlot, will he return to her? No, he will put her away, and give her a Bill of Divorcement: but you have done it, and done it oft, and with many lovers; and yet return again to me, saith the Lord: So I say, when Christ shall come to you, when you have committed such and such sins, and the Lord shall say to you, though you have done this, though you have done it often, yet return again to me, and I will receive you to mercy: I say, this should melt our hearts, and cause us to love the Lord. I should come to the third, that is, to beseech the Lord to show his own self to you: for indeed we shall never come to love him till the Lord show himself to us. It is one thing when we preach him to you, and it is another when the Lord shows himself: For as the Sun is not seen but by his own light, there is no way in the world to see the Sun, all the candles, all the torches cannot do it, except the Sun show itself: So I say of the Lord, all the Preachers in the world, though they should speak with the tongues of Angels, they were not able to show the Lord Christ Jesus what he is: but if the Lord show his own self to you, if he open the cloud and show you his glory, and the light of his countenance, then you shall know the Lord after another manner than we can show him to you, with another knowledge more effectually: And when you have seen him thus, you shall love him, without this you shall not love him. And therefore pray the Lord to show himself to you, as it was Moses prayer, Exod. 33, Show me thy glory. What is that? That is, Lord show me thy excellency which is exceeding glorious: You must think Moses asked not this in vain, it was for some purpose, he asked not merely to satisfy his

fancy, for the Lord would not then have heard him: But what did he ask it for? Surely that he might love the Lord the more, by knowing him better. And when Moses came to ask it at the hands of the Lord, he did assent, he proclaimed, that is, he revealed himself more than ever he did before. So I say to every one of you, if you be earnest with the Lord, desire him to show you his excellency, that you might love him more, serve him more, and fear him more, he could deny you no more than he did Moses: for you must think, that this is no extraordinary thing for the Lord to show himself. That which he did miraculously to Stephen, when he opened the heavens, and showed himself to the outward view, that he doth ordinarily to the Saints, he shows himself to their minds and inward affections. When we preach at any time, except the Lord show himself to you at that time, then our preaching is in vain: for the word that we speak is but a dead letter, it will work no more upon you, than a dead thing that hath no efficacy. But when the Spirit goes with the word, and he openeth to you the thing that we speak, then it is effectual. Therefore Paul to the Ephesians, when he had opened those great mysteries, he concludes with this: The Lord give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, to enlighten the eyes of your understanding, that you may know what the hope of your calling is, and what is the glorious inheritance of the Saints, &c. As if he should say, when I have said all this, it is nothing, it will not do it; but he beseecheth the Lord to give them the Spirit of revelation, and then it is done. And so to conclude all, when we have said all we can to move you to love the Lord, it is all nothing except the Lord give you that Spirit of wisdom and revelation to open your eyes to see what is the exceeding greatness and excellency of his power.

FINIS.

SERMON III.

GAL. 5:6.
For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by Love.

Out of these words we have formerly delivered this point to you, that, Whosoever loveth not is not in Christ.

The last thing (in the prosecution of this point) was the means whereby this love is wrought in our hearts, which we did not then finish, notwithstanding we will not proceed in it at this time, but rather alter the matter, and do that which I did not then intend; because there are many this day that are to receive the Sacrament, and you know when we come to receive the Sacrament, our chief business is to examine ourselves. Let every man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread and drink of this cup.

We have often pressed to you the necessity of these two things:

First, that you may not omit the Sacrament when it is administered in the Congregation whereof you are members: for if they were to be cut off from the people that neglected the Passover, why should not this be accounted a

greater sin, and to deserve a greater punishment, to neglect the receiving of the Lord's Supper, which is come in the place of the Passover, and is far beyond it?

First, because it is more clear, and it is more clear because the doctrine is more clear; for it doth more lively represent Christ now exhibited in the flesh, than that which only represented Christ which was then to come.

And secondly, because the mercy that you are now to remember is your redemption from sin and from hell, a greater mercy than that which they were to remember in the Passover, which was their deliverance out of Egypt, (though that was not all) therefore the neglecting of this must needs be a greater sin than the neglecting of that.

Now you see how strictly God layeth a charge upon them, that no man should omit the Passover, unless sickness or a journey hindered him. Now consider this you that have been negligent in coming to this holy Sacrament, for it is a great sin, and provokes God to anger when he shall see that this ordinance which himself hath instituted, and which he hath laid such a charge upon you to do is neglected?

Besides, do you think it is a sin to neglect coming to the word? And is it not as much to neglect this ordinance?

Besides, do we not need all helps of grace? and is not this among the main helps.

Again, as you ought not to omit it, so to come negligently to it, to come without examination, to come without a more solemn and extraordinary renewing of your repentance is to receive the Sacrament unworthily, to eat and drink judgment and damnation to yourselves. Now there are two sorts that receive the Sacrament unworthily.

First, those that are not yet in Christ.

Secondly, those that are within the covenant, but yet come remissly and negligently, and take not that care they should in examining their hearts: for though you ought to renew your repentance every day, yet in a more especial manner you ought to do it upon such an occasion. As women do in scouring their vessels, they make them clean every day, but yet there are some certain times wherein they scour them more: so we should scour our hearts in a more special manner upon this occasion. Now because this is the business that we have to do this day, we will therefore handle that more fully that we touched lightly before, which is this examination, whether we love the Lord Jesus or no: for if you love not the Lord Jesus, you are not in him; for whatsoever you do availeth not, if you have not faith and love. Therefore if you find that you have not this love to Christ, that you are not rooted and grounded in love, you have nothing to do with Christ, and if you have nothing to do with him, you have nothing to do with the Sacrament. And therefore we will show you what properties of love we find in the holy Scriptures.

This is one property of love set down in 1 Cor. 13. Love is bountiful, and seeketh not its own things: that is, it is the nature of love to bestow readily and freely anything a man hath to the party whom he loveth. We see, Joseph that loved Benjamin, as his love was more to him than to all the rest of his brethren, so he gave him a greater portion than the rest. It is the nature of love to be bountiful, what a man loveth, he cares not what he parts with to obtain it. Herod cared not to have parted with half his kingdom, to please that inordinate affection of his. The Converts in the Apostles time, how bountiful were they, laying all their goods at the Apostles feet? Zacchaeus, when he was converted, and his heart was inflamed with love to Christ, he would give half his goods to the poor. But in general, it is a thing that you

all know, that love is of a bountiful disposition. If you would know then whether you have this love to the Lord Jesus or no, consider whether you be ready to bestow anything upon him, whether you be ready to part with anything for his sake. David, when he abounded with love to the Lord, you see how he expressed it in his provision for the Temple, you see how he exceeded in it, An hundred thousand shekels of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver: this, saith he, I have done according to my poverty: As if he had said, if I had been able to do more I would have done more, but this was as much as I could reach unto: herein he showed the greatness of his love to God in the greatness of his bounty. Take it in the love which we have one to another: where a man loveth, he denieth nothing. Samson, when he loved the harlot, he denied her nothing that she asked of him. If you love the Lord Jesus, examine yourselves by this, are you ready to bestow anything for his advantage? Are you ready to take all opportunities to do somewhat for his glory? Consider how many opportunities you have had, and might have had, wherein you might have expressed and manifested this love to the Lord Jesus. Might you not have done much to the setting of a powerful Minister here and there? Have you not had ability to do it? Would it not much advantage the glory of Jesus Christ to make bridges (as it were) for men to go to heaven by, and to make the high way that leadeth thither? A greater work of mercy than these external works that appear so glorious in the eyes of men: to have blessed opportunities, and not to use them, because we have straight hands and narrow hearts, is a sign we want love to Christ.

In the passages of your life there is many a case, that if you were of a bountiful disposition, you might do much good in. You know what Paul saith, which was a great testimony of his love, Acts 20:24. My life (saith he)

is not dear unto me, so I may do anything for Jesus Christ, so I may fulfill the course of my Ministry. So examine yourselves whether you can say thus upon any occasion; so that I may do any good, so that I may help forward any good cause that may tend to the glory of God, my life is not dear unto me, my liberty is not dear, my estate is not dear, my friends are not dear to me. You that have to do in government, many cases there are, wherein if you will do any special good, you must part with something of your own; God looks to you and sees what you do, and how your hearts stand affected in all these passages, ask yourselves now whether these things be not dear to you: if there were love in you, it will cause you to do more than you do. It was David's great wisdom, when water was brought to him that was purchased at so dear a rate, when so high a price was set upon it, he would not drink it himself, but poured it forth to the Lord; and therein he showed the greatness of his love, that he was willing to part with that which he so exceedingly longed for, which was bought at such a rate.

The like he did when he bought the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, he might have had it given him for nothing; No, saith he, I will not offer to the Lord of that which cost me nothing: As if he had said, I shall show no love to the Lord then, and if I show no love to him, what is my sacrifice worth? For David knew well enough that God observed what he did, he observed what it cost him. The Lord observeth all that you do: Beloved, he knoweth your hearts, and seeth what motions you have, and prizeth your actions accordingly. If you do any action for him, that costs you something, he observeth that likewise. In Rev. 2. I know thy works and thy patience: so doth the Lord say of every man, I know what such a service cost thee, I know what loss thou sufferedst, when thou didst part with such a thing for my sake. Therefore if you would show your love to the Lord, and

would have a testimony in your hearts, that you have this love wrought in you, be not backward to bestow anything upon Christ. The woman that brake the box of precious ointment, you see how the Lord accepted that work of hers so much, that he puts it down that it should never be forgotten. For love wheresoever it is, will open the heart, and open the hand, and bestow anything upon Jesus Christ, that is in our power.

Now if we examine whether love be amongst men by this sign, we shall find but little love, and we may justly take up the complaint of the Apostle, Every man seeks his own things, and not the things of Jesus Christ: that is, when anything is to be done, men are ready to inquire thus, it is the secret inquisition of their hearts; What is this to me? What profit will it bring me? Wherein will it be to mine advantage? And if they find it is a thing that will cost them something, and a thing that they shall get nothing by, how cold and backward are men to do it? It is from this, that men seek their own things.

But here every man will be ready to profess, and say that he is not so strait handed, but he is ready to do many things for Christ, that he is bountiful, and seeks not his own things?

My Beloved, let us try this now a little: thou thinkest thou art so bountiful for the Lord, I would ask thee this; Doest thou do it purely for the Lord in such a case, when there is no profit nor praise with men, nor advantage redounding to thyself? Art thou as forward then as when there are all those respects? Art thou as abundant in it, as diligent, and as ready to do it? This discovers the falsehood of men's hearts for the most part.

And besides, take it in the case of self-love, consider what thou doest when thine own self-love shall come in competition with this love to the Lord: for in that we shall know our love to the Lord, when we deny

ourselves, when we cross our self-love, and reject and refuse it: for otherwise it is no thank to us, when there is no inward crossing in us, no contrary affections drawing us another way. Therefore if you would know whether you love the Lord or no, try what you do in the things that are dearest to you, consider what you do in those things that of all others you are most unwilling to part with: for indeed herein is the trial, as the Lord said to Abraham, when he would have offered up his son, Now Abraham I know that thou lovest me: As if he had said, this is a sure testimony that thou lovest me, because thy son is not dear to thee. So I say, when you are to part with something that is dear to you, consider what you do in such a case, consider whether you can say generally, I account all things but as loss and dung for Christ. It may be thou art willing to part with something that thou carest not much for, but this is nothing. Some man will not lose his credit, that is dear to him; Examine thyself now, if thy credit be dear to thee, art thou content to lose the praise of men for Christ? When thou art put to a hazard art thou content to suffer the loss of thy estate?

Every man hath some particular temptation, young men for the most part are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, and old men are lovers of their own wealth more than of God. Therefore consider what you will do now in your several cases. Christ, you know, requires this at every man's hands, that his wife and children, that his father and mother, and whatsoever is dearest to him, that he should neglect it all for his sake; and herein a man's love is seen.

And when you have done all this, I will add that further, though you do bring your hearts to do it, yet are you willing to do it? Do you do it cheerfully and readily? For why doth the Lord require that as a necessary condition, that whatsoever is done to him might be done cheerfully and

willingly? For no other reason than this, but because he regards nothing but that which cometh from love, and if it come from love, we know, we do it cheerfully. Therefore consider whether thou art willing to do this cheerfully, and with a full hand, not miserly and pinchingly; and by this you shall know whether you have this love to the Lord Jesus or no, whether you be bountiful, whether you seek the things of the Lord, and not your own things.

In the second place, you shall find this to be one property of love (by which you may try yourselves) it will be content with nothing but with love again from the party whom we love. If one love another, let him do never so much, let him be never so kind in his actions towards him, let him be never so bountiful to him, yet except he have love again, he is content with nothing. Indeed when we do not love a man, we can be content to receive profit from him, and it is no matter though his heart go another way so we enjoy it; but it is the nature of true love to desire to be paid in its own coin. Now if thou love the Lord Jesus, if thou mightest have all the blessings that he could bestow upon thee, if he should open his hand wide, and compass thee about with abundance, yet if thou lovest the Lord, thou wouldest not be content with this, but thou wouldest have assurance of his love, thy heart would be at no rest else.

And this you may see in David, Psal. 51. David, you know, was well enough, he had health and wealth, and abundance of all things, yet you see how miserably he complained, because he wanted that joy that he was wont to have, because he was not in those terms with the Lord that he was wont to be; and till he had that, his bones were broken with sorrow, and he took it so to heart, that nothing in the world could content him, till he was assured of God's favor: And it is certain, that if thou love the Lord, nothing will

satisfy thy soul, but the assurance of his loving countenance to thee again. Therefore that which Absalom did we may make use of, upon this occasion, he had that wit, to make a right pretense, whatsoever his intent was: when he was called from banishment where he lived well enough, and enjoyed all things, he wanted nothing, but had as much as he could desire, yet, saith he, what doth all this avail me, so long as I may not see the Kings face? It was but his craftiness: Yet thus much we may observe out of it, that this is the property of love, that till a man see the face of God, that is, till he enjoy a near and close communion with God, until he can have the love of God witnessed to his soul, he cares for nothing in the world besides: As you have it in 2 Chron. 7:14, you have that condition put in: If my people (saith he) when they are in distress, shall humble themselves, and seek my face, then I will do thus and thus. As if he should say, it may be they may seek liberty, when they are in captivity; it may be they may seek health, when they are in sickness; it may be they may seek deliverance from enemies, under whom they are enthralled; but that is not the condition that I put them upon, but if they humble themselves, and seek my face, then I will hear in heaven, &c. So I say now, if you will try whether you love the Lord Jesus or no, consider whether you seek his face, that is, whether you seek grace or no, whether nothing in the world can content you but his favor. For it is the property of one that is truly sanctified, mercy alone will not content him, but he will have grace as well as mercy: Another man that loveth not the Lord, it is true, it may be he is pinched with the sense of his sins, but let him have mercy, it is enough he thinks; but now take a man that hath his heart right towards God, except he have grace, it contents him not; for that is the property and nature of true love, that it careth for no wages, all that it desires is the love of the party, that what it doth may be acknowledged and

accepted; and there is a great difference in that: You know, a nurse doth much unto the child, as well as the mother, and it may be more, but notwithstanding the nurse never doth it but when she is hired; but the mother doth it for nothing, and she doth it more abundantly, because she doth it out of love, and it is wages enough to her that she hath done it, because she loves her child: So I say, if you love the Lord Jesus, it is not wages that you seek, but if you may have the light of his countenance to shine on you, if you may have his favor, if you may have opportunity to do him service in your place, it is enough for you, you care not for the present wages, nor for future. Therefore herein you may know the nature of your love, the rightness and ingenuity of it, if it be so that all that you do is out of love to the Lord, and if you can content yourselves with love again from God, it is a sign that you love the Lord Jesus.

Again, (to proceed) if you love the Lord Jesus, you will also love his appearance: as you have it in 2 Tim. 4:8. A crown of righteousness is laid up for me, and as many as love the appearance of Jesus Christ: and in Heb. 9, ult. He was offered for the sins of many, and shall appear the second time to such as look for him, &c. For whom was he offered? And to whom shall he appear? To as many as look for his coming again. So in 2 Pet. 3:13. What manner of men (saith the Apostle) ought we to be in all godliness and holy conversation, looking for and hasting to the appearance of Christ? &c. So that it is certain, every man that loveth the Lord Jesus, he loves his appearance, he hasteneth to the coming of the Lord, he looks for his coming again: and it must needs be so in reason. For if you love any, you know, you must needs love their presence; will you profess that you are loving to any, that when you hear of their coming towards you, there is no news more unacceptable to you? If a woman had a husband in the East Indies, and

report of his coming home should be the worst news that she could hear, shall we think that such a woman loves her husband? So if you did love the Lord Jesus, you would be glad to have his appearance.

And (Beloved) seeing the Apostle hath chosen out this note, why should not we press it in our examination of ourselves, whereby we may know whether we love the Lord Jesus or no? Whether we desire to be with the Lord? Whether we can say, as the Apostle Paul, We desire to be at home, and to be with the Lord? If we examine the love of men by this rule, we shall find that there is exceeding little love to the Lord Jesus, men are so exceeding backward in desiring to be at home, and to be with him; and we may know that by our backwardness to be in the Lord's presence upon earth: Shall we think that men are desirous to be in his presence in heaven, and yet are so unwilling to draw near to him upon earth? But you will object,

Many of those that love the Lord, that are men truly sanctified, yet are afraid of death, and the news of death is terrible to them: and therefore surely this is a rare sign, even in those that have faith and love to desire the appearance of Jesus Christ?

I answer, it is true, there may be a backwardness even in the Saints, but you must know upon what ground it is. A spouse that is to marry a husband, no question but she would be glad to be handsome, and to be prepared for his coming, and though she may desire his company exceedingly, yet because things are not so ready as she would have them, or for fear that he may find that which may divert and turn away his eyes from delighting in her, perhaps she desires not his coming at that time. There is a certain negligence and unpreparedness in men's hearts, which breeds an

unwillingness in them sometimes, and makes them afraid of seeing the Lord, and yet there may be a true and inward love after him.

Besides, you know, there is flesh as well as spirit, and the spiritual part desires, as Paul did, to be at home, and to be with the Lord, and to enjoy his presence, but that flesh that is in us is always backward to it. Therefore in Rev. 14:13. Blessed are those that die in the Lord, so saith the Spirit, but so saith not the flesh; the voice of the flesh is contrary to it, but it is the voice of the spirit and the regenerate part that is in us. So that this I may boldly say to you, that every man that hath this faith and love wrought in him by the Spirit of God, he hath that in him which doth earnestly desire communion with Christ to live with him forever, to be in his presence continually, although there may be some reluctancy by reason of the flesh that is there. Take a man that hath sore eyes, you know, to the eye the light is exceeding pleasant, but look how much soreness and defect there is in the eye, so much the light is burdensome to it; but so far as the eye is right, so far as it is perfect, so far is the light pleasing and delightful to it; so it is with the heart of the regenerate man, look how much faith, look how much spirit there is, so much desire there is of the presence of Christ, and it is most pleasing and acceptable to him, as the light of the Sun is to the eye; but look how much soreness, that is, look how much flesh there is in him, so much reluctancy, so much unwillingness there is in him: and that he must strive against: But still the rule holdeth good, that wheresoever the heart is right, there is always an earnest desire and longing to be with Christ. And indeed this is only found in the Saints; for evil men, if they knew what heaven were, they would not never desire it: for they desire heaven in another notion, they would be well, they would be freed from misery and discontent which they met with in the world, they would have whatsoever

the flesh desireth, and that is it they look after; but to desire heaven as it is, that is, to desire an excellency in grace, to be always praising God, to be continually in his presence, to be freed from the practice of sin, this is a thing that if men ask their own hearts, they do not desire in this manner; for they desire it not here upon earth, when they are in the communion of Saints. When they are in places where there are holy speeches, and holy exercises, it is burthensome to them, they are out of their element, they are as men that are not upon their proper center; these men desire to be in heaven, but they desire another kind of happiness than there is in heaven; the felicity there is presented unto them under another Idea, they desire no more than the flesh desires: but to desire heaven indeed, as it is heaven, to desire God there in his pureness and holiness, to desire it so as thereby to be sequestered from all worldly, carnal and sensual delights, this a carnal man desires not. Therefore this is a distinguishing note and sign, that he that loves the Lord will love his appearance.

Fourthly, you shall find this to be the property of love, he that loveth is very ready to speak of the party loved; love is full of loquacity, it is ready to fall into the praises of the party beloved, and to keep no measure in it, to abound in it, that is the disposition of every man that loveth. So is it in this love to the Lord Jesus: You may see it in David, as he abounded in love to the Lord, so he could never satisfy himself in praising the Lord: in Psal. 105, which is repeated 2 Chron. 15, you shall find that he hath never done with it, but is always singing praises to the Lord: Sing praise to the Lord, and be always talking of his wondrous works. And again, Remember his marvelous works that he hath done of old, and all the wonders, &c. As if he should say, if you love the Lord, show it in praising of him. Do you profess to love the Lord, and yet never delight to speak of him? Nor delight to hear

others speak of him? My Beloved, this backwardness that is amongst us to holy and gracious speech, to speeches that tend to the setting forth of the Lord's praise, shows that love to the Lord Jesus is wanting among us.

You know, it is natural for every man to abound in the speeches of the things they love, of what nature soever they be. Mariners are delighted to talk of their voyages, and soldiers of their battles, and huntsmen of their games. If you delight in the Lord, certainly your tongues will be much in speaking of him, you will be ready to do it upon all occasions. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh: and if love to the Lord do abound in your hearts, this love will be expressed in your tongues, upon all occasions: and therefore, at the least, you may judge of the measure of your love by this. He that speaks much of loving God, and yet hath his speeches, empty, vain, and unprofitable, surely we may guess that he loves him not at all: and this is a mark that will not deceive us.

And now what will you say for yourselves, that you speak no more upon those several occasions that you meet withal in the world? Is it because you are ashamed, because you are bashful, and fearful to express yourselves, and to make an open profession of that holiness that is in your hearts? Certainly it is a sign that you love not the Lord Jesus: for he that loveth, is never ashamed; because, whom a man loveth, he magnifieth, he prizeth much, he hath a high esteem of: and therefore that bashfulness and fearfulness that you object, will not keep you back, if you did love the Lord in truth and sincerity. Or else, why is it that you speak of him no more? Is it because you cannot speak? Is it because your understandings are weak and dull? Because you are not able to do it as well as others, and therefore you are loath to express yourselves?

You know, when you love any, that love will teach you to speak, it will quicken the dullest wit and invention; love sharpeneth, and maketh the rudest tongue eloquent. It is the nature of love to set the heart on work, and when the heart is set on work, the tongue will be as the pen of a ready writer. You know how the Apostle sets it forth, Our heart is enlarged to you: love openeth the heart wide, and the heart openeth the tongue wide: therefore if you love the Lord much, you will be much in speaking of him. Consider therefore what your speeches are concerning God, whether you yourselves are ready to speak much, and to delight to hear others speak also? Whether you be glad of any occasion, as those that love are glad to hear those that they love to be spoken of?

Fifthly, love will do much and suffer much for the party loved: Paul, as he was abundant in love, so he was abundant in labor likewise; whosoever aboundeth in love will abound in works also. Therefore see what you do for the Lord Jesus, see what you suffer for his sake. When Christ came to Peter, and asked him that question, Peter lovest thou me? He puts him upon the trial by this fruit of his love, Feed my Lambs: As if he should say, Peter, if thou wilt show that thou lovest me, express it in doing something for my sake, Feed my Lambs: herein thy love shall be discerned; do not say thou lovest me, and yet art negligent in doing for me, Feed my Lambs. We shall not need to press this much in this Congregation, because it belongs to the Ministry: Although you have somewhat to do in it for the Magistracy also, whereby they may express their love to the Lord Jesus, to help the feeding of Christ Lambs.

It is true, we are as the vines that bring forth the grapes, but you are as the elms that hold up those vines: the Magistrates feed the people as well as the Ministers: therefore that phrase is applied to David, he was a Shepherd.

Therefore in your several occasions, when you meet with that which may tend to the feeding of the people of God, when you shall labor so far as may lie within your compass, that the Gospel may have a free passage, that there may be more faithful and laborious Ministers set up in the several places of the kingdom, the more you do this, the more you feed Christ's lambs. And if you will show that love you have to the Lord, show it by feeding his people, that is, by doing that which lies in your power tending to that end, by doing of it zealously, with all your might. And as that was the work that Christ put Peter upon for the trial of his love, so I may say to every one of you, If you will show that you love the Lord Jesus, do the work that belongs to your particular place; for every calling hath a particular work in it: if you love the Lord, be diligent in that way, in that calling which Christ hath given you to do him service in: and herein you shall show your love, as it was Christ's own speech, I have glorified thy Name, that is, in that particular work, in that charge which thou gavest me to perform: so you must show your love to God in doing the actions of your particular callings diligently. You know, when that woman's heart abounded in love to Christ, how it found out a way wherein it would show itself presently in breaking the box of ointment, &c.

As it is said of faith, It is dead without works, so love is dead without works, the Lord regards it not, it is a dead carcass, without motion. We know it is the nature of love to be diligent: if you do love Christ, it will make you diligent.

And as you will be ready to do much, so you will be ready to suffer much also: these two I put together, because suffering is a kind of doing, only it is a doing of things, when there is difficulty and hardness. Now if you love the Lord Jesus, see what you will suffer for his sake; those that we love, we are

exceeding ready to suffer for. A husband that loves his spouse, is exceeding ready to suffer anything to enjoy her love, he is willing to suffer any displeasure of parents, of friends, to suffer the loss of his estate, he cares not for discredit in the world, he is ready to break through thick and thin, and to do anything, so he may obtain her love at the last: So if you love the Lord Jesus, you will suffer anything for his sake. It was an excellent testimony of David's love, in 2 Sam. 6:21, when David there dancing before the Ark was scoffed at by Michal his wife, see what an answer he gives her, It is, saith he, before the Lord: as if he should say, I am willing to bear this at thy hands, for it is to the Lord who hath chosen me rather than thy father and all his house: As if he should say, seeing it is the Lord, for whose sake I endure this rebuke at thy hands, I care not for it, I am willing to do it, yea I will do it more, and be more vile in mine own eyes, and expose myself yet to more scorn and derision, since it is to the Lord who hath chosen me rather than thy fathers house; so I say, when anything comes to be suffered for any good action, for any good cause, (as indeed commonly such actions have sufferings joined with them) if you love the Lord, you will be ready to go through it, and that with cheerfulness, because it is to the Lord who hath chosen you, and passed by so many thousands. And therefore it was the commendation of those in Heb. 10, it was an argument of their sincerity, that they suffered the spoiling of their goods with joy. Whence came this, but from their love to the Lord? They were so far from being backward to suffer, as that they were glad to have the opportunity to suffer somewhat for his sake.

But you will say, I am ready to do much for the Lord, and I hope I am not backward to suffer for him.

It is well if it be so, but let me add this to all that I have said, In what manner doest thou do that thou doest? You know the caution that the Apostle puts in, in 1 John 5:3. Herein is love manifested, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous. Indeed herein is the reality of love seen, that we keep the commandments of God. It is true, a man may do much for Christ, and yet not love him; a hypocrite may go far in performances, and yet though he doth much, he may not love much: therefore you must examine yourselves by that, in what manner you do that which you do. Therefore it is added, if we keep his commandments, and they be not grievous: as if he should say, the manner of your doing is all in all, you must both do much, and suffer much; but they must both be done willingly. You know, the wife and the servant, they both serve the husband, and do much for him, both are alike diligent, yet notwithstanding there is this difference, the wife doth it out of love, she doth it in another manner, proceeding from another affection, aiming at another end than the servant doth. So two men may be diligent in keeping the same commandment of the Lord; the one doth it as one that loves the Lord earnestly, being desirous to please him, as one that delights in the Lord, nothing doth more content him, that when he is in an opportunity wherein he may express his love to the Lord, all his commandments are not grievous to him, it is not respect to the reward, it is not an eye to the punishment that moves him.

A man indeed may do much for the Lord, when it is the respects that he hath to hell and to judgment, to heaven and the reward that moves him: Not but that these may be motives; but yet you must remember this, that if these be the principal, and if these only move you, you do it not out of love, you take but an aim from yourselves. When a man hath a business of his own to do, you know how careful he is in it, and with what diligence he doth it,

how often and how seriously he is devising with himself to bring his matters to pass. Now if you love the Lord, the actions that you do, you will not do them as those that are his slaves and servants, that do things for other regards; And indeed such is the love for the most part that is among us nowadays, there is much formality in our actions, we have a form of godliness without the power of it: even as in our love towards men, there are many complements, and much profession of love one to another, but we find that there is little true love: So we may take up a complaint against men in their love to God, there is much formality, men are much in outward performances, which is well, I confess, but alas, the power is wanting; it is all but complementing with God, as it were, when you come and do these duties of God's worship, when you keep the Sabbath, and present yourselves at prayers and at Sermons, it is well you do so; but yet when your hearts are going after your covetousness, and after your pleasures, after this or that particular humor, the Lord looks upon this as upon a formal performance: it is another kind of doing that the Lord requires at your hands. It may be you do duties in secret and private, and it is a good property that you do so, but yet that is not enough; you may do them as a task, that you are glad when the business is done, and it is well that is over; but when you will do things out of love, you must know that you must do it in another manner, not in this formality. If you will serve the Lord out of love, it is not the praying to him morning and evening that will content you, but it is the working upon your hearts, it is the beating upon your affections till you have brought them to a good frame of grace, till you have wrought upon yourselves a sound and thorough renewing of your repentance, you will never give over till your hearts be quickened in prayer, till you have

found that God hath answered you, till you have had experience of his mercy and loving kindness towards you.

So when you come to hear, is this all, (think you) that God requires of you, to sit here, and lend us your ears for a little time? No, my Beloved, unless you do it from love, unless you be moved to it from an inward principle, from an entire and holy affection to God, it is nothing. You must labor to have the word wrought upon your hearts, you must observe how you practice, and how you bring forth into action that which you hear; for you do not learn a thing here, when you come to hear the word, till you practice it, till your hearts be transformed into it: Do not think that you have done the work, when you have sat here and heard us, when you have gone home and repeated the Sermon, and understand it: To hear as God would have you hear is another thing: it is like your lessons in music, you say you have never learned them, till you be able to practice them; so you never have learned the word of God aright, till you have an ability in you to practice it.

To show you what love is, and what faith is, and what patience is, to make you understand and conceive of it, it is nothing; but to have faith, to have patience, to have love, to have your affections inflamed to the Lord, this is the right hearing. As it is in physic, the understanding of the Physicians bill is nothing, it is the taking and applying of that which is there written that doth good to your bodies; so is it with the doctrine that we preach, you may understand it, and apprehend it, and conceive of it aright; but except you bring it forth into your lives and actions, you learn it not. Therefore this slight and overly performance is not a true testimony of your love to the Lord Jesus, but the doing of it to purpose, so that God who searcheth the

heart may accept of it; the doing of it thoroughly that your hearts may be wrought upon, this is a sign that your doing and suffering comes from Love.

FINIS.

SERMON IV.

GAL. 5:6.

For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by Love.

The last thing that we did was to show you what were the properties of true love, that by them you might try yourselves whether you love the Lord Jesus or no: we went through five in the morning, we now proceed.

Another property of love is this, it is full of heat: therefore in Cant. 8, it is compared to coals of juniper: and that phrase is used in Matth. 24:5. Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold. That antithesis shows that love is a hot thing, hot as fire. Therefore if you would know whether you love the Lord Jesus or no, consider what heat and what fire there is in you.

Now what are the properties of fire? Wherein doth love and that agree?

Fire, you know, is the most active of all the elements; cold benumbs a man, and is the greatest enemy to action: if thou love the Lord Jesus, thou shalt find thy love will have that property of fire to set all on work on thee;

it will set thy tongue on fire, and thy hands on fire, and thy head and heart on fire, everything that is within thee will be working, and doing some service or other to the Lord. When a man wanteth love, he is as a man benumbed, as a man frozen in his dregs, not apt to anything: the more a thing is like to fire, the more aptness, and the more activeness; so the more love, the more aptness and readiness to every good work: where there is no love, there men are reprobate to every good work.

Besides, love as it is very active, so it is very quick, as fire is of a quick nature. Therefore we say that love hates nothing so much as delays, and it is in this like to fire, which is the quickest of all the elements. Consider of this therefore; Art thou speedy in thy executions? If thou love the Lord, thou wilt not defer and put off from day today anything that is to be done, thou wilt not say with thyself, I will change my course of life, but not yet: no, if thou love the Lord, thou wilt do it presently.

Besides love agrees with fire in this, that it is earnest and vehement: and indeed I take it, that in that regard it is chiefly compared to fire. For fire, as it is of a quick, so it is of a vehement nature, and so is love. Look what a man loves, upon that he bestows the top of all his affections, and the main strength of his intentions run that way. Examine by this therefore whether thou love the Lord or no. If thou love the Lord Jesus, thou wilt look upon other things, as things that thou regardest not much, thou wilt grieve for them as if thou grievedst not, and rejoyce as if thou rejoycedst not, thou wilt use the world as if thou usedst it not, thy heart will be taken up about Christ, and about the things that belong to the kingdom of God, thy intentions will be set upon the things that belong to the service of God, and thy own salvation. This is a thing by which you may plainly discern the truth of your love: examine therefore what it is upon which you bestow the

main and the top of your intentions. Indeed, my brethren, the greatest things that the world hath are not worthy of the top and strength of our affections; for they are but trifles. Therefore if you love the Lord Jesus, if you prize him aright, and be rightly affected towards him, you will esteem nothing great, but the enjoying of his favor, and nothing of worse consequent than the loss of it, nothing will be of any great moment to you, but only sin, and grace; sin that displeaseth him, and grace that brings you into favor with him: as for other things, you will look upon them as trifles, you will not put the strength of your minds to anything else; this is the nature of love, it is vehement toward the thing that it loveth.

Moreover, it hath also this property of fire, that it is still aspiring, it is still enlarging itself, still growing on, assimilating, and turning everything into its own nature, it is overcoming and is not ready to be overcome: Which property of fire is noted in that place I spake of in the morning, Much water cannot quench it, it is as strong as death: Now death, you know, overcomes all; so will love, it will break through all impediments. Consider whether you find this disposition in yourselves, that your hearts are still drawing nearer and nearer the Lord, that they are still aspiring up towards heaven, that you are still going onward and thriving in the work of grace.

But that which of all other things will manifest most to us this affection of love, it is those affections which depend on it; you shall know it, I say, by the affections that hang upon it. It is true that all the affections depend upon love, but, for this time, I will instance but in two, namely, Anger, and Fear.

Look whatsoever it is that a man loveth, where he finds any impediment in the prosecution of it, he is angry, he desires with as much earnestness to remove that impediment, as he loves the thing.

Take any man even of the mildest disposition, if in anything that he loveth much, and intendeth much, there be an intercurrent impediment that shall interrupt him, he is angry, though otherwise he be of a most meek disposition. For anger is but earnestness to remove the thing out of the way that hinders us: whatsoever a man loveth, he is angry with the impediments that hinder him in it. Come now and examine your love to the Lord by your anger: that anger that proceeds from love to the Lord, we call zeal: will you profess that you love the Lord, and yet your hearts are not moved when he is dishonored? Think with thyself when thou art wronged in thy name, or somebody miscalleth thee, misreports of thee, and prosecutes thee with evil speeches and reviling's, is not thy wrath kindled in thee against such a one? Well, if thou love the Lord Jesus as thyself, as thou oughtest to love him above thyself, why are not thy affections stirred in thee, when thou hearest him dishonored, when thou knowest that his Name is ill spoken of? If a man should take from thee thy wealth, or anything that is dear to thee; if a man should come and violate thee with ill terms, thou wouldest be angry with him, and be ready to fly in the face of such a one. If you be thus affected to the Lord, and to his glory, why do you not do the like for him? You know, David did the same: Mine eyes gush out (saith he) with rivers of water because men keep not thy Law. Therefore know that, if you find not your hearts affected with the things that belong to God, that there is no anger stirred up, it is a sure argument that you love him not. It is observable that is said of old Eli, 1 Sam. 4:3, when news was brought him that the Israelites were fled, that moved him not so much when it was told him; moreover that there was a great slaughter among the people, that stirred him not neither; when it was told him yet that his two sons Hophni and Phineas were slain, yet this did not so much affect him; but when it was told him that the Ark of

the Lord was taken, the text noteth something more than ordinary, that he was so stirred with it, that he fell from his seat, and it cost him his life. Can you find this affection in yourselves, that you are not moved with the death of children so much, or for the loss of your goods, or for your own particular discontents, as when you shall hear that the glory is departed from Israel, that religion suffers any eclipse in any place, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is hindered? This is a thing that will try your love to the Lord. If you find that you can hear of the desolation of the Churches, and of the increase and growing of Popery, and yet you do not take it to heart to be affected with it, you do not grieve for it, it is a sign that you want love to the Lord. You know what is noted of them in Jer. 36:24, when the King had done an abominable action, that he had cut the roll in sunder that Jeremiah gave him, and cast it into the fire that was upon the hearth before him, it is said that those that were about him, did not rent their clothes, nor petition to him &c. As if he should say; in this they discovered a wonderful want of love to the Lord, and to his cause, that they were not moved with this dishonor, that was offered to God, and to his servant, and to the cause of Religion at that time. You know what disposition Paul had in this case Acts 17. He observed that the place, where he was, was given to Idolatry, the text saith, His spirit was stirred in him, his zeal and his anger was kindled in his breast. Therefore consider what your affections to the Lord are by this holy anger that is in you. Moses you know, was the meekest man upon the earth, and yet you know how he was moved, how his zeal was kindled in his breast, when he saw the idolatry of the people.

In the next place consider your fear: For if you love the Lord, it will cause you to fear and tremble at his word, and at his judgments, for whom a man loves much, he regards much, and when a man regards another much, he is

much affected with what he doth; Now when the Lord shall show some tokens of his wrath, those that love him, and esteem of him, those that prize him, cannot but be affected. Shall the Lyon roar, and shall not the beasts of the field tremble? Consider, how you are affected therefore, when the Lord shall discover any expression of his wrath, and what doth he else in this stroke, which is now upon this place; is there not wrath gone out from the Lord? You know the plague is more particularly God's hand, then any other affliction: Therefore David saith when he chose the plague, that he would choose to fall into the hands of God, intimating that, in that business, God was in a more peculiar manner the doer of it. As the thunder is said to be the voice of the Lord, so the plague may properly be said to be the stroke of the Lord, more peculiarly than any other affliction. Consider therefore what your affections are in this case: for my beloved, let it not be in vain to you, that the Lord stretcheth forth his hand as he doth now at this time among us. It is but yet in the beginning, and what is the Lord's meaning in it? Is it not as a messenger sent upon an errand? If it had its answer, if that were done, for which the Lord had sent it, would he not remove it again? Would he not bid the destroying Angel to put up his sword into his sheath? Doubtless he would, if you would do that at the beginning of this sickness that must be done before the Lord will remove it from you.

You will say, what shall we do then? I beseech you consider what commonly is the cause of a plague among us. Consider what hath been the cause of the plague in former times. You shall find in Num. 25, two causes of the plague. One was the superstition and Idolatry of the people, they began to be yoked with Idolatry, They joined themselves to Baal Peor. I confess that sin was not yet grown to any great height, it was but yet in the

beginning, in the seeds, and yet you know how the Lord was offended with them.

And the second was fornication, the sin of uncleanness that was committed. It is not likely that all the people fell into that sin of Idolatry, or into the sin of Fornication, but yet the Lord was offended with the whole Congregation for those that did it, as the manner is to be. So here you see two causes of a plague, Idolatry which was but beginning, and the very admitting it into the Campe; and the Fornication of the people.

Another cause of the plague you shall find in David's numbering the people, it was their security and pride, and trusting to themselves, and the creatures: for surely it was not David's sin only (who had somewhat forgotten God, and trusted to his mountain, and thought that that was strong enough) but it was the sin of the people.

It is good (my beloved) to be secure out of confidence upon God, and therein, the more security the better; but to be secure for any outward help, either in the number of men or ships, or strength or policy, or because we are compassed about with the walls of the Sea, or whatsoever it is wherein we think our safety consisteth, the more confidence in this the worse. The Lord smote the people for this security in David's time.

Another cause is, the unworthy receiving of the Sacrament. Many are sick among you (saith the Apostle) and many are dead, because you receive the Sacrament unworthily. The Lord is pleased to punish that particular sin of receiving the Sacrament unworthily, with some sickness or other, whether the plague or no, we cannot say, but this we may be sure of, that this was the cause why so many were sick and dead. You know that passage in the book of Chronicles concerning Hezekiah, when the people had not prepared themselves aright as they ought, he prayed to the Lord, and it is said, The

Lord healed the people: we cannot say what the Lord healed them of, but yet it makes it evident that the Lord had some way smitten them. Moses for the omission of the Sacrament the Lord would have slain him, that is, he would have sent something upon him, whether some disease, as is most probable, or some other thing which should have taken away his life in the end. The omission and negligent receiving of the Sacrament I put together, which moveth God to anger, and to inflict plagues upon a people.

I will name yet one more besides these, and that is the coldness and deadness of their hearts who belong to the Lord, from whom he expects better things, and more zeal, which I gather hence: What was the reason that the zeal of Phineas stayed the plague? Num. 25. Because his love was hot, and his anger was kindled in a holy manner against that Israelitish man, and the Midianitish woman, that had committed fornication among the people. If the zeal of Phineas was the cause of staying that plague, and of withholding the Lord's hands, then surely the coldness of those from whom the Lord looks for much heat, for much fervency of spirit, whom God expects should stand in the gap, I say, that is the cause that the Lord goes on in punishing.

But what should we do now to remove it?

Amend the things that are amiss, repent and amend, and he will turn from his fierce wrath, which he not only intendeth against us, but is also already upon us; Labor to cleanse your hands from idolatry and superstition, and cleanse the land from the crying sin of uncleanness and fornication, and every man labor to cleanse his own heart.

And again, to turn to the Lord, to take heed of security, which is a forerunner of a ruin, as a great calm is a forerunner of an earthquake.

Again, take heed of receiving the Sacrament unworthily, many of you this day have received; therefore I should speak something particularly to them, but in truth this concerns all among us; but chiefly let me speak to those a little that are able to pray, that have some fire in them, that have had the work of grace in their hearts wrought by the Spirit of God, that have some sparks if they were blown up, that are men fit to stand in the gap; It belongs to you, my brethren to do something that the Lord may stay his hand: and remember that when the Lord begins to send forth tokens of his wrath and displeasure against a Nation, it is a time wherein he expects and looks for humiliation and repentance: Therefore take heed of neglecting that in Isaiah 22. In that day (saith the Lord) when I called for humiliation, behold killing of fatlings and oxen, &c. Therefore know what your duty is, and learn now to see what belongs to you to do, show your love to the Lord in trembling at his judgments, in being zealous for his Names sake: as indeed where there is abundance of love there is always exceeding much zeal: So it was with Paul, so it was with Elias, so it was with Moses, so it hath been with all the Saints. And so much for this.

Another property of love is this, that it doth not play the huckster with the Lord (as we say) it doth not bring things to an exact account, but when a man loveth, he is willing to do what offices of love and friendship he can, and he doth not stand to look for an exact recompense; (for that is to play the huckster, to make a bargain with God) but the nature of love and true friendship, wheresoever it is found, is this, to be free in doing that it doth, and not to stand to examine how much they shall do, and how much they shall receive for doing of it; but to do it with liberty and with freedom. And so it will be if your love be right to the Lord, you will not stand halfpenny-worthing, you will not stand considering what you are bound to do of

necessity, whether you are bound to pray in your families or no, whether you are bound to keep the Sabbath so exactly and precisely as is commanded; whether you are bound from giving so much liberty to yourselves in vain speeches, &c. but love will rather say, what shall I do to recompense the Lord? It will be devising what to do, it will be glad of any occasion of doing anything that may be acceptable to God. When you set limits to yourselves, and are afraid of going too far, and doing too much, it is a sign that what you do cometh not from love to the Lord, but from some natural principle, it comes from yourselves, and not from the spirit. For if you love the Lord Jesus aright, why do you not labor to exceed in the duties of obedience? Why do you blame those that go further than yourselves are willing to do? Why do you quarrel with that exactness and preciseness, and strictness which is required in walking in the ways of God? Love is abundant in the work it doth, and if you love the Lord, you will not set limits to yourselves, you will not have such thoughts as these, I will do as much as may bring me to heaven, and no more, I will take so much pains as that I may not be damned, but to exceed, and do more than needs, this I hope may be spared, and I may go to heaven notwithstanding well enough, though I go not so fast as other men. No, Beloved, if there be love in you, you will strive to do the utmost of your power, it is the nature of love so to do.

Again, you will not be so exact, nor indent with the Lord what he will do to you; but though the Lord be slow and slack in rewarding you, though he stay long, and suffer you to go on without taking any notice of you, as it were, nay perhaps he gives you many afflictions and persecutions, poverty, trouble, sickness, &c. though the Lord doth not do what you expect, yet your love will be free, it will go on, you will be ready to say as Paul did, I

know whom I have trusted: that is, he was resolved to serve the Lord, to do his utmost, though the Lord did reserve himself and the recompense of reward to a further time, yet he was content. Such a disposition will be found in those that love the Lord Jesus.

Again, you may judge of your love to the Lord Jesus by another property of love, which is a hatred of sin, by your hatred of that which is contrary to him; for love is not better known by anything than by hatred; for all hatred is properly rooted in love: for you hate nothing but because you love the contrary; therefore if you love the Lord Jesus, you will hate sin. Examine yourselves by this, for it is a sure rule, if you love the Lord, you will hate that which is evil.

You will say, I hope I do that.

It is well if you do, but let us consider that: it may be you may be angry with sin, but do you hate sin? That was the commendations that the Lord gives the Church, in Rev. 2. Thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans which I also hate. Therefore, if you would know whether you love the Lord Jesus, try it by this, do you hate sin?

You will say, How shall we know whether we hate it or no?

In these three things you shall find wherein hatred differs from anger, and thereby you may examine yourselves.

First, hatred is more of generals; a man hates all drunkards, if he hate drunkenness: he hates all toads and all serpents, if he hate poison. A man is angry with this or that particular, but hatred is of all. I would ask thee, doest thou hate all sin, everything that is called sin, all that belongs to sin? If it be this or that sin that you make against, you are but angry with sin, you do not hate sin: for hatred falls always upon the general. Examine therefore if you find this disposition in your hearts, that you hate every sin, that your hearts

rise against everything that is sinful, whatsoever is contrary to the Lord, whatsoever you apprehend under the notion of sin, that you hate, and resist, and strive against; this is a sign that you love the Lord.

Secondly, hatred desires the utter destruction of the thing it hates, anger doth not so, anger desires but a revenge proportionable to the injury: therefore we say there is a kind of justice in anger, it would not have the party that it is angry with to be destroyed, but it would have him sensible of its displeasure, it would have something done that might answer the injury that is offered; but hatred desires the destruction of a thing utterly. Now do you do so with your sins? Do you desire to have them wholly extirpate and rooted out of you? To have your lusts thoroughly and perfectly mortified? Are you willing to have sin so clean taken away, that you may have no liberty to have dalliance with it in any kind? Do you hate it so as that you cannot endure to come near it, nor to have it within your sight? It is a sign you hate it indeed.

Lastly, hatred differeth from anger in this, that it is implacable: hatred comes from judgment, and it continues, and therefore hatred is not a passion, but we call it an affection; it is a bent, and disposition, and frame of the will; anger is a passion that dies, and flites away after a time; but hatred continues. Is your disposition such to your sins? Examine yourselves; nothing is more frequent, my brethren, than to be humbled for some sin, which amazeth you for the present, but doth your hatred continue? If not, you do but fall out with your sins only, and grow friends with them again. If you did hate them, as you should, you would never return to amity with them more.

Many a man takes resolutions to himself, I will be drunk no more, I will be a gamester no more, I will not commit such, and such gross sins, as I

have done anymore; perhaps some shame, or some fear hath followed him, some deep apprehension of wrath and judgment, which set him upon this resolution for the present; but if the heart be right that thou hatest sin as thou shouldest, thou wilt continue hating of it. Therefore consider, whether you love the Lord Jesus by this trial, whether your hearts hate sin, in your constant resolution or no. This was the disposition that was in Lot, His righteous soul was vexed with the unclean conversation of the Sodomites, that is, he did not only abstain from the acts that they did, but his soul wrought against them, he was vexed with them, as a man is vexed with a thing that is contrary to his disposition.

So it is said of Moses, he stood in the door of the Tabernacle, and he wept as he stood, his heart was moved in him. It is not enough to abstain from sin, but to hate sin, and that is an argument of our love to the Lord Jesus: take this therefore for another trial of your love.

Again, there is one more which we cannot leave out, though it be a thing known unto you, yet because the Scripture gives it as a peculiar sign by which we may judge of our love to the Lord, it must not be passed by, and that is our love to the Saints; and there is good reason given of it, if we consider it well, 1 John. 4:20. Wilt thou say thou lovest God whom thou hast not seen, and yet lovest not thy brother whom thou hast seen? The meaning is this, for a man to love the Lord who is immortal, invisible, who dwelleth in light inaccessible, is a more difficult thing than to love thy brother whom thou seest. For why do we love the Lord, but because we conceive him under such a notion? We think of him as such a God having such and such attributes: Now, saith the Apostle, whatsoever thou conceivest of God, that very image and disposition is stamped on man like thyself, thou shalt see the very same disposition in a holy man that is in the

Lord himself. Indeed it differeth in the degree exceedingly, there is but a glimpse of it, yet why is it said that the Image of God is renewed, but that there is in holy men a disposition like the nature of God? Now this is in a more remiss degree in man, and therefore more suitable to our weakness; as you know, difficulty comes from disproportion, it is a harder thing to love the Lord than a man like ourselves. If therefore we do not love men like ourselves, in whom is stamped a disposition like the nature of God, and his Image, in some degree, surely we cannot love the Lord who is so far above us.

Again, a man like ourselves is visible, we see his actions, we hear him speak, we know more plainly the frame of his disposition; and therefore it is more easy to love a holy man than to love the Lord: For so is the Apostles argument. Do not think that thou lovest the Lord whom thou never sawest, when thou doest not love thy brother whom thou seest daily. Therefore we may conclude thus much, if we love not the Saints and holy men, it is certain we love not the Lord.

I confess every man is ready to say (in this case) he loves holy men.

I would put you to this trial, and ask you but this question; you shall know it by this: Do you love all the Saints? You shall find that the Apostle Paul still in his Epistles puts in that caution, Love to all the Saints. If thou love grace and holiness, thou wilt love it wheresoever it is. Many men will love some particular grace, especially when it suiteth with their disposition, and is agreeable to them, and to their constitution, but to love all grace, to love all holiness in all the Saints wheresoever it is found, it is an infallible sign that thou lovest the Lord Jesus.

Again, doest thou love none but them; that, where grace is, thou lovest, and where it is not, thou withdrawest thy love?

But, you will say, would you have us to love none but the Saints? I answer, it is true, we ought to love all others with a love of pity, we should show abundance of this love to all mankind; but then there is a love of complacency and delight, and with this love we ought to love none but the Saints.

Again, thirdly, do you love them as they excel in holiness? Many men can love one that hath but some degree of grace; but if it be one that hath more exactness than ordinary, that hath proceeded higher in holiness than he thinks requisite, here his heart is ready to quarrel, and to rise against him.

Lastly, do you manifest your love by delighting in their company, and by the fruits of love towards them? You may profess much, and say much, but of all other things company is the worst dissembled. Will you profess that you love the Saints, and that you delight in them, and yet desire to be in any company rather than in theirs? That when you are among them, you are as if you were out of your element, you move as if you were out of your own center? It is impossible but that those that are moved by the same spirit should be best pleased when they are in one and the same society. Put all these things together, and by these you may judge whether you love the Saints or no.

You will object, I do love the Saints, but who are they? I love not hypocrites, and so it is made a notable excuse.

I will not wish thee to love hypocrites, only take heed thou suffer not the imps and instruments of the Devil to paint out the true Saints unto thee in the colors of hypocrites: thou must consider that it hath been the usual manner to cast that aspersion upon all the Saints, upon all holy men in all ages, as the Apostle saith in 2 Cor. We are as deceivers though true: that is the common esteem that the world hath of the Saints, they judge them to be

deceivers, and to be men that profess themselves to be otherwise than they are. You know what was said of Jesus Christ, some said of him he was a good man, others said nay, he was a deceiver of the people. You know what was said of David, that he was a subtle man, one that went about to deceive others. Paul, you know, was reckoned the great impostor of the world; this was always laid upon the Saints: therefore let not the Devils instruments deceive thee in that.

Besides, why are they hypocrites? Is it because there are some shows of holiness in them? Surely that is not argument enough.

Thou wilt say, because they do not answer that which in their profession they make show to be?

If that be the reason, why doest thou not pitch thy hatred upon those that are found to be so? And to conclude this, you must know, that no man speaks against religion or hates religion, under its own notions, under its own name, but something else must be put upon it, the name of hypocrisy, or the like.

And it is the common condition of men whose hearts are not upright, that they are not able to judge aright of the ways of God; a man that hath not grace himself cannot possibly judge aright of grace in others: but I hasten. I must now proceed in the point I formerly began to insist on, namely, in showing you the means of getting this love, and of increasing it.

I showed formerly some means to get this love and to increase it.

As first prayer, for it is the gift of the Spirit.

Secondly, to beseech the Lord to show himself to you.

We will add but one now at this time, to show you the way more fully to obtain this love.

If you would love the Lord, remove the impediments.

What are those?

They are two.

Strangeness, and uncircumcision of heart, or worldly mindedness.

First, strangeness is a great impediment to love. It is an observation that the Philosophers hath, that strangeness when we do not salute, and converse one with another, is a means of dissolving friendship; so in this case, when there grows a strangeness between God and us, it unties and loosens that love and communion that should be between us. Therefore, if you would preserve your love to the Lord, suffer not your hearts to sit loose from him, suffer not a strangeness to grow between God and you. For strangeness breeds fearfulness, and fearfulness looseneth love, as boldness is the parent and nurse of love, and that which increaseth it.

Besides, when there grows a strangeness between God and us, we begin not to know the Lord, there grows an ignorance, and so there is an intermission of those reciprocal offices of love between us; that even as it is among the Saints, the forsaking of their fellowship looseneth their love, and so stoppeth the intercourse of good duties that should be among them: so it is with the Lord. And therefore if you would maintain love with the Lord, draw near to him, and he will draw near to you.

How shall we do that?

By speaking much to him, by hearing him speak to us, by retiring to him upon all occasions for consolation and comfort.

If thou receive any injury from men, wrangle not with them, but do as David did, betake thyself to prayer, take heed of sin, for that of all other things will breed a strangeness between God and thee; and if you do fall out, seek to be reconciled again as soon as may be, labor to entertain a continual commerce between God and thyself, observe constantly his

dealing with thee, and observe again thy carriage towards hm, this will breed a familiarity between God and thee.

And above all, be much in prayer; for that in a special manner maintains and increaseth this communion and familiarity between the Lord and thee.

Again, the other thing that hinders is uncircumcision of heart, or worldly-mindedness: in Deut. 30:6. I will circumcise your hearts, and you shall love me with all your souls, and with all your hearts. As if he should say, that which keeps you from loving me, from delighting in me, is the uncircumcision of your hearts, that is, your worldly lusts, and worldly cares, and worldly desires, when these abound in our hearts, they keep us from loving the Lord: Therefore in 1 John 2. If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you. Come to any particular, and you shall find it so; if you love wealth, you cannot love the Lord, if you love pleasures, if you love praise with men, if you love honors, &c. you cannot love the Lord; the love of God, and vain glory, the love of God and covetousness will not stand together. Therefore if you will love the Lord, you must have your hearts circumcised, that is, you must have these sinful lusts cut off; for nothing quencheth love so much as these. You know, the love of an adulterer quencheth the conjugal love of the wife to the husband: your love of the world is adultery, the Scripture calls it so; therefore if you love that, it will quench your love to the Lord.

You will say, May we not love the things of the world?

Yes, my brethren, only take heed that it be not an adulterous love.

How shall we know that?

You shall know it by this, if it do lessen your love to God: You may know whether your love to any creature, to any sport or recreation be adulterous or no. A chaste wife may love many men besides her husband; but if it once

begin to lessen her love to her husband, that is an adulterous love: Therefore if you would love the Lord aright, be sure to cut off this, for it breeds a distance between God and you. As it is said of Absalom, when the hearts of the people went with Absalom, they fell from David the King; so when our hearts are stolen away with the love of earthly things, our love to the Lord is lessened with it. Therefore I say, if you will love the Lord aright, you must be careful to remove this: for the cares of the world, the lusts and diverse pleasures, these choke the love of the Lord, they are the greatest quench-coals of any other.

Love, you know, is of a uniting quality, when anything lieth between God and us, that, you may be sure, will hinder our love. Now there are many things that lie between God and us.

Some things lie in our understandings, temptations to atheism, temptations to think that the Scriptures are not true, temptations to judge amiss of God in anything, temptations to doubt of the favor of God; These lie in the understanding between God and us, and are contrary to love: for love uniteth.

But in the will there lieth much more, sometimes vain hopes, sometimes vain fears, sometimes one thing, sometimes another. If there be any inordinate lust after any creature, after anything in the world, it lieth between God and us, and makes a separation between us; and till that be removed, God and we cannot come together, till there be an union we cannot fully love. Therefore if you would love the Lord, have your hearts circumcised, that is, have those things removed out of your understanding, and out of your will. Take away those obstacles that lie between God and you: And if you cannot do it yourselves, go to Christ, it is he that circumciseth us with the circumcision made without hands.

Again, when you have done this, that you may grow in love to the Lord, learn to know the Lord; for the more you know him, the more you will love him. What is the reason that the Angels in heaven so love him? Because they know him. What is the reason that we shall love him more in heaven than we do now, but because we shall know him more? Therefore when you read the Scriptures, and observe the works of God's providence in every particular, learn by this to know God: as you know a man by his actions and carriage, learn to have such an Idea of God, as he hath described himself in his word, that he is true of his word, that he is full of goodness, that he is abundant in longsuffering and patience, that he is exceeding merciful beyond measure, &c. labor to see his wisdom, his goodness, and his mercy, labor to know God: for when you come to know him aright, by that we come to love him. Why do we love one man more than another, but because we conceive him under such a notion, we conceive his heart to be of such and such a frame, we think him to be a man of such and such a condition? When we thus conceive the Lord, it will teach us to love him more. Therefore this you must know, that for you only to look upon things that are beneficial to you, as forgiveness of sins, and adoption, and an inheritance in heaven, that is not love to the Lord. It is true, you should do all this, but that which you are principally to do, is to look to the essence of God, to see such excellencies in him, that thereby you may be led home to him: and therefore that you may know him the better, you must be taught of him. Again, you must not only know him, but you must likewise have assurance of his love to you: for when you know the excellencies of the Lord, unless you have assurance of his love to you, it is not sufficient. Take a man of the highest place, and of the most excellent quality; if thou conceive that he hath a hollow heart towards thee, thou canst not possibly love him: thou must be

persuaded of the love of the Lord to thee. Therefore in the Text it is said to be faith which worketh by love. The increase of the assurance of God's love therefore is the means to increase thy love to him.

So much for this time.

FINIS.

SERMON V.

GAL. 5:6.
For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by Love.

The last thing we did was to give you the properties of love to the Lord Jesus.

Now that which remains to do at this time, is to apply that which hath been said, that is, to bring your hearts and the rule together, and to exhort you, that what you have heard in this, it may not pass like airy notions, and never be brought home to your particular practice. For, my beloved, the word that we deliver to you, should be like nails, driven home to the head, fastened by the masters of the assembly, as the Wiseman speaks, that they may stick and abide in the soul, as forked arrows do in the body, that they may not easily fall out again. Therefore the main business that we have to do in preaching the word, is to fasten these words thus upon your hearts. That which we will do therefore at this time shall be to exhort you to question your own hearts, and to examine them upon your beds, whether

these characters and properties of love which have been delivered do agree to you or no. For, as the Apostle saith, Unless you be in Christ, that is, unless you be knit to Christ in love, you are reprobates: it concerns every man therefore that hears me at this time, to examine this strictly with himself.

We will expostulate the matter a while with you at this time, and you must expostulate the matter between God and your own consciences, whether this love be in you or no. And although indeed this needeth not any distinct dividing into branches, yet that we may help your memories we will put it into a number.

And first we will make this expostulation, you that profess you love the Lord, (as who will not be ready to do that, to say he loveth Christ; but yet as the Apostle John speaketh of love to the brethren, that men love them in show, and not in truth; so it is with most men, they love the Lord in word, and in profession, but they love him not in deed, and in truth) therefore first let me ask you this.

You that profess you love the Lord, do you not grieve him, and vex him from day today, and provoke him by your words, and by your works? If this be your case, it is certain you love him not indeed. Some there are that profess much love to the Lord Jesus, but yet spend their time idly, are diligent in no calling, but waste their precious opportunities in sports, in idle visitations, in gaming, in doing nothing that is profitable either to themselves or others, but eat and drink, and rise up to play: It is the case of many of our young Gentlemen; a shameful thing before men, and abominable in the sight of God, that men should live like beasts, and make their souls like the souls of swine, serving for nothing but to keep their bodies from putrefaction, doing so much the less work, because they have

the more wages; burying so many precious talents, whereof their time is the chief, because it helpeth to improve all the rest; of which they shall give an exact account at that day, When God shall judge the secrets of men's hearts according to our Gospel. Do you profess that you love the Lord Jesus, and do you neglect him thus?

Besides this mocking of the Lord, and dissembling with him, you deal most foolishly with yourselves: for all the comfort that you shall ever find in this life, it will be from working, from being serviceable to God, and profitable to men; empty lives cause but empty joy. Therefore if any man shall find this to be his case, examine it, it is but a false profession of love. And as I speak to those that are young, that spend their time, *Nihil agendo*: so I may say the same to those that are of more years, that waste their lives in doing something indeed, but it is not that which they should do, or in doing it in another manner than they ought; those that are so drowned in business, so overwhelmed with employment, so occupied with outward things abroad, that they have no vacancy to feed their souls within, to clothe them with graces. For you must know, my brethren, that your souls have need to be trimmed every morning, as well as the body, they have need of breakfast, and dinner, and exercise, as well as the body; and as you fail in giving this due respect to the soul daily, so you shall find that proportionably in that degree the inward man will languish, and grow faint. But to speak a word unto you likewise: Do you think that you love the Lord Jesus in good earnest, and yet have scarce leisure to think of him from morning to night, that you cannot take time to speak to him, to seek him, nor to prepare your hearts for him?

Besides this general, come to particular sins, Sabbath-breaking, neglecting of private prayer, vain speeches, concupiscence and sinful lusts, secret

courses of uncleanness, swearing, if not by greater, yet by lesser oaths, which indeed in this exceed the greater; because in the other you swear by the Creator, in these by the creature. You that do these things, will you say you love the Lord? You must know that it is a contradiction, it is impossible: For, if you love me, keep my commandments: if you keep not the commandments of God, certainly you love him not.

But, it may be, you will say that your meaning is good, that you are well affected to Christ, and therefore surely you do not hate him.

My brethren, you are deceived in this, thy meaning is not good; for while you cast the commandments of God behind you, you cast him away: and let me say to you in this case, as you have it in Jer. 3:4. You profess well in saying, Thou art my Father, and the guide of my youth, but you do evil more and more. So I say, when you profess you love the Lord, and that you reckon him your Father, and your Husband, thus you say indeed, but you do evil more and more; and that is a certain argument you love not the Lord. Therefore examine yourselves by this rule: For, if you love the Lord, you will reverence him: You know, whom we love, we reverence, and whom we reverence, we dare not do anything unmeet in their sight. Take any one whom we love, whose good opinion we seek for, we had rather that all the world should see us do an unseemly thing, than that he should; and certainly if you love the Lord, you would not dare to provoke him to anger. Therefore this carelessness in serving of him is a certain sign of want of love to the Lord Jesus, this fearfulness, and carelessness, when you dare not show your courage for him, when you account it a small matter to commit a sin against God, this ariseth from the defect of your love.

In the second place, as you may try your love by your taking care not to offend God, so likewise you may try it by your sorrow and grief after you

have offended him: For you must know this, that love, as it hath the greatest joy of anything else, when it obtains that which it would have, so it is attended with the most exquisite grief, when it is disappointed. As when one loveth another earnestly, if any breach fall out that shall make a separation between them, if any strangeness grow between them, if they love, they will never be at rest, it will trouble and disquiet them; but as the Scripture speaks, they are sick of love, that is, they cannot be quiet while there is such a condition, while there is any alienation, while there are breaches and offenses between them, for you know that nothing is so sweet as love; as you have it in Cant. 1. Love is better than wine: and as David expresseth it, Psal. 63:3. Thy loving kindness is better than life. So sweet (I say) is love, as sweet as wine, and better than life. Now, by the rule of contraries, then, to have a breach made, to have a bar, and an interruption in this loving kindness of the Lord towards us, or in our love towards him, it is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as death. Therefore you may examine yourselves by the offenses you offer to God, when they are past; if you love him, it is certain they will trouble you exceedingly; for so much sorrow for sin, so much love. And you may take it for a sure rule, in what measure any man desires to please the Lord, in that measure he will be grieved that he hath displeased him. Therefore examine thyself, Hast thou sinned against him many times, and doest thou look back upon those sins in a careless manner, be sure that thou lovest him not. Examine this by that which passeth between man and man: When a father or a husband hath anything committed against them by a child or a wife, if they shall withdraw themselves, and profess themselves displeased, and yet the child or the wife, in the meantime, be never troubled at this, but be at rest, well enough content it should be so, and are not disquieted for it; will not the parent or

husband take this exceeding ill at their hands, when he seeth his displeasure slighted? For this is much greater than the offense itself. So I may say, whatsoever the sin be that you have committed, this hardness of heart, this negligence after the sin is committed, when you are not disquieted for it, when your hearts are not troubled for it, it is a greater sign of want of love to the Lord, it is a greater sign of an evil and untoward disposition, than the sin itself. Therefore this want of sorrow for sin, is a sure argument that you love not the Lord. You may take that for one sign of want of love, that we commit sins against God from day today. For, do but go to your neighbors, and profess your love to them, and yet you injure them again and again, you care not what wrong you do them; will they think that such a profession as you make is true? And will the Lord regard, when you say that you love him, if you provoke him to anger, and renew your sins, and relapse into them again and again, and when you have sinned, take it not to heart? No, my brethren, if you do love him, you will do as it is said, Zach. 12, when you have sinned, you will mourn as he that mourneth for his only son, your hearts will melt, as Josiah's did; your hearts will smite you, as David's did him: thus it is with all that love him in deed and in truth. Therefore in Lev. 16:29, and likewise Lev. 23:27. (they are both one and the same) the Lord appoints a feast and a meeting together for cleansing of sins, it was the feast of atonement; saith he, In that day when you come together to offer sacrifice unto me, and to make an atonement, you shall humble your souls, and whosoever doth not afflict his soul on that day, he shall be cut off from his people. As if he should say, At that day you come to reconcile yourselves to the Lord, you make profession of your love to him, and of the desire you have to be friends with him: Now, if you come and make this profession, and do not humble yourselves, nor afflict your souls on that day

for those breaches that have been between God and you, all your professions are but dissimulation; and such a man as will thus dissemble with the Lord, shall be cut off from his people. So I say, when you profess that you love the Lord, and yet have hard hearts, that there is no softness there, that your hearts do not melt towards him, but when you have sinned, you can look back upon your sins without any disturbance at all, know that it is but dissembling with the Lord, and you are worthy to be cut off from his people.

I come to a third trial: If you love the Lord Jesus, have you your hearts after his own heart? That is the disposition of all those that love him. Acts 13:22, the Lord saith of David, I have found a man after my own heart, that will do whatsoever I will: That is, look how the Lord himself was affected in any business, so was David's heart affected, and so it is with all those that love the Lord: (for this is proper to the Saints) If you love the Lord, you will be of one heart with him; if we have hearts after his heart, as every Christian must have in his measure, (though perhaps he reach not David's measure) in all the turnings of our lives, upon all occasions, in the diverse disposition of our wills, we will be conformable to the Lord's will, we will be like God, affected in everything as he is affected.

But, you will say, this is a hard thing, how shall we discern it?

You shall discern it by these two things: If you be affected as he is, you will do whatsoever he will; as those words are added concerning David, I have found a man after mine own heart, for he will do whatsoever I will. You may examine yourselves by that; do you do whatsoever he will? Are your affections aright, that you love what he loves, and hate what he hates? For your actions are the immediate fruits and effects of your affections, and as every man is affected so he doth.

And besides, as that is one way to discern it, so this is another which you shall likewise find in David, that he loved those that feared the Lord; and those that love vain inventions, do I not hate them, saith he? &c. And that you may discern this, consider whether you love all those that fear the Lord, and hate all those that are enemies to the Lord. For while there is nothing but nature in a man, so long those that are of good natures, that are fair in their carriages, and kind and loving to us, those we love, and those that are contrary we hate and dislike; but when you love the Lord, and are after his heart, and have another nature in you, it raiseth you above this nature of your own, and then you will love those that are like the Lord, whosoever they are, though perhaps they are not so sociable, not of so fair a natural disposition: but if you have a new nature, and are become new creatures, now you have common friends, and common enemies.

Do not object now, that you are willing to do so, if they were sincere and upright, but they are hypocrites.

I say, do not deceive yourselves in this: for as they rejected Christ under the person of a counterfeit, and of a wine-bibber, so thou mayest persecute Christ under the person of a hypocrite. Paul; you know, he thought he did God good service in persecuting those whom he persecuted, yet though he did it ignorantly, he confessed of himself that he was a blasphemer, and a persecutor: So I say, though you do it ignorantly, under the person of an hypocrite, yet that is the judgment, and the censure that will be upon you, that in so doing you are persecutors.

And if you shall say, that if the Lord himself lived amongst us, if Jesus Christ were here, I hope I should show that I do not hate him.

You shall see what the Lord himself saith, In that you have done it to these, you have done it to me. As he speaks there in the matter of giving, so

may I say to you concerning this case, in that you have despised those that fear his name, in that you have spoken against such as are his, you have done it against the Lord: in this thing you have showed your hatred against him. Examine your hearts therefore seriously by this mark.

Again, fourthly, we will bring you to that expostulation which is grounded on 1 John. 2:15. Love not the world, nor the things of the world; for if you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you. Now question with your own hearts about this, whether you love the world, and the things of the world; for if you do, the words are clear, The Love of the Father is not in you.

You will say, how shall we know this?

You shall know it by these three things.

First, by your delight in the things of the world, and your grief and sorrow for the loss of them after you have enjoyed them; for if you find that you are much affected about them, it is certain that you love the world, and the things of the world: Intemperate and excessive grief, and complaint for worldly losses and crosses, is a sure argument and evidence that you love the world.

Whereas when you love the Lord, you will be indifferent in those things; if a worldly loss befall you, you will grieve as if you grieved not; if any worldly advantage happeneth, you will enjoy it as if you enjoyed it not: A man will be thus affected, If I have God sure, I reckon him only my portion, all other things are by accident, he only is essential to my happiness.

We do not deny that a man may grieve upon such occasions, but it is a lighter kind of grief; and therefore it is expressed well by the former phrase, As if he grieved not: He knoweth all this while the main is sure, and so long his heart is steadfast within him: but when a man shall fall into excessive

grief, when the affection shall be exceedingly stirred about worldly things, it is a sign that you reckon not God, and the assurance of his favor to be the main thing in your happiness: you should be affected to the world with a remiss affection. Now when your affections are so much taken up about them, it is a sign you love the world, and the things of the world. It is true, you may do the things of the world, and enjoy them, and follow after them, but in a remiss manner; but when your affections are so much stirred about them, when you come to excessive love in the having them, and excessive grief in the losing of them, it is a sign that you love the world, and the things of the world.

Secondly, you shall know it by this, when worldly things shall come into competition with those that belong to a good conscience, and the service of God, you shall find this one way whereby you may discern your love to the world. When Christ would make a trial of the young man, whether he loved the world or no, he puts him to it by this, Go, (saith he) and sell all that thou hast, and come and follow me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. When it came in competition once, whether he were best to follow Christ, and sell all that he had, and that he must either forsake Christ, or forsake his riches, he went away sorrowful, and would not do it. So we shall find it in John 12:42, when the matter came there into competition, that if they confessed Christ they should be cast out of the synagoge; saith the text, though they believed, They confessed him not, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Their carriage there towards Christ, when their confessing of him came in competition with their applause and honor among men, it was an argument that they loved the world, and the things of the world.

You shall see in Abraham's case, when the Lord would put him to the trial, and bids him come from his kindred and from his fathers house, and from his Country, this in Heb. 11 is taken as an argument of his love, that when he was put to do either the one or the other, he made his choice to obey the Lord, though it stood with the loss of Country and friends. So I say, consider with yourselves, and you shall find many cases wherein your conscience will dictate to you, this you must do, this you ought to perform, this you ought not to do. Perhaps it shall be said unto you again, if you do it, you shall lose such a friend, you shall lose such credit, you shall suffer such loss in your estate, you shall expose yourself to such and such danger, you shall incur such and such inconveniences to yourself; consider what you do in such a case: Many businesses fall out every day, wherein the like case is offered to you, many times you think it were best to do so, and if it were not for the loss of something, or for the discredit, you would do it. By this you may examine your hearts whether you love the world or no.

Lastly, you shall know whether you love the world, and the things of this world by your actions; for where your love is, there your tongue, and your hand will be, and all your endeavors: Now try yourselves by this, Are you occupied so about the world, and the things of it, that all your endeavors and all your actions are taken up about them? Some about matter of pleasure, in hunting and hawking, in gaming and sporting, your thoughts are there, and your speeches there; others again in seeking wealth, and wordly greatness: Are you taken up about these? I say, the actions of a man are a sure sign, for the Lord judgeth us by our actions; therefore we may judge ourselves by them. Consider in what element you live, if you be so busied about worldly things, that you are never well but when you are there, and as for heavenly things, you do them but by the by, and when you are

doing them you are weary; this is an argument that you love the world, when a man shall turn the stream of his endeavors all that way, when he shall turn all his projects, all his actions, all his labors into that. As when the body hath a wen or a wolf in it, all the nourishment is drawn to that, and in the meantime the body is lean and poor: so is it when a man's heart is taken up with the world, it eats up and devours all the thoughts, all the intentions of the mind; all his care, and endeavor, and striving runs this way; and the hidden man of the heart, in the meantime, is left starved and pined within: This is a sign that you love the world, this so much intending the things of the world, as Christ speaks, The lusts of your Father will you do, John 8. What is the meaning of that? That is, look to your actions, to your doings, to your executions and performances, and you shall find that they are according to the lusts of your father the Devil; those actions they did were a sign that they did affect those things that the Devil affected.

But you will object, the holiest man, he that is most regenerate, yet is inordinately affected to the world, is too ready to grieve, and to rejoice inordinately, it too ready to fail when these things come in competition with God. Therefore how should we examine our hearts by this?

I answer in a word, that it is true in the Saints, there is something in their hearts that doth all this that I have spoken; but it is not they that do it: as the Apostle speaks, It is not I, but sin that dwells in me: We cannot deny but that there is flesh and worldly-mindedness even in them; but yet this they do, these worldly lusts and desires they are still checking them, and restraining them, and keeping them down, so that though they be there, yet they do not walk after the vanity of their minds, they are not led by it, but they are led by the Spirit, and walk by the Spirit. Indeed sometimes they fall, when they are transported with temptations, and through incogitancy,

and infirmity, yet their constant walking is not after the vanity of their mind, for that is proper to those that fear not God. Therefore know thus much (my brethren) that though the Saints do these things sometimes, yet their purpose, and their desire and care is to cross and resist them as much as they can, that though they have these inordinate worldly desires in them, yet they are not midwives to themselves, to bring forth fruit to the flesh, they are not stewards to provide for these beforehand, as it is in Rom. 13. Put ye on the Lord Jesus, and take no care for the flesh, to make provision for it: I say, they are not stewards for their lusts, but they resist them, and strive against them. But to conclude this also, examine yourselves by this rule, whether you love the world, and the things of the world.

And if we take an examination of men by this, how few are there that love the Lord? We may truly say as the Apostle saith, The love of God is not in them, for men seek themselves, and their own things, and not the things of Jesus Christ. One follows this particular, another that, every man fitting and plotting a garment to himself composed of such vices as do suite every man's humor. This is a sign that you love not the Lord, when you mind the world, and go with the world, and let your whole body and soul follow it, with all the actions, and all the strength and endeavor thereof. The love of many shall wax cold, because iniquity shall abound. What is the meaning of that? That is, because the men of the world, those that are in place, because they shall countenance iniquity, because the stream of the times shall go that way; for this cause the love of many shall wax cold: that is, because they mind the world, whereas if they did not love the world, and the things of it, though iniquity did abound, yet their love would wax hotter. When things are so that iniquity abounds, some will not take the pains, they love their ease, and contentment; others want courage to do it, they are faint-

hearted, and dare not adventure. Now whence doth this come but from the love of the world? For no man is fearful, but because there is something that he is in love with, and is loath to part with. If a man did not love the things of the world, he would have courage for the truth. This is therefore an argument that men do love the world, and consequently the love of the Father is not in them.

Let us come yet to another expostulation. In the first place therefore, if you love the Lord, you will find in yourselves a readiness to please him in all things, you will do it naturally: As the Apostle speaks of Timothy, I know no man like minded, who will naturally care for your matters. So if you love the Lord aright, you will do it with a natural affection, you will love him naturally: For what is this love to the Lord, if it be right, but that which himself hath planted in us? We are taught of him to love him. It is like the natural affection which parents have to their children, such a kind of affection will it be if you love the Lord, you will do that which is good in his sight with a kind of naturalness and readiness, you will be carried to the duties of his service as the fire is carried upwards, and not as stones are carried upwards with the force of another, but you will do them readily, and cheerfully; you will not do good duties as being hailed to them, and put on to do them, but you will be zealous of good works, that is, you will have a burning desire in your hearts, longing after them, you shall not need to have them forced upon you, but you will be forward to do them, you will be affected to good works as you are out of self-love to your own business. You know when a man naturally loveth himself, when he is to do something that concerns his own good, how solicitous is he about it, and how provident forecasting how to bring it to pass, and if any rub be in the way it troubleth him, if there be any fair passage, and likelihood of achieving it, he

rejoiceth. Now, if you love the Lord naturally and truly, you will go about his business as you go about your own, if there be any business to be done: Magistrates in their place, Ministers in their place, and every man indeed shall find some business to do, wherein he may bring glory to God's name, and advantage to his cause. Consider now how you are stirred about it, do you go about this business, are you so industrious and laborious, do you project it, do you mind it as your own? You will not stand expostulating the matter, to say must I do it? And is it of necessity? But if it be a thing that tends to the advancing of the glory of God, you will do it with all readiness, you will not so much stand upon this, what wages shall I have? And what profit shall I gain? But as a loving woman to her husband, she is glad to do anything for her husbands good, she is satisfied with this, that she hath an opportunity to do something; so it will be with you, if your hearts be rightly affected, you will then do things after this manner.

You will say, How shall we know this love? This is a nice and curious point to love the Lord thus naturally.

You shall know it by these two things:

First, by the evenness of your carriage towards the Lord; for what a man doth naturally, he doth with a kind of equality, with a kind of evenness: so that, as we say, an uneven pulse is a sign of a deadly and dangerous distemper within; so I say, when you find an unevenness in your carriages to the Lord, that you are off and on with him, that sometimes you do a thing for him, and anon you will do for your lusts, this is a sign that you love not naturally; feigned things are for the most part unequal: because when a man doth not do a thing naturally, he cannot hold out; a man cannot dissemble so well, but at one time or other he will discover himself; what a man doth naturally, and heartily, he is like himself in it still. Therefore when there is

such an unevenness in your ways, (some will be very forward in a good cause, now in a good mood, and then out of it again) it is a sign you love not the Lord thus naturally, for then you would be even in your carriage towards him.

Add to this the continuance of it; for if you love the Lord with a natural affection, you will hold out, and be constant in it. The second and third ground went far in their profession, but their inconstancy showed that they loved not the Lord with a natural love, this discontinuing is a sign that your love is not true. I beseech you examine yourselves by these things whether you love the Lord; remember what I said the last day, do you desire that your sins should be utterly destroyed? Do you not dally with sin? Would you not have some remainders within you? Nay, I will go a step further with you, do you not hate the Lord?

You will say, God forbid that we should do so, I hope we are not in that condition.

My brethren, first you must know that there are many that do hate the Lord: in Rom. 1, amongst others those are reckoned up, Haters of God: Therefore it is certain that there are many, and many of those that come to Church, many that think well of themselves, and that others think well of too, that yet are haters of the Lord. You will say, how shall we know that?

I will ask you but this (to bring this likewise into examination, and so to conclude) I say, examine yourselves by this:

Do you not desire that there were no God? examine your hearts whether if this news were brought, that you might live at liberty, that you might do what you would, that you might satisfy your lusts in all things, that there were no God to call you to account, to reward you according to your doings, whether it would not be acceptable news to many of you? Now it is

certain, if you would not have the Lord to be, you hate him; for whomsoever you would have taken out of the way, such a man you hate.

And besides this, consider whether you do not look upon the Lord as upon a judge, whether you do not all that you do to him as one that looks upon a judge: If you fear the Lord in this manner, it is certain you hate him: for those whom you thus fear you hate, and that you shall find in 1 John. 4. If you fear, saith he, you love not; for perfect love casts out fear: when you look upon God as upon a strict judge, and that is it that puts you on to do all that you do, that is it that makes you keep a good conscience in secret: for this you may do, and yet look upon God as a judge, to fear with this kind of fear is a sign you hate the Lord; for whom you fear, you hate.

Besides this, Do you not look upon God and upon his ways as contrary to your hearts? That your hearts, and the ways of God are in an opposition, your hearts, and sanctifying the Sabbath will not agree; the Lord would have your speeches to be good and holy, he would have you not only abstain from evil, but to hate it, to have your hearts rise up against it: Are not these commandments contrary to you? Consider but that holiness that is expressed in the book of God, and that is expressed also in the lives of the Saints, who carry his Image stamped on them, and is there not a kind of contrariety between your ways and theirs, between your hearts and them? If there be, it is a certain sign of hatred: for wheresoever there is contrariety, there is hatred. Examine yourselves by this, and see whether you do not hate the Lord.

And yet, to come to one more, if you love pleasures more than God, and wealth more than God, you hate God: For so you have it, Mat. 6. No man can serve two Masters, but either he must hate the one and love the other, &c. That is, when you love other things, though you think you do not hate

the Lord, yet, I say, in that you love pleasures, and love the world, and the things of the world, in that you love your lusts, and the objects of them; in doing this, you hate the Lord. Now if this be your case, if upon these exhortations that I have propounded, if upon these rules of examining yourselves, you find that you do not love the Lord, if this be your condition, (as it is your wisdom to deal strictly with yourselves; for hence it is, brethren, that the souls of men perish, because they will not see and search into their estates, they will not come to this examination of themselves, it is a painful thing to them, men are backward to examine themselves in private; what is the reason of that phrase in the Psalm, Examine yourselves upon your beds, but because examination should be when a man is most retired? I say, if you find it to be so, as it is the case of many) then it should open a window to you, to see what you have deserved at the Lord's hands, how just it were that the Lord should cast you off: For when you are enemies to the Lord, can you think much at it? My brethren, what a condition is that man in, that hath the great God of heaven and earth to be his enemy?

And besides this, have you not reason to justify God in his just judgments upon others, when you shall see God sharply plaguing them? It may seem to you that it is a hard thing that men should be so punished; but when we consider that they are haters of God, that they are enemies to him, you may justify God in that he doth.

But, to conclude, you ought to humble yourselves, if upon these trials you find yourselves to be lovers of the world, and not lovers of God. And you that are young, and put off repentance, it should move you to come in betimes: For if this be required of you to love the Lord, and you shall not be exempted from death when it comes, though you be never so able, and

never so strong and lustly; what condition do you think you will be in, if you die enemies to God, and haters of him, as you needs must be, if you love him not. And if you think you have time enough hereafter to settle your affections; Consider, is it in your own power, though you have warning before death, to have this affection of love? You may do many good duties, you may be sorry and repent for your sins; but though you do this, and a thousand times more, yet if you have not this love-wrought in you by God, if it come not from heaven, if it be not the fruit of his own Spirit, all your repentance, and all your forsaking of sin, all your doing of duties, the change of your courses is nothing, the Lord regards it not, unless you have this naturalness of love. I have stood therefore the longer upon it, and upon this part concerning examination, because it is a matter of great moment. We should have come to the next part concerning exhortation, which we would not disjoin, because it is very useful and profitable; but we cannot do it now, but reserve it for the afternoon.

FINIS.

SERMON VI.

GAL. 5:6.
For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by Love.

And before we leave this point, one thing I must add For what reason do we put you upon this disposition, upon this examination, whether the love of God be in your hearts or no? The reason is not that you should be discouraged, that (you should be put off from coming to God, that you should be grieved with the sight of the want of your love, but the end of it is to stir you up to get it, if you want it. You know, we have formerly delivered some means of getting it, only there is one which we will commend unto you, which we gave a little touch on but could not handle it, and it consists of these Three branches; if you would love the Lord:

First you must know him, for otherwise you cannot love him. As it is in natural love that is bred between man and man, you say love ariseth from sight, they must see before they can love; so you must know the Lord, there must be a sight of God by faith, before you can love him. And every man

that sees him and knows him as he is will love him, he cannot choose, for that is the Lord's work to all the Saints. Jer. 31, You shall he taught of me, and you shall know me from the greatest to the least. It may be in some manner they knew God before, but although a man have never so exact knowledge of him, yet till he be a regenerate man, he never knows him indeed it is another kind of knowledge that he hath, when a man is regenerate; when God teaches him to know him, he looks on God with another eye, everything is presented to him after another manner, he sees now another beauty in God than ever he saw before, he sees another excellency in him: for that knowledge he had of him before bred not love. But when a man is once within the Covenant, the Lord will teach him such a knowledge of himself, as withal will work the love of him. Such a knowledge you must have of the Lord, and you may help yourselves to love him by reasoning, if ever you saw any excellency in any man, or in any creature, it did help you to love that creature. Think with yourselves there is more in God that made that creature. He that made the eye shall he not see? So he that wrought that excellency, shall not he have it in himself in a greater measure? Besides, you may consider how the Lord hath described himself, that he is most wise, most merciful, and full of kindness, and gentleness, and abundant in truth, as you know that description in Exod. 34.

Go through all the virtues, and excellencies that are amiable, if you look in the Scripture, you shall find them to be in the Lord. This serious consideration will help you, to increase your knowledge of the Lord, and by consequent your love of him. So that, if you would come to love a man, what is it that causeth you to love him, but because by his speech, and by his carriage and behavior, you come to have such an apprehension of his disposition, he hath a mind thus framed, thus qualified, thus beautified?

When you conceive such an Idea of him, you love him. So, when you apprehend the Lord aright, when you observe him as he is described in his word, when you observe his doings, when you consider his works, and learn from all these together a right apprehension of him, I say, when you have such an Idea of him, such an opinion of him, then the will follows the understanding, and the affections then follows, then you come to love him, and to delight in him. Therefore learn to know the Lord by his former carriage towards your selves, how kind he hath been, how exceeding patient, how exceeding ready to forgive, how much kindness he hath showed, how hath he in mercy remembered you, though you have forgotten him; how you have recompensed him evil for good, yet he hath not broken off the course of his mercy towards you. Consider his dealing with you, and learn by this to know the Lord, and this will be a means to increase in you the love of the Lord.

This is not all, there is another thing, which is the second branch that I told you of; that is, to look upon God as one suitable to you, and to your disposition. For if you should find never so much excellency in him, if he be not agreeable to you, you love him not. A woman may see a man that she thinks is very excellent, in many respects, yet he is not a fit husband for her. It is the suitableness and agreeableness between God and our own condition, that causeth us to love him. Therefore when you put these two together, consider the Lord's mercy, and see that, and look on yourselves as sinful men needing that mercy; when you see the Lord exceeding powerful, and look on yourselves as very weak, needing that power; when you look on him as the Lord of life, and see yourselves subject to death, and needing that life; when you see your own folly, and his wisdom, (go through all in him, and then again look upon the contrary weakness in yourselves) this is

that which will make you apprehend God as one that is suitable, as one that is agreeable to you; and till you come to this, you shall never love him, and long after him, till the heart namely is thus framed, till a man is humbled, till he comes to the sight of himself: for as you must know God, so you must know yourselves before you can love him. I say, when a man comes to that, he begins to look on God as upon one agreeable to him: As, take a man, who is touched with the sense of his sins, whose heart is broken, who hath an apprehension of God's wrath, and of his own unworthiness, such a man now will be satisfied with nothing in the world, but the assurance of God's love and his favor. As you see in natural things, let a man be very weary, the daintiest meat in the world, whatsoever you give him, will not heal him; but he must have that which is fit for that particular defect, nothing will help him but rest. Again, let a man be hungry, and faint for want of meat; all the music, the best air, or whatsoever you can give him will do him no good, it must be meat that must help him. If a man have a disease, it is not sleep, it is not meat and drink, it must be a medicine that is fit for his disease. So it is with the heart of man, when his heart is so broken, so humbled and touched with the sense of his sins, that he longs after nothing but remission, nothing but the assurance of God's favor, the assurance of his love and kindness, nothing will satisfy him but that: it is so in natural defects, and so it is in the soul, when the heart of a man is so fashioned, that it looks upon God as one agreeable to him, and there is nothing else suitable but only the Lord, and his favor, and his love, that is required, to breed this love in you towards him. What is the reason else, that it is said, Hosea 5, ult. When they are afflicted they will seek me diligently. But because afflictions teach a man to know himself, it teacheth him to know his own weakness, to see his own sin, his own impotency, his own

unworthiness; and when he hath done this, then he looks upon God as one who only is fit for him, as one who is only able to help him. Affliction doth but discover what was there before: For man is a weak and impotent creature, made for the Lord, he is nothing without the Lord, it is the conjunction with God that makes him up, only he knows not this, he understands not this.

Therefore when God opens a man's eyes either by the immediate work of his Spirit, to teach him to know himself, or by affliction, then he comes to seek after the Lord, when they are afflicted, they will seek me diligently. If thou shouldest have such an offer as was made to those, Acts 2. Peter tells them there, they should have remission of sins, they should receive the gift of the holy Ghost; if this had been offered to them before they knew themselves, before they had been humbled and pricked at the heart, as it is said they were, would they have regarded such an offer as this? No they would not, although they had understood that offer never so well. So I say, though you know his name and his excellent attributes never so perfectly, yet till you come to know yourselves too, you will never love him, you will never desire him, you will never long after him: for both these must go together, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves, to teach you to love him. The knowledge of God, without the knowledge of yourselves, is a fruitless speculation: And again the knowledge of yourselves, and your own misery, without the knowledge of him and his mercy, is a miserable vexation. The knowledge of God, without knowledge of yourselves, is, as if a man should know a medicine, but should not know what defect it were fit to supply: And to know yourselves and your own case, without him, is to have the disease discovered, and not to know how to help it. And therefore learn to know both God and yourselves: If you will

love him, then you must learn to study those two. We say scholars study books, and Politicians study men; but a Christian should study God and himself, to learn to know God and himself better, by this means he comes to know the Lord: as wheresoever you find any love to the Lord expressed, you shall find these two going together, as David oft, Psal. 18, and Psal. 116. I love the Lord, &c. Why? For I was in distress, I was in grief, the grave overtook me, and I was compassed about with death, and I cried to the Lord, and he healed me, and set me at liberty, he is my fortress, &c. That is, when David saw himself to stand in need, he saw his weakness, and looked on God again, as one that would help him, and heal him, as one that could set him at liberty; this caused him to say, I love the Lord dearly. So Paul, when he saw these two, I was a blasphemer, I was a persecutor, and looked on Christ, who had been merciful to him, with faith, this was that which caused Paul so to abound in love towards Christ. And so Mary, Luk. 1. My soul doth magnify the Lord: And why? For he had respect to the low estate of his handmaid: I was poor and mean, and loe he hath raised me to a high degree. This suitableness, this knowledge of God and of ourselves is that which breeds in us a love of him. But is this enough now to know God and ourselves? This is a fair step to beget in you this love of him; for as you heard before, love is an inclination of the heart to some good thing agreeable to us:

But yet you must have a third, or else this will not do, that is, assurance of the Lord's love to you: for if you long after him never so much, if you think him worthy to be desired; on the other side, yet if for all this you are not persuaded of the Lord's love to you, you cannot be affected towards him. We cannot love any man whom we conceive to be ill affected to us: And therefore you shall see in the course of the Scriptures, love proceeds from

faith, faith must beget love, that is, the assurance of God's love must go in: This is the third ingredient to make it up.

You will say to me, we doubt not of this, but if we be persuaded of God's love, we shall love him; but how shall we come to this persuasion, how shall we assure ourselves of his love?

Those to whom I should speak now are of two sorts; either such as are out of the Covenant, or such as are already within it. For you that are without, to you I say, you may, if you will consider it, come to the assurance of his love towards you.

For first, the Lord hath made known his own willingness to take you to marriage. There are but two that are to give their consent, the Father to give his Son, and the Son to give his own consent: The Father, you know, hath given his consent, Isaiah 9:6. A Son is given: He so loved the world, that he gave his Son. Therefore certainly you have the Fathers consent, he hath given Christ, as a father gives his son in marriage. But now whether we have the Sons consent or no, of that we make question; saith the Apostle, He loved us, and gave himself to us, and for us; yea he not only gives his consent, for his part, but he hath purchased his wife with his own blood. And therefore you cannot doubt but that he is willing to marry with you, to take you, and to receive you if you will come in. Why then, what is required now? Nothing at all but thy consent, if thou give thy consent to the Lord, thou needest not to question his favor, thou mayest assure thyself of his unchangeable love in Jesus Christ; for he hath revealed it on his part, in his word, you have his sure word for that, heaven and earth shall pass rather than that word. This is the sound consolation that will not fail you, when you come to examination, and think with yourselves, upon what ground am I assured of God's affection towards me, that he loves me: I have his word

for it, he hath said it, and he cannot recall it, yea he hath added his oath, that by two immutable witnesses you might have strong consolation; that is, that you might have the greatest degree of assurance that can be. Why, now, why doest not thou give thy consent? Why doest thou no more rest on it? You will say, alas I am willing to give my consent, if that would do it.

But first, I am unfit to marry the Lord, I am not prepared for such a match as that is, my heart is too bad, and my life hath been too sinful to think of such preferment and advancement.

Take thou no care for that, the Lord knew thy unfitness, when he made that promise to thee, when he gave his Son; and the Son gave himself to thee, he was well enough acquainted with thee, and with thy nature, he had an intention to marry a black-moor, he justifieth the wicked, he knows thou art so, and yet he will do it, he will put a fairness, he will put a beauty upon thee, when thou art his wife; therefore let not that hinder thy unfitness.

You will say again, it may belong to such and such, it doth not belong to me; my case is such, I have provoked him in this manner, my sins are of such a nature.

This shall not shut thee out neither. For why shouldst thou make exceptions where the Lord makes none. Go, Preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven. What is the meaning of that? That is, go tell every man, without exception, whatsoever his sins be, whatsoever his rebellions be, go tell him this glad tidings; that is to preach the Gospel to him, that if he will come in, I will accept him, he shall be saved, his sins shall be forgiven him, if he do no more but come in, and take me and receive me. Therefore to conclude this, doubt not thou that that shall be a hindrance on God's part. And for thy own part, there is no more required of thee but sincerity, that thou take him, sincerely resolving to thyself I will serve him

for the future, I will be contented to be divorced from all my former loves, from all the sins that I have delighted in before, I am willing now to take him, and to serve him, and to love him, and to give myself wholly to him; I say, this sincerity of resolution is enough, there can be no hindrance if this be found in thee. Therefore do not think with thyself, I want sorrow for my sins, such a degree of sorrow, my heart is not broken enough, and therefore I am not fit: for thou must know thus much, that the promise is made to the coming, and not to the preparations. If thou canst come, and take the Lord, it is enough, if a man have so much sorrow, so much heart-breaking as brings him home to Christ, as makes him willing to match with the Lord: if he have that wrought in him, doubt he not of the other.

But now I come to the other, those that are already within the Covenant, to you I say, you may much more easily and fully come to this assurance, because ye have the fruits of the Spirit in you, which are the seals of his love; you have cause to trust perfectly through the grace that is revealed in Jesus Christ: you know that exhortation, Trust perfectly to the grace revealed, &c. that is, in the free offer to every man by Christ; trust not in that by halves, remissively, and unperfectly, and weakly, but trust perfectly, be confident in that, that the Lord will thus receive you, trust perfectly in the grace revealed.

But, you will say, I commit many sins from day today, I am negligent in many duties, I find much unevenness in my life, many distempers in my affections, &c?

What if you find all this in yourselves? Yet so long as your hearts are sincere, you must know this, that every breach, every offense doth not break the band of wedlock between the Lord and you, you must not think there is a breach of covenant between God and you upon every sin that is

committed, but know that the Covenant holds good, till you come to choose another husband, the Lord continues your husband still. Therefore when thou art married to the Lord, it is not for thee to think then of questioning the match, but study to please thy husband, and to do thy duty. You know, there may be many offenses, and many slight breaches between a man and his wife, but the bond holds good, there is no bill of divorcement except it be in case of adultery, that she choose another husband: so think, in such a case, the bond is not broken upon every offense, and every sin that is committed. Learn to know this for thy comfort, for it is a great matter to have this assurance full.

And besides consider this, think not with thyself, because I have not attained such a degree of holiness as another hath, therefore I have none at all, that is an evil reason that discourageth the Saints, discourageth many times those that should be encouraged, that are already within the Covenant; he looks on another, and sees he cannot reach him, he propounds to himself such a measure of grace and of holiness, and of mortification of his lusts, and he cannot come near it; and he thinks, because I cannot do this, I have no sincerity in me. Not so, there are degrees, when a man is within the door, he may go further and further, and though all may be within, yet one may be further in than another.

Besides all this, know that the Lord is faithful, he cannot deny himself, though thou fail on thy part, yet he continues the same, and renews his mercy to thee, as thou renewest thy repentance. But, to conclude this, if you would love the Lord, labor to do these three things:

Labor to know him more:

Labor to know yourselves more, that so you may long after him as after one that you need.

And thirdly, labor to get this assurance, for it is this assurance that breeds the love, that seals it up; when a man shall look on God as one who may hate him for anything he knows, who may be an enemy to him one day, he can never love him heartily: When a man hath no ground to set his foot on, he will do it tenderly and warily; but when he looks upon God as one whom he may trust, whose love he is sure of, that he builds on that as a rock, this is that which makes his heart perfect to him, when he can say, as Paul, I know whom I have trusted. If a man have never so much excellency in him, if you conceive him to be hollow-hearted to you, your affections are not perfect towards him; so is it, if you look on God as one that may be your enemy As we say, friendship with Princes, it is like that familiarity that those men have with Lions, that keep them. A Lyon, you know, will suffer a man to play with him as long as he lists, and when he lists, he will rise and devour him, and rend him in pieces; so I say, the love of a Prince may be, and the love of men may be: But the love of the Lord is not such, when he loves, he loves perfectly. It is true, he hath the strength of a Lyon, he is able to do it, you are weak creatures subject to him, but he hath that constancy in him, that when he loves once, it is always perfect, and unchangeable. Let all these be well considered and wrought on your hearts, and it will be a means to beget this love in you: Even as fire begets fire, so this will beget love in your hearts towards him again. So much for this.

The second point, which I intend to handle at this time is this; another conseqtary, another use we are to draw from this doctrine, He that loves not, is not in Christ.

The next use is to exhort you to come in, if it be a thing of that moment, now our business is to exhort to love the Lord Jesus. And is there not much reason to move you to it? If you had this love in your hearts, would it not be

a ground of much comfort to you? For if you were able to believe in Jesus Christ, and love him, you should have your salvation sure, if once you could find this disposition in yourselves, as it must be in you, if ever you be saved, that your hearts long after him, still you are growing towards him, hanging that way, as a stone to the center, as the iron to the loadstone, there is such a lingering after him, the heart makes towards him, and will have no denial; but, as the woman of Canaan, it breaks through all impediments, no bar can keep it from him: as those that love, they are not easily put off, but are importunate till they have obtained reciprocal affections of the party beloved.

I say, if thou find this disposition in thy heart, it is the greatest consolation that thou canst have in this world: for if this be thy case, thou mayest boldly look that the gates of hell shall not prevail against thee; and if thou love the Lord in this manner, heaven and earth shall pass rather than thy salvation shall be hindered: it is impossible, because then thou hast a good ground of hope, and hope will make thee not ashamed, but be assured that God is thine, and all that he can do, and all that is his is thine; as Paul tells us, his power, and his wisdom, and all is thine: He is a Sun and a shield to thee, thou shalt want nothing that is good, nothing that is evil shall hurt thee, the Lord brings all with him: this is your case if that you do love him, this is your consolation, this is that which may inflame your hearts with a desire of this affection. For know this, that there is scarcely anything else that we can instance in, but a hypocrite may go cheek by jowl with a good Christian, in that he may do all outward duties, he may abstain from sins, there may be a great change in him, (you know how far the third ground went, and those Heb. 6.) but this they cannot counterfeit, to love the Lord. Therefore, if thou find that thou love the Lord, thou hast this consolation, that thou art now

sure, and indeed thou art never till then sure. And as reason differenceth a man from a beast, so love makes the great difference between a Christian and another. Indeed we say it is faith, but you know that faith is differenced by love, that is, such a faith that breeds love, and so love is it that breeds that great consolation. And therefore this is thy comfort, if thou canst once bring thy heart to love the Lord, he will bear with anything, he will bear with many infirmities, as, you know, he did with David when he saw that he loved him. David had many great infirmities, as we see in the whole story, the whole relation of his life, yet because he loved the Lord, the Lord passed by all, and in the end he gave him this testimony, that he was a man after his own heart. So I say, love the Lord once, and he will bear with much in thee. On the other side, if thou do not love him, do what thou wilt, the Lord accepts it not. As we see in the case of Amaziah, it is said that Amaziah walked in all the ways of his father David, and of the good Kings, he did as much as they, he was as great an enemy to idolatry, he did all the duties of religion, only this was wanting, he did it not with an upright heart, that is, he did it not out of love, and therefore the Lord regarded it not. And therefore let this move you to get this affection; there is much, if I could stand to press it, that might inflame your hearts with a desire of it: only it is this love that sets a price on all that you do, that makes all that you do currant; as this stamp is set on your actions more or less, so they are more or less acceptable. This was that which set a price on the widows mite, that set a price on a cup of cold water; this set a price upon Abel's offering, and made it more acceptable than his brothers: the meanest service when it hath this stamp on it is currant and good in God's sight, he accepts it: again, the greatest performance without it, is nothing. And if thou give thy body to be burned, if thou suffer martyrdom, if thou give all thy goods to the poor; do

what thou wilt without love, it is nothing, thy labor is lost: this love sets a price on all that thou doest.

Besides this, consider, this is that that must stir you up above all other arguments, that if thou love the Lord, thou shalt be no looser by it, in all other love a man seems to be a looser, for, when you love another, as you know it is no love except it be fruitful and active, when you bestow on another your time, and your pains, and your money, you know, you have so much the less yourself: And therefore it is that men are so full of self-love, because that engrosseth all, a man in that keeps all to himself, when he comes to love another, and partes with something of his own. And thence it is that men are so backward to love, in truth and in good earnest. They love in show and in complement, that is easy, but to love indeed is difficult, because it takes somewhat from them. But in loving the Lord, it is not so, there is a difference between that and other loves when you give the Lord your hearts, and bestow them on him, he will give you them every jot again, and reserve not any for himself. You will ask me, what is the meaning of this? My meaning is this, whatsoever you bestow on the Lord, all the love that you give to him, it reflects and redounds to your advantage, you gain by it all: as we see, Isa. 48:17. I am the Lord that teacheth thee to Profit, for if thou keep my commandments, thy reward, thy prosperity should be as a flood, and thy rejoicing as the waves of the Sea. Mark it well, as if he should say to them, when I command you to serve me, and to love me with all your soul, and with all your strength, know, that all this is for your own profit, it shall all redound to you. For, if you keep my commandments, your prosperity shall be as a flood, that is, it shall run over the banks, it shall be so large, and so great, and your righteousness, that is, the reward of your righteousness, as the waves of the sea, that is, one reward should follow

upon the neck of another, as one billow follows upon the neck of another. This should be your case, saith he, if you love me and keep my commandments, and serve me: And therefore saith he, when I require your love and your service, herein there is a difference between that, and that which any man requires at your hands; all this is for your own profit, it redounds to yourselves, yourselves fare the better for it: as it is said of the Sabbath, so I may say of this commandment, and all the rest, it was made for man, and not man for this, that is, for the profit of man, for the advancement of man, thy loving the Lord is for thy advantage, thou gainest by it; as it is, Deut. 5:29. Oh, saith he, that there were a heart in this people, to love me, and to fear me, as they have promised, then it should go well with them, and their children after them. Not that I might be a gainer, and you lose, but that it might go well with you and your children forever. So, if you love the Lord, when you think with yourselves, I shall be a loser by it, I shall lose much liberty, and much contentment and delight, I shall lose the giving satisfaction to many of my desires and lusts: No, thou shalt lose none of this, though a man seem to lose this when he gives his heart to the Lord, but thou gainest all this, that is, the Lord gives thee thy heart again, and gives thee leave to dispose of it, he gives thee leave to love thy friends, to love thy wife and thy children, and even to love thy recreations; he gives thee leave to dispense and to distribute thy heart to this or to that, as long as thou doest it lawfully, only thou must do it at his command.

Yea, when we give our hearts to the Lord, he gives us not them again only, but he gives them much better than he received them, new painted, new beautified and new furnished, he gives them in a far better condition: there is no man that loseth by giving his heart to the Lord, but he gives it him again much better. As we say of vapors that arise out of the earth, the

heavens return them again in pure water, much better than they received them, so will the Lord: if thy heart ascend to him, thy impure, thy sinful heart, the Lord will give it thee better. As we say of earth, when the earth receives the sea water, and puddle water, it gives it better than it received it in the springs and fountains; for it strains the water and purifies it, that whereas when it came into the bowels of the earth, it was muddy, salt, and brinish, it returns pure, and clean, and fresh, as, you know, the waters of the springs and fountains are: so the Lord doth with us; if thou wouldest give thy hearts desire, thy affections to him, thou shouldest have all again, only with this difference, thy affections should be more pure, thy thoughts, all the faculties of thy soul should be renewed, and cleansed, and beautified, he would restore them better to thee, but yet thou shouldest have them; let it be thy comfort. So that here is all the difference, take a man now that loves himself, and that thinks with himself, Well, say what you will, I will go mine own ways, I will provide for mine own contentment in this life, I know not what I shall have after, I will look to mine own profit: I say, compare this man with another, that resolves this with himself, Well, from hence I will deny myself, and cross myself, and will seek no more my own contentment, nor to satisfy my own desires and lusts, but I will give my heart wholly to the Lord. The question now is, which of these are gainers? I say, the latter hath as much liberty and as much power of his own heart, he shall have as much use of all that is within him, as the other hath, that takes it to himself: all the difference is, the one is an unjust owner, the second the Lord hath made the steward of his own heart; so that the Lord hath thy heart, and yet it is thy own heart, thou mayest dispose of it as a steward under thy Master, thou hast it as before, only now thou doest it by his

appointment, before it was at thine own. Let all this therefore stir you up to love the Lord.

You will say, indeed this is enough to persuade us to come in, to love the Lord, and we are contented to do so; that is the answer which we shall have from most men. But now what kind of love is it that we shall have at their hands?

My brethren, we must add this for a conclusion, that it is not every kind of love that the Lord accepts: but your love must have these two conditions in it. I will briefly name them and so conclude.

First, you must love him with all your hearts, and with all your soul, you know that is everywhere required in the Scriptures. That is, the Lord will have the whole stream of your affections, and desires, and intentions, and your endeavors to run to him; there must not any riveret run out of it, it must not be drained away, but the whole stream must all be bestowed upon him, there must be no division there, you must not say here, as he saith, My Country, and my father, and my children, and my friends have a part in my love, but the Lord must have all, and there is good reason for it, because he bestowed all on you. It is in this love as it is in marriage, in that there is no corival admitted, but there must be all in all: for the husband must bestow himself wholly on his wife, and the wife on the husband; so if you love the Lord, if the match be made between you, there is all in that equality; if the Lord bestow all on you, and you should bestow but half on him, there would be no equality, there would be an unevenness. But when you bestow all on him, when you love him with all your heart, and with all your soul, that makes the match between you.

You will say, the Lord doth not bestow himself wholly on me, he bestows himself on many others, on many thousands besides me, and why should

not I bestow myself on another?

I answer, it is not so, the Lord bestows himself wholly on thee. Hos. 3:3, it is a borrowed speech, I will be to thee alone, and I will have thee to be so to me; so the Lord saith to every man, I will be alone to thee, and thou shalt be alone to me. I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine. This is the match that must be between you. And when you say the Lord is not wholly yours, I say, he is, though he bestow himself on many thousands besides. You will ask, how can that be? I say, that may be by reason of his infiniteness; for that which is infinite hath not parts, and therefore he bestows not himself partly on one, and partly on another, but he bestows all upon everyone: for he is infinite, and hath no parts. To express myself by a similitude, a point hath no parts, it is one indivisible, let a thousand lines come to one point, everyone hath the whole, and yet there is but one that answers all, because it is indivisible, and everyone hath all: So it is with the Lord, though there be many thousands that God loves, yet everyone hath the Lord wholly, he is to them alone, and he looks for and expects this at thy hands, that thou shouldest be to him alone, that thou bestow thyself wholly on him; thereupon all those words are put in, Thou shalt love thy Lord with all thy mind, with all thy heart, with all thy soul. The meaning is this, when all that is in a man is set a work to serve the Lord, when he looks to the Lord, when he inclines towards the Lord, that is, when the mind is set on work to think on him, to remember his glorious works, to have a right knowledge and opinion of him: again, when the memory is set on work to remember him, and not to forget his benefits, his statutes and his ordinances, and so the rest of his faculties. And therefore if we love the Lord, we will not do this with ourselves, to think I love him, and yet I will suffer my mind, in the meantime, to be exercised in contemplating of fornication; not to think, I

love the Lord, and yet will suffer my memory, in the meantime, to be recollecting injuries and breeding of them, and recalling my pleasant sins that are formerly past, that I should abhor, thou canst not love him and do this. Again, thou must not say, I love him, and yet let thy affections run after this and that, but thy whole heart must be bestowed on him: Thou must not think to love him, and to reserve thy affections for this or that particular thing that thou lovest inordinately, but thou must bestow all these on the Lord.

The second thing required in this love, wherewith I will end, is this, that you love the Lord with all your might. You will say, what is the meaning of that, to love the Lord with all my might, and with all my strength? For the understanding of this, you must know that God hath given different might and different strength to men; as a rich man hath more might than another: for he can rule more, and sway more, and command more than a poor man can. Again, a Magistrate, he can restrain by his power, and encourage men by his authority, and win them, yea compel them by his example. Again, a learned man, that is of great parts, that is of a stronger wit than another, he hath more might than another, he is able to do more than a man of weaker parts. Now to love the Lord with all our might, is to improve all the means we have, all the strength, all the ability that we have above others, to improve it so, that we may serve the Lord with it more than others, that even as thou exceedest any in these abilities, so thou mayest go beyond them in serving the Lord: This is to love the Lord with all thy might, that is, to love him so much more than a poor man, to bestow more on him, to do more for him, as thy riches make thee more able, and more strong than another. For thee to love him now as another man doth that hath less might, the Lord will not take this love at thy hands; but will say to thee as

Landlords say to their Tenants, when they bring them less rent than they should, less than is due, they will receive none; for they say, so much is due. The Lord will require this, that you love him with all your might. If thou be a rich man, if thou be a Magistrate, if thou be a man of such and such opportunities to serve the Lord, and do but a little, he will not accept it at all: thou must love the Lord with all thy might, for God requires this at thy hands, he leaves it not arbitrary. He saith, To whom much is given, of him much shall be required. He saith not, I leave it to him, to do more or less, but I require it, that is, I will exact it according to the measure he hath received. Therefore consider with thyself, what means thou hast, what power God hath put into thy hands, what ability thou hast more than others. When you send a servant to market, as you give him a greater price, as you put more money into his hands, so you expect he should bring home more than another that hath a less price put into his hands: So the Lord doth with men, he sends men into the world, as men are sent to a market, he gives a larger price to some, to some he gives five talents, to some three, to some two, the Lord expects that they should bring home according to the price they have in their hands, that is, according to the might, according to the strength and opportunity he hath given them. For, you must know, that the Lord observes an exact difference between man and man. It may be, thou livest under better means than another, thou hast had better education than another, thou hast more knowledge in the ways of God than another, the Lord hath helped thee more by the inward suggestions of his Spirit than another, he looks that thou shouldest bring forth more fruit than another. And so again for all other abilities and advantages: the Lord expects at our hands that we love him with all our might, otherwise, saith he, you might have given my money to the exchangers, and they would have made use of

it. Mark that in the Parable of the Talents; for a man will be ready to say, if I bestow some love on the Lord, why should he exact and require the utmost, why doth he require so much at my hands? Yes, saith he, if another had this might, if another had this strength, and this opportunity that thou hast, he would have done as exchangers do, he would have brought it in with profit; so if that ability were given to another, he would make use of it: And therefore think not much, if he require it at thy hands, for there is loss if he should not. Therefore know that the Lord requires this at thy hands, it may be thou art more composed, and more disposed than another, it is nothing for thee to abstain from drinking, to abstain from swearing, because thou art framed this way by natural ingenuity, and natural temper that God hath given thee, it is not that the Lord requires no more, but that thou live soberly, free from gross sins: No, God looks for more, he requires of every man according to his strength and ability. As, you know, a child may run, and another man may walk, the child takes more pains, the man less; if the reward were to be given according to the endeavor, the child should have it, though he that walks come to the goal before him.

A man that is weak may not do so much as another that is strong, and able to do ten times as much work as another man that is weak; though thou do more work than he, this is not accepted, because he looks that every man should do his utmost, he requires that you should love him, and serve him, and set yourselves to improve all your ability according to the might, according to the Talent, according to the price he hath distributed and measured to you.

So much for this time.

FINIS.

SERMON VII.

GAL. 5:6.
For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by Love.

The last thing that we entered upon was the conditions that God requires in our love to him, we went through two of them the last time, we come now to that which remains.

Thirdly, you shall find this to be another condition in our love to the Lord, to love him above all, that is, incomparably above all: For, my brethren, we may love many things in the world, we may love ourselves, we are commanded to love our brethren as ourselves; but this is peculiarly required to the love of God, if it be right in us, and such as the Lord expects at our hands, that we love him above all, for otherwise we do not love him as God, we love him as a creature: for to say we love him as God, and yet not to love him above all, is a contradiction.

Besides, if we should not reckon him as the chief good, and so prize him above all, something would offer itself one time or another to us, and draw

our affections to it, and then we should leave the Lord, and take that: Therefore I say, it is required that we love the Lord above all. For every kind of love is not sufficient, as we see it in other things; that love that will serve a servant, or a common friend, will not serve for a wife, it is another kind of love; that love that will serve for one will not serve for another: A Parent, a King, and a Master, as they have different relations, so they must be love with different kinds of love. Now then consider what love it is that belongs to the Lord, he must have all, he must have a love that answers him: otherwise if thou come with a little pittance of love, and say, Lord, I am willing to bestow this upon thee, the Lord will refuse it, he will answer, I will take none of these things at your hands: Even as landlords do with their tenants, when they bring not all their rent, they refuse it and reject it, because it is not that which they require, and which is due. Even so the Lord deals with us, as he did with the young man in the Gospel, saith he, Go and sell all that thou hast: My brethren, it was not the act of selling, but it was the affection that was required. Therefore Christ did but try his affection by it; and it was performed by the wise Merchant that sold all, this the Lord requires that we love him above all.

And there is good reason for it, for he is most excellent and most amiable of all.

Besides, I am sure he hath done for us more than all, as Paul speaks, Was Paul crucified for you? Hath not Christ bought you, hath not he redeemed you, hath not he deserved more than all, and should he not therefore be loved above all?

Again, is he not the uttermost end, are not all natures else subordinate? God as he is above all, so should we have a love answerable unto him.

But you will object, What, to love God above myself, how can I do that?

Yes my brethren, and there is good reason for that too, because in so doing we provide best for our selves; it is not so with the creature, if you set your love upon it, if you love any creature above yourselves, it may be the destruction of yourselves: But the Lord can provide for you and repair you again when the creature is destroyed for the Lord's sake, when a man is a loser for anything that he doth for the Lord, he is a great gainer by it; for it is the rule that God hath appointed the creature, and the perfection of every creature is in coming near to the rule. Now when the Lord hath appointed this to love him above ourselves, in so doing we cannot choose but provide best for our selves, because therein lies our excellency and perfection. This is therefore another property of this love, we must love God above all, above all riches, above all profits, above all honor and credit, above all learning and delight, above ourselves and our lusts: Therefore you shall find it in the phrase of Scripture how it runs, those that love pleasures more than God, those that love the praise of men more than God, those that love wealth more than God, you see how they are excluded.

You shall see what it is, not to love the praise of men more than God, it is this, when they come together at sometimes in competition, as they will ever and anon, still to prefer God before them. As for example, the Lord hath commanded you to sanctify the Sabbath, to pray continually, the least thou canst do is to do it evening and morning, and to do it diligently. Now when thy profits and thy business, or thy ease shall come and thrust thee off from such a duty, now they come together, and here they meet upon a narrow bridge as it were; if thou shalt now prefer thy profits and thy business before the service of the Lord, thou art a lover of thy wealth more than of him. You may bring it to many such examples.

So again the Lord hath commanded to be diligent in your callings, to improve the time to the best advantage, for you shall give an account for it is one of the most precious talents you have: Now if pleasures and sports, and recreations shall come in and allure you, and call you, to draw you away to spend time amiss, now they come in competition; if ye do this ordinarily, you are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

So again, God hath commanded thee that thou shouldest not commit adultery, that thou shalt not kill, that thou shalt forbear to revenge, and the like: Now if any lust shall come and stand in opposition to such a command, if thou prefer this before it, thou art a lover of thyself and of thy lusts before God.

In a word, go through any such thing, wherein God and thy lusts, thy pleasure or thy profits come in competition, when thou shalt in thy ordinary course be ready to prefer that before him, thou lovest that before him, thou lovest that before the Lord; and though thou think that thou lovest God, yet notwithstanding know this, that that is not sufficient, thou must love him above all.

And if you say, who is able to perform this? Who is it that doth not at sometimes prefer his pleasures and profits before the obedience to a command?

I answer, it is a thing that hath been done and is done by all the Saints: Therefore if you look into Deut. 30:6, saith the Lord, I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, and thou shalt love me with all thy heart: He speaks it there of a thing that is acted indeed, of a thing that is to be done by those that are regenerate, I will circumcise you, and then you shall do it. And, my brethren, a man that hath the least measure of grace, if he be once in Christ, he loves God above all; that is, let a man be himself at any

time, let not his lusts get the upper ground of him, as sometimes it doth, when he is in passion and transported; indeed then fear may prevail as it did with Peter, and lusts may prevail as it did with David: But the meaning is, let a man be himself in his ordinary course, and still he prefers the Lord before anything in all his actions.

You will say, this is a thing that no man can do to love God above all.

Yes, my beloved, therefore you must understand it thus, that comparatively you may reach it; all those that are sanctified do love him above all, although there be many degrees of love you cannot reach unto, yet you love him above all: Even as it is in marriage, a man may love his wife with such a degree of Jove as is meet for her, yet there may be a greater degree of love, continuance of time may increase that love upon further knowledge, &c. So we may love the Lord above all, and yet come short of that degree that we may have after longer communion, and greater familiarity. So much for this third condition, to love him above all.

But yet this is not enough, we find another condition required in this love in the Eph. 3:17. That ye be rooted and grounded in love, that is, that as ye must not love the Lord by halves, so ye must not love him by fits and by starts, it must be a fixed love, a permanent love, you must be rooted and grounded in it, otherwise as it is said of him that is unstable in the faith, as Jam. 1:12. He is as a wave of the Sea, tossed too and froe, the same may be said of him that wavers in his love, he is tossed to and fro, that is sometimes he cometh with great purposes, with abundance of promises and resolutions, that seem as big as mountains, but stay a while and they come to nothing, they vanish away. Suppose it were thy own case, that a man should come to thee, with an expression of as much love, as that there could be no more for a day or two, but presently afterward, he is as strange as if

he had never seen thee, wouldest thou regard such a love as this? No surely, but as we use to do with frantic men, though that they be sober for a while, yet we reckon them frantic, because they are more constantly frantic, such account doth the Lord make of such, as do love him by fits and by flashes.

But you will say, who is there that is always at the same stay? It is true my brethren, I deny not but that the best of the Saints have their love sometimes in the full tide, and sometimes in the lowest ebb; but you must know that there is a great deal of difference between these degrees, and that love, that is as the morning dew and presently dried up again, therefore you must always remember, that this must be added to that that formerly hath been spoken, that ye must be rooted and grounded in love.

You will say how shall we do that?

Remember but these two things. Labor to be rooted and grounded in Faith, and then you shall be rooted and grounded in love, as in that place I named before in Eph. 3:17, he prayeth that Christ may dwell in their hearts by Faith, that so being rooted and grounded in love, they may comprehend &c. Let a man consider well upon what ground he hath persuaded himself of the Lord's favor and love to him, let him not build upon a hollow sandy foundation, but let him build the assurance of his salvation upon a rock, that is, let him examine his grounds to the bottom, let him search it well, let him consider all the objections that may be made against his assurance, and not give over till he be fully convinced, that the Lord his heart is perfect with him, and when he is thus rooted and grounded in faith, he will likewise be rooted and grounded in love.

Again, remember to pitch your love upon the person; not to love him for by-respects for other matters, but set your eye upon the very person of Christ, to behold him in his glory, in his pureness, in his attributes, in all his

excellencies, and so to love him, for that will continue; for if you love the Lord because he deals well with you, because you have hope he will save you, because you have escaped such and such judgments through his providence, if any of these be the ground of your love, these are mutable; but if you love him for himself, because of that amiableness that is in him; for my brethren, he is the same, there is no shadow of change in him. Therefore if you love him thus, your love will be constant; this was the case of Job, his love was right, he loved the very person of God, therefore he was willing to take good and evil at the hand of God, and yet his love remained sure: take another man that hath not known God, that is not acquainted with him, it may be when the Lord hath brought him into prosperity, he will forget the Lord, as Demas embraced the present world, the prosperity of such a man draws him from God. Another man, when persecutions and trials come, he forsakes the Lord, because indeed he pitched not his love upon his person, therefore he loves him not constantly. But to go on.

The next is that property ye shall find in the 1 Thess. 1:3. Diligent love: that is the last which I will name to you, I say, it must be a diligent love wherewith you love the Lord, and not an idle and negligent love, not a love that is in show only, but a love that is operative, for that God requires.

You will say, wherein should our love be diligent.

I answer, you must be diligent in preparing for the Lord's coming, that you may receive the King of glory, that he may enter into your hearts, for there is a diligence of love in that; to do as John the Baptist came to do, to prepare the way of the Lord, what was that? To bring down the mountains, and to raise up the valleys, that is, those high thoughts, those high lusts that stand in opposition against the Lord, that bar the door against him, that will

not let him enter into your hearts, bring down those mountains: again, the valleys must be raised up, that God may come and dwell in your hearts; the diligence of love is showed in opening to the Lord when he knocks, that when a thing shall be suggested to you, it is for the Lord's advantage to embrace it, for it is the nature of true love, it enlargeth and wideneth the heart.

Again, love is diligent in adorning itself, and beautifying the soul for the approach of the lover, such is this love that we speak of, it will make you make yourselves new creatures; express your diligence therefore in laboring to adorn your hearts with graces that the Lord may take a delight to dwell in you; be diligent also in cleansing yourselves from all pollution of flesh and spirit, that when the Lord cometh he may find no sluttish corner within you, for the Lord hateth these: As the Israelites were to go with a paddle, and cover every filthy thing, because, saith the text, The Lord walketh among you, so must we do, keep our hearts clean if we will have the Lord delight to dwell with us, we must be diligent to remove out of his sight whatsoever he hateth.

Lastly, we must be diligent in keeping his commands; wilt thou say thou lovest God, and yet doest disobey him and rebellest against him from day today? The Lord careth for no such love, for indeed love cannot be otherwise judged of than in obeying: to say thou lovest him, and keepest not his commands, it is but a dead love, and a picture of love, it is not love indeed, it is but as the Apostle saith, to do it in word, and not in truth; for when you love him in deed, you do the things he would have you to do: Therefore so much diligence in keeping his commands, so much love, he that doeth most loveth most. And so you see the conditions that are required

in this love, what a kind of love it is that God will have at your hands, or else he will not take it of you.

Now my brethren, there remains but one thing more, wherewith we will conclude this point, that is, now I have been so large in showing you what this love is, wherein you cannot blame us if we press you to it, because it is one of the greatest and most radical virtues, faith and love, therefore we have been the larger in describing it to you; I say now you have heard what it is, what remains but this, to show you the great danger in not loving? And that we will make to be the last conseq̄uence that we will draw from this doctrine:

I say, consider how dangerous a thing it is to neglect it; the Lord you see requires it upon pain of damnation, whatsoever you have, yet notwithstanding if you have not this love, you are not in Christ, and so you shall be excluded. Let no man think that this is exaction, that it is a hard thing that the Lord requires it with this exaction: for what is it that he requires? If he had required of you to offer sacrifice, as he did in the old law, then the poor man might have objected, he had not where withal; if he had required us to fight battles, the weak man might have said he could not do it, he was not able: but now young and old, rich and poor, all can love.

Besides if we consider who it is that requires this love, is it not the great God of heaven and earth? Is it not the Son? If he had commanded thee the hardest thing in the world, if he had said, thou shalt cast thyself into the fire, thou shalt sacrifice children to me, you are his creatures, and you must obey him: But when he requires this only at thy hands, to love him, is it not equal?

Besides, when he requires this, it is for your benefit, for when you have given the Lord your hearts, the Lord gives you them again; even as the

earth, the water it receives from the sea, it returns it better back again in springs and fountains, and pure streams; so doth the Lord give you your hearts back again, when you have bestowed them upon him, and withal he gives you leave to bestow them upon other things, to love all things that you may and ought to love, and which is good for you to love; therefore the Lord may require it upon this penalty, for he asks but his own, and what he hath deserved at thy hands, therefore it is a most reasonable and equal request. For what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, saith Moses, but only that you love the Lord your God? So I say to you, what else doth the Lord your God require of you?

But again know this, that as it is a command full of equity and reasonableness, so the danger is the greater if you do it not; and what that is I will show you but by one place, that is, 1 Cor. 16:22. Cursed is he that loves not the Lord Jesus, yea let him be had in execration to the death: That is the place I would have you consider, that now when you have been acquainted with this whole doctrine of love, you might know the danger of not performing and doing it; whosoever loves not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema Maranatha, he curseth him in two languages, to show that it is a peremptory curse.

But what is that to be cursed?

My brethren, to be cursed is to be separated, to be set apart or appointed unto evil, so that all that love not the Lord Jesus, they are men separated and set apart to evil, so that no man may meddle with them, no man may touch them to do them good, as the Saints and those that love the Lord they are set apart that no man may touch them for hurt; so it is here, when a man is cursed, the meaning is this, he is set apart, secluded from all good things, that none are to meddle with him, he is set apart for evil, all things shall

concur together to do him hurt; this is when the Lord curseth any man, and this is the case of every man that loves not the Lord Jesus.

Our business when we preach the Gospel is but to offer the Lord Jesus to you, that is all that we have to do; and all that you have to do that hear us, is to take Jesus Christ, to believe in him, to love him: Now saith the Lord, if you will not do this, if you will not love him, every such one let him be accursed. Now when the Lord shall curse a man, as Isaac said, I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed: So whom the Lord curseth, he shall be cursed, and it is a fearful thing if you consider it; and therefore we will a little open it, and show you wherein this curse consists:

Which I urge the more, because it is a usual thing among men, when they come to consider their sins in particular, wherewith they have provoked God to anger, they look upon this or that gross sin, but this defect and omission of love they scarce put into the number of their sins. But that you may know now what it is not to love him, you may consider by the greatness of the punishment, and that you see here is a curse: Now that you may know what this curse is, know that it consists in these four things.

First it consists in this, he shall be separated from grace and goodness, from holiness; and this is the curse upon his soul in this respect, in regard of exclusion from grace, which is to the soul as an obstruction in the liver is to the body, as a thief in the candle is to the candle, which causeth it to waste and consume, and wear away; so it is in this curse, when God shall lay it upon the soul of any man, he shall not thrive in grace, his inward man shall not prosper at all, he shall be still in the wearing hand, and the Lord shall take away from him that which he seems to have; when the Lord shall say to thee as to the fig tree, Never fruit grow more on thee, that is a fearful curse, when the Lord shall curse, and say to a man, though thou hast some

leaves upon thee, there are some things that seem to be good in thee, yet because thou hast not love, never fruit shall grow upon thee more. What a curse is it think you that shall make the soul of a man to wither, as the fig tree withered after the speech of Christ, that is, when everything shall drive a man off from that which is good, and carry him on to destruction; whatsoever befalleth him in poverty, in prosperity, riches, and friends or enemies, everything shall breed his hurt: he shall have riches when he is most ready to abuse them, he shall have adversity then when it is worst for him to be in adversity, that shall be to him as the lopping of trees out of season; he shall be as an unthrifty son, set him to a trade in the Citty, there he goes down the wind, put him to husbandry in the Country, that thrives not with him; such is the case of everyone that loves not Christ. So my brethren, when Christ is preached to you, when you will not receive the doctrine, but refuse it, you see the doom here, saith the Apostle, let him be accursed; this causeth men to go away from the Lord, Because they receive not the love of the truth, therefore he gives them up to believe lies, because that men receive not Christ in the love of the Gospel, he gives them up to a reprobate sense, from one degree to another, till there be no remedy. We see by experience, are there not many that are given up to the sin of drinking and idleness, and company-keeping, and others, to other sins; you see many plod on in an old track of sin, some lying a long time in a dead sottish course, so as the most powerful ministry in the world will not stir them, which is an evidence that the Lord hath cursed such, therefore the ministry can do them no good. And this is the first curse upon men that love not the Lord Jesus.

But perhaps thou regardest not this curse because thou regardest not grace and holiness from which it sequestereth thee, but yet there is another branch

of it, thou shalt be separated from the presence of the Lord, that is, from the joy, from the influence, from the protection of God; and this is a very fearful curse. You know what it was to Cain in the fourth of Genesis, when the Lord had cursed him, saith he, I am hid from thy face: that was the great curse that was laid upon him, of which he was most sensible that he was separated from the presence of the Lord. And my brethren, this is no small thing, because God is the God of all comfort, and to be separated from his presence is the worst thing that can befall us in this life: It was Saul's case, when the Lord had once cast him off, he was separate from the presence of God, so that when he came to ask counsel, the Lord would answer him no more, he would have no more to do with him: you know how fearful and how bitter this was to Saul. On the other side, see how much Moses magnifies this presence of God; Lord, saith he, if thou go not with us, carry us not hence: as if the presence of God were the greatest comfort in the world, as indeed it is. This is another thing wherein ye shall be cursed.

Again, there is yet another branch of it, ye shall not only be separated from grace, and from the presence of the Lord, but there shall be a curse upon your outward estate. It is said of Cain in the same chapter, Thou shalt be cursed from the earth: it may be many that hear of being cursed from grace, and of separation from the presence of the Lord, are of that mind that they care not for it, that they regard it not; it may be you care not to be cursed from heaven: but to be cursed from the earth is that which goes near to you, and that is a thing which the most earthly-minded man in the world is sensible of. Now you must know that whosoever loves not the Lord Jesus shall be cursed from the earth, that is, there shall be a curse upon you in all earthly things, in all things that belong to this present life whatsoever they are.

But you will say, we see it quite otherwise, we see such men as they, described to be men that abound in outward wealth, in outward blessings.

It may be so in outward show, but yet there is a curse upon them notwithstanding. Abimelech had the kingdom, yet there was a curse that never ceased till he was rooted out of the kingdom: The Israelites had the quail, but yet there was a curse with them: Ahab had the vineyard, but it was a curse to him. So all these things that are of themselves blessings and mercies in their own nature, yet if the Lord will mingle them with a curse, ye shall find no ease from them at all: and this is a thing that is well known by experience, if the hearts of men will speak what they know. This is the case of those that love not the Lord, The earth shall not give her increase, you shall not have that sound comfort, that sweetness, that influence of comfort from earthly blessings, though you have the creatures about you which naturally have blessings in them, yet they shall not give down that milk for your comfort, you shall not be satisfied with them, you shall see a constant emptiness in them, they shall be to you as the shell without the kernel; and so much more shall ye be miserable, because ye shall find the least comfort in them when you most expect it: the Lord meets thus with those that love him not in earthly blessings.

But last of all, there is one branch of this curse which exceeds all the rest, that is the eternal curse that shall be upon men forever: while ye live here in this life there is a certain show, a certain twilight of comfort that the Lord sometimes affords even to evil men; but then there shall be a perfect midnight, then the Sun of comfort shall set upon you altogether and rise no more: in that day, saith the Apostle, it shall be the day of the manifestation of the just wrath of God: in that day when the Lord shall open the treasures of his wrath, those which have been so long time a gathering. While we live

here the clouds of God's indignation are but gathering, then they shall grow thick and black, and fasten upon you to the uttermost, then all the great deeps shall be broken up, then the flood-gates of God's judgments shall prevail and overflow you; that case shall be yours at that time, and this is a time which is to be considered by you now: in Eccl. 1:7. Remember the days of darkness, for they are many. My brethren, eternity is another thing than we consider it to be while we live in this world. In Psal. 78:38. The Lord called back his wrath, and stirred not up all his indignation, but at that time the Lord shall stir up all his wrath; ye do here but sip of this cup, but then ye shall drink up the dregs of it forever. This shall be the case of those that love not the Lord.

But you will say, this is afar off, and therefore the less terrible, it is not near at hand.

Well, though this curse in which we have showed these four branches, be not presently executed, yet remember this, that when we preach the Gospel to you, as we do from day today, and are still offering you Christ, beseeching you to come in, and take him and love him, but yet you will not, know that there is a thunderbolt always following this lightening: when John the Baptist came and preached the Gospel, he tells them presently of the curse that was to follow: You do not know the time when the Lord will execute this curse; Cain was cursed many years before he died: and so Saul, when the Lord had rejected him, and had made a separation between God and him, (for a curse is but a separation, when a man is cast aside and set apart for such a purpose, so Saul was set apart for evil) yet he reigned many years after, notwithstanding he was under the curse. So those that the Lord sware in his wrath they should not enter into his rest, there was a curse upon them, yet they lived many years in the wilderness: Therefore though the

execution be not presently, and though thou be in prosperity for the present, yet it is but Cain's prosperity, though he had his life continued, yet the curse lay upon him notwithstanding; therefore I say take heed of refusing and deferring, lest he swear in his wrath that ye shall not enter into his rest; it is a dangerous thing to refuse the Lord Jesus when he is offered the first, second, third and fourth time, and still you will not come in, take heed and remember that speech of the Apostle that we named to you, Whosoever loveth not the Lord Jesus let him be accursed. When the Apostle looked upon the men to whom he had preached and written, you Corinthians to whom the Gospel hath been plentifully preached and made known, those among you that have heard me, and have been made acquainted with this doctrine of the freeness of God's offering grace to you, if you will not take Christ in good earnest, if you will not love him, let such a man be accursed: and brethren S. Paul was stirred up by the Spirit of God to pronounce this curse. So I say, let these words continue in your minds, that whosoever loves not the Lord Jesus let him be Anathema Maranatha; and he that hath ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith: for happy and blessed are those that love the Lord Jesus, but miserable and cursed are those that do not love him.

FINIS.

SERMON VIII.

GAL. 5:6.

For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but Faith which worketh by Love.

Having spoken of faith and love, it remains that we add to them good works, for which we will go no further than this Text, we cannot have a fitter; for, saith the Apostle, when you come to have to do with Christ Jesus, to be engrafted into him, to make yourselves first acceptable to God through him, all the works you can do are nothing, they are no more than the omission of them, circumcision is the same with uncircumcision: But what is of moment then? Faith (saith he:) But what faith must that be? Such a faith as begets love: And what love must that be? Such a love as sets you on work: so that you have a chain here consisting of these three links; faith which when it is right will beget love, and love when it is right will set you on work; faith which works by love. So the point we will deliver to you out of these words shall be this:

That we are to be judged not only by our faith and love, but also by our works, that no man hath faith and love, that none are new creatures, that none have sincerity, but works will follow.

this is a point which I do not mean to handle at large as we have done the other, but will endeavor to finish it at this time, and it is a very necessary point, because men are ready to applaud themselves in their knowledge in their good meaning, in their honest desires, and in the mean time they fail in their lives and actions: therefore as those are the radical virtues which indeed make up the new creature, Faith and Love, so you must know that good works are never disjoined from them, wheresoever there is sincerity, and a new creature, good works will follow.

The Scripture you know is evident in this, A good tree bringeth forth good fruit, Matth. 7, that is, it cannot be that a man shall have a new heart, it cannot be that a man should be regenerate, but that his works will be also new; look how far the heart of any man is holy, look how far his heart is put into a new frame of grace, in that measure his works will be good, and his life sanctified. In Acts 14:22, speaking of David, I have found a man after mine own heart, who will do whatsoever I will: and in Matth. 23:26. Make the inside clean that the outside may be clean also: As if he should say, if the inside be right, if the heart be set right within, if that be well molded, the outside will be clean, they cannot be disjoined.

If a man have a treasure within, there will be silver in his speeches and actions; but if his heart be nothing worth, his words and actions will be but mere dross: It is the scope of that, Prov. 10:20. The words of the righteous are as fined silver, but the heart of the wicked is nothing worth: That is, when his heart is nothing worth, his speeches and actions are nothing worth too; but the good man that hath his treasure in his heart, there is silver and

gold in his speeches and actions, that is, they are likewise precious. Therefore let no man say he hath faith and love, and as good a heart as the best, though his actions be not so good, though he be not so strict in his carriage; for it cannot be my brethren.

For first of all, if a man's heart be good, he hath the spirit of God dwelling there: now, saith the Apostle, 2 Tim. 1:6. The spirit is not a spirit of fear, or a spirit of weakness, a spirit that only makes attempts, and is not able to bring things to pass; but it is a spirit of power, a spirit of a sound mind: That is, do not thou pretend thou meanest well and desirest well, and think it is sufficient, but stir up the gift that is in thee, set thyself on work, do the actions that belong to thee in thy place, and do not say I am not able to do it; for we have not received a spirit that is weak, but a spirit of power: the same I may say to every Christian, If ye be in Christ, ye have the spirit, which is a spirit of power. So you have it likewise, Gal. 5:25. If you live in the spirit, walk in the spirit: that is, if you have so much of the spirit as to make you living men, show it by walking in the spirit, by following the spirit, by doing that which the spirit guides you to; therefore it is impossible that a man should have a right mind, but that his works also will be good, because grace is strong: in 2 Tim. 2:1. And thou my son be strong in the grace received, &c. As if he should say, grace is a strong thing, it strengthens every man that hath received it; if thou profess thou hast received the grace of Christ to regenerate thee, to change thee, and to make thee a new creature, let that appear by showing thyself strong in thy actions, able and ready to do everything that belongs to thee in thy place. Indeed flesh is weak, so much flesh, so much weakness, for that is weak and fading, and withering, and mutable; it is grass, and all the purposes of it and the desires of it are no better: but the spirit is strong, and grace is strong,

quite contrary to the flesh; as the Prophet speaks, Isa. 31:3. Ye are men and not God's, flesh and not spirit: when he would show their weakness, as if weakness were a concomitant of the flesh, and strength a concomitant of the spirit: Therefore if you have the spirit of Christ in you, there will be strength to go through good works, not only to intend them, and purpose them, and resolve on them, but you will put those resolutions and purposes in execution.

Secondly, it must needs be so, because there is a chain between good works and the inward rectitude of the heart, a chain that cannot be disjoined; for ye shall find that these three things always go together.

First, as that indeed is the beginning of every man's renewing, there must be a knowledge, a man must be enlightened, he must be renewed in the spirit of his mind, as the Apostle saith. Now if the knowledge be right, if it be a convicting knowledge, a sanctifying knowledge, a knowledge to purpose, it will draw on affections, it cannot choose, they are never separated: you are never truly enlightened by God's spirit, but affections follow necessarily, and then if the affections be right, if knowledge draw on holy affections, love, and fear, and desires, &c. affections are the immediate principles of actions, there is no man that hath right affections, but good works will follow: so that these three are never disjoined, sanctified knowledge draweth on holy affections, and holy affections draw on good actions: as ye have it in Matth. 13:5. Their hearts are waxed fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and why? You shall see the chain there, lest seeing with their eyes they should understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them: Mark it, if they should see with their eyes, the Lord hath given them up to judge amiss of things, that seeing they do not see, that is, they see not to purpose, they are not convinced, they do not judge;

for if they did see with their eyes, that is, if they did see indeed, they would have understood with their hearts, their affections would follow in their hearts, and if they were set aright, then they would be converted, that is, their lives would be turned to God; and if these three were done he must needs heal them: but saith God, I am resolved not to heal them: therefore they shall see as if they did not see, for these will draw on one the other. So I say, if the heart were right, if there were faith and love, good works would follow: therefore let no man say he hath grace, he hath love and faith, except his life also be holy and good.

Lastly, wheresoever there is faith and love, there is a change of nature; for you know that wheresoever they come, faith that is effectual, and love that followeth from faith it makes a man a new creature, they are the very things wherein a new creature consists: Now when a man's nature is changed, it must needs be active, for that which is natural to a man, he doth without unevenness, there is no inequality in his doing it, he doth it constantly, where there are natural principles of actions, the actions flow like water from a spring: indeed where the nature of a man is not changed, that is, where there is only good purposes and good desires, and no alteration of nature, there actions do not come as water from a spring, but as water from a pomp that is forced and extorted; but where there is a change of nature, there is no difficulty, a man doth it with facility and with desire, it is his meat and drink to do the will of God. Therefore I say good works will follow, there will be the same degree of holiness, of rectitude in your lives, in your actions, as there is of grace, as there is of faith and love in your hearts. And this is enough to make the point plain to you, the main business will be to make use of it, and to apply it to yourselves.

And first let us make this use of it, not to content ourselves with good meanings only, as it is the fashion of men to say, my heart is as good as yours, and my meaning is as good as yours, though I be subject to infirmities, though I cannot make such a show, though I cannot do so much as others do; this is the common objection, and though men say it not constantly, yet they think it, otherwise they would not content themselves in such a condition as they do. But I say, deceive not yourselves in this, for, my brethren, you must know that you may have good purposes and good meanings, we will not deny you that you may have these, and yet have no true grace; for you must know that good purposes and desires may arise from these two things, which every unregenerate man is capable of.

There may be knowledge, as you know an evil man may have knowledge of all the mysteries of salvation as well as the most holy; I do not say he hath the sanctified knowledge, but the law of God is partly written in his heart, the Lord hath taught every man somewhat.

Secondly, in an evil and unregenerate man there may be not only knowledge, but an approbation of that which is good, they can approve that which is good, so far they may go; I do not say they can delight in it, for that is another thing, they do not love and delight in it, that is not suitable to them, yet they may approve it. Now from these two principles, to know that which is good, and to approve it, they may go so far as to purpose and desire to serve God, they may have good meanings, but yet if actions follow not, if there be not reformation in their lives, if a man deny not himself in his beloved sin, if he come not to that outward profession of holiness that is required in Scripture, and is seen in the lives of the Saints, he hath nothing to comfort himself withal; these good meanings will not serve the turn.

For know this, though it be true as we see there may be actions where there is no sound heart, as the second and third ground brought forth a kind of fruit when there was neither of them right; hypocrites you know may go far, they may make a blaze as your comets do more than the true stars: though this be true, that there may be abundance of good works where there is no rightness and soundness, no sincerity, no pureness within; yet again also on the other side, wheresoever there is sincerity there are good works, and though many times the outside be clean when the inside is not, yet the inside is never clean but the outside is clean too: And that is the thing we must examine ourselves by; though it be not a good rule to say I have good works, therefore my heart is right, yet it is a good rule to say on the other side, I want good works, therefore my heart is not right; except there be a general reformation in your lives, except things be reformed that you know to be amiss. Indeed when it is not revealed to you, then there is something for you to say, but when you know that such a duty is to be done, that your speeches should be holy, that they should be seasoned with salt, that you ought to abstain from sins of all kinds, from all appearance, that you ought not to admit any kind of dalliance, not the least touch of any sin; now not to set yourselves with all your might to reform this, this is a sure argument you are not right; for if the general frame of the heart be good, there will be a general reformation of the life. Therefore let no man say I purpose well, but in this particular infirmity I must be spared, to such a thing my nature is prone, and I am given to it, I cannot tell how to refrain it, and I hope it is not so great a matter; say not so, for if the heart be right, the actions will be right and unblameable.

For though you see sometimes a man may have a good color from flushing and painting, when the constitution of the body within is but crazy

and unsound; yet again it is true there is never any that hath a sound and hail constitution, there is never a healthful body but the complexion is good; the heart is never right, but you shall see it without, though you have leaves without fruit, yet you never have fruit but there are leaves, there are actions appearing. Therefore learn to judge aright of yourselves, content not yourselves with good purposes, only you see the complaint of the Scripture of the lack of this in people. What is the reason the Lord calls for obedience rather than sacrifice? Because that is the touchstone that every man is tried by; I am weary, saith he, of your fat of rams, I am burdened with your sacrifices, Isaiah 1. The thing that I desire is that you cease to do evil, and learn to do well, that is the thing that the Lord looks for at every man's hand, these outward performances are good, they must be done, and these good meanings must be had, but yet that is not enough, you are not to judge yourselves by that.

But it will be objected, that the best men have their failings, those that have a good heart, yet do we not find them subject to infirmities as well as other men? And if this be the rule we are to be judged by, who shall be saved?

To this I answer first, it is true that the most holy men may many times do that which is ill, but it is by accident, it is when they are transported, when they are carried besides their purpose: As a man that is bound for such a place, sailing such a way, his compass stands still right, he alters not that, though the wind carry him violently another way, yet he looks still to the right way, that is his intent still; and it is known by this, when the wind is over, and the gust is past, he returns again and saileth to the haven he intended to go to at the first: So it is with all the Saints, they sails by a right compass, their intents are still good, whensoever they do otherwise it is by

accident, it is when they are overborne by some temptation, by some passion, when they are not perfectly themselves.

Again, you must know this, that every holy man as he hath grace in him, and a principle of holy actions, so he hath also flesh in him, and a principle of evil actions; now that principle may sometimes prevail and get ground of him, yea it may prevail mightily sometimes, and make him do as evil actions as the worst man: For that is a true rule, a man that excelleth in grace may sometimes excel in ill doing; you must take me aright, that is, a man that hath a more impetuous spirit than another, so that none excelleth such a spirit when it is set aright, he may be as impetuous in evil-doing for a fit, for a time, when that evil principle within him shall get the better. Therefore though you see a good man sometime unlike himself for a fit, yet it is at that time when the flesh prevails; for now grace though it be there, yet sometimes it is laid asleep, it is not always acted: As the Philosopher was wont to say, It is one thing to have knowledge, and another thing to use it always; so it is with grace, sometimes the Saints do not use that grace and holiness, and hence it is that they are subject to great failings; but I say it is by fits and by accident, the constant course of their life is right, because the constant frame of their heart is right.

But again there is another objection on the other side, that evil men sometimes do well as well as good men do sometimes ill.

To this I answer, that it is true they do so, but yet we must know that it is not they that do it, but the good that dwelleth in them, as the Apostle speaks in Rom. 7, which may be implied on the contrary; when any regenerate man sinneth, it is not he that doth it, but the sin that is there; that is, it is not the master of the house, but a rebel that is crept in by accident: so I say of every evil man that doth that which is good and right, it is not he that doth it, but

some good that is there. For it is one thing for a man to have good things in him, and another thing to be a good man, he may do some things sometimes for a fit that are good, God's Spirit may be there to help him to do much; I say not that the Spirit dwells there, but he may take up his lodging for a time, and from him he may have common assistance, common gifts that may enable him to do much: Therefore I deny not but those may have many good flashings of lightning that may enable them to do much; only this we say, The Day-spring from on high never visited them, that is, the morning never riseth upon them, to guide their feet in the way of peace, for that is proper to the Saints; they never have any constant light that leadeth them so far as to bring them in: they have some lightnings indeed that guide them in this or that particular, to help them in a step or two, to enable them to do many good actions by fits, but not to bring them to perfection.

Secondly, if this be so that we are to be judged by our actions, then this will follow from it, that poor Christians are better taught than the greatest Clerks, they are better taught I say, because they do more, therefore indeed they know more; for all the knowledge we have, all the sincerity, whatsoever is right within us, if it be to be judged by the actions, then he that doth most he knows most; for no man knoweth more than he practiseth, because what knowledge soever a man hath that he practiseth not, mark it, it is a dead knowledge, it is an inefficacious knowledge. When things are dead and inefficacious, we say they are not; as leaven that doth not leaven the dough, it hath but the name of leaven and no more, the thing itself is wanting; it is not knowledge if it bring not forth practice. As we say of drugs, they are not true when they do not work, but they are false and counterfeit. Every man is to be judged by what he doth: Therefore I say those that do most, those are knowing men, Those that seem to know, as the

Apostle saith, know nothing as they ought: a man may know much, a man may have a large extent of knowledge, yet this is true of him, if his life be barren, if he bring forth nothing into action all the while, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know, though he know much: On the other side, the other sort though their extent be never so small, yet what they know they know as they ought. Therefore when you look upon men in the world, when you would make a judgment of them, I say those that know most they are not the best, you must not put them in the highest degree, when you come to matters of religion, but men are to be judged by their actions; when men have knowledge only to know, as they have money to account with, and not to buy and sell with it, it is but dead, a man hath no good by it, that money makes him not the richer; so men that have knowledge only to know with, not to make them more useful in their lives, more serviceable to God, and profitable to man, it is unprofitable knowledge: therefore those are the wisest men, let them seem never such fools, though they are not able to speak so much as others, yet they know most that practice most. For there is that difference between art and wisdom; indeed it is true in matter of art, he that omitteth willfully may be the best artist, because there is no more required of him but skill, and it is but some error in him, it is the commendation of his art that he erreth willingly: But now in matter of holiness and sanctity, there he that knoweth and doth not is the greatest fool: For wisdom consists most in that. Wisdom comprehends indeed these three:

First, to invent, to see, to know and understand things.

Secondly, to judge aright of things you know.

Thirdly, to put in practice that which you have concluded to be the best, and this latter is the greatest part of prudence: Therefore those men that

know, that can dispute well, that have clear understanding, and yet do nothing, they are the unwise; again, those that can speak little, and perhaps have not such a treasure of knowledge as others, and yet can do more, they know more than the wisest. Therefore let us not misesteem those that are good Christians, and holy men, and set too high a price upon others; for there is an error under that, and it hath an ill consequent to judge of religion by the opinion of those that are only knowing men in religion: No, beloved, religion is the art of holy men, and not of learned men, and it was the custom of former times to judge of heresies not so much by disputes, as by the lives of those that have been the professors of them: and that Christ directs us to, You shall know them by their fruits: and what are those fruits? Their fruits are their actions.

We learn at schools what to say in such a controversy, how to dispute rather than how to live: and that is the complaint we may take up in these knowing times, where knowledge (I confess) abounds as water in the sea, but practice is thin and rare, like grass upon the house top, of which the mower cannot fill his hand: and that is the burden of us that are Ministers, that we teach much, and see little fruit, we see no amendment of men's lives, men do the same things that they were wont to do, the duties they were wont to be defective in, they are defective in still. Alas my brethren, the end of our preaching is not that you should know, but that you should do and practice: as it is not the desire of the shepherd that his sheep should return their meat in hay again, but he would have it in their milk and fleece; so it is not our desire that you should only know, though indeed many come short of that, but that you should show it in your fleece and milk, show it in your lives, that all the world may see it there. It is not enough for him that desires to write, to see the copy, and to know it, and the fashion of the

letters, but then he hath learned it when he can write after it: so you must know sciences are of two sorts, indeed some there are the end of which is only contemplation and knowledge, but some there are the end whereof is action, and they are no further good than we practice them. What is music, but the practice of it? What is physic? The knowledge of all will not heal a man, but the taking of it: so it is with Divinity, the knowledge that we teach is nothing worth, if you know as much as could be known, it were all nothing worth without practice, practice is all in all; so much as ye practice, so much you know. It is a great matter to have your judgment true in this case, for when men shall applaud themselves merely in this, that they know and have right purposes and honest desires, and shall esteem their estates by this, it causeth men to content themselves with a loose and a negligent life; but we must know that God judgeth us by our actions, and that is our best rule to judge by too, therefore we should learn thus to judge ourselves.

If you object, but it is a rule that we have heard often, that the will is often taken for the deed, and if the will be present with us, though the action do not follow, yet we are accepted according the will.

To this I answer in brief, first, it holdeth only then where there is some impediment which you cannot remove: as for example, a man hath a desire to do good to such poor people, he hath a compassionate heart, he is willing to be bountiful, but he wants means to do it, in this case the Lord accepts the will for the deed; for upon that occasion is this delivered in this place by S. Paul: so it is in everything else, when you have a desire, and there cometh some impediment that it is not in your power to remove, then the will is accepted for the deed. As when a man hath a desire to move his hands, his legs or arms, but because of a palsy that hangs upon him, he is not able to stir them, here the will is for the deed, he is not able to do it,

though the mind be right and the desire good; so when you come to such duties that are not in your power to do, when there are some impediments that you are not able to remove, here the will is accepted for the deed.

Sometimes a man is ignorant of some particulars, and he hath a desire to obey God in all things, here the will is accepted for the deed, though he be not come to that degree of perfection as others are: but as men apply it commonly it is amiss, for when a man thinks I have a good purpose to do this, but I cannot pray, I cannot be so strict in looking to my actions and speeches, here the complaint is not right: for if ye stir up yourselves, and do the utmost you can do, the deed will follow the will, there is no such impediment here but that you may remove. Therefore our answer is, that the reason why you cannot do, is not because of such impediments that you cannot remove, but because your will is not yet right, which the Schoolmen call an imperfect will; it is but such a will as the Wiseman speaks of concerning the sluggard, he willeth and lusteth, and hath not: and what's the reason? If it were a full, a complete and perfect will, it would draw action with it, he would not be a sluggard any longer, but he would draw forth his hands to do somewhat to bring his desires to pass, but indeed he hath but light wishing's and no more. And so it is with men in Christianity, they are as Solomon's sluggard, they wish they had such sins mortified, that they had such graces, they wish they could attain such a measure of faith and love, but they take no pains: no man hath height of grace without pains; do you think to get the greatest excellency in the world without pains? It is true, the Lord must do it, but yet he doth it by yourselves, you are agents in the business: Therefore do not say I wish well and desire well, for if you would do your uttermost that you ought to do, if your will were full and complete, and desires right and strong, you would do more, you would excel more in

grace, you would amend your lives more, you would have your lusts more mortified: therefore let not this deceive you. I should press this further, but we will come to the last thing, because I would conclude this point with this time, and that is,

To exhort you to be doers, that your faith may be effectual faith, and that your love may be diligent love: This is the great business which we have to do, and the thing which for the most part we all fail in, that there is no doing, no acting, no working of our faith; be exhorted now therefore to add to your faith diligent love, especially you that profess yourselves to be grown Christians, look you to it, and know that as in nature everything when it is ripe brings seed and fruit, if not it is but a dead thing, a dead plant that keepeth the room idle; if there be that ripeness and maturity in you, show it by bringing forth seed and fruit, show it by doing something. For, my brethren, we are called into the Lord's vineyard for the same purpose; it is not for you now to stand idle, the time of your standing still is past, it is for you now to work, for ye are now come into the day. That exhortation is excellent, 1 Thess. 5:6,7,8. Let not us sleep (saith he) as do others, we are come out of the night: those that are still in the night, it better beseems them to sleep, and to sit still and do nothing, but let not us sleep as do others, for we are of the day; let it not be so with you as with others, to be much in speech only, but labor to be much in actions. As it was said of Gideon, Up and be doing, and the Lord shall be with thee, so I say to everyone, up and be doing, and the Lord shall be with you; that is, though perhaps you do not find that vigor, that fervency and liveliness of spirit, yet be doing notwithstanding, it is your wisest way, for that doing will increase the grace within you: exercise increaseth health, as well as health enables to exercise, so the use of grace will increase grace and other abilities; motion causeth

heat, as well as all motion cometh from heat, so every good action proceedeth from grace, and good actions intend grace: and therefore be still acting, and judge of yourselves by that, for what is grace, what is that you call Christianity else, but to do that which another man cannot do? Therefore if there be such a difference between you and others as you profess there is, show it by doing that which another man cannot do, by exposing yourselves to that danger, to those losses for any good cause, which another would not do; by spending more time in prayer, by taking more pains with your hearts from day today than others do, by keeping the Sabbath better than others do, by being more exact in looking to your ways, that you may be holy in all manner of conversation, that other men will not do: I say show your grace, show your regeneration, by being new creatures, by doing more than others, this is that which will make the world believe that you are Christians in good earnest, and not in show only, that your profession is in deed and in truth: and truly there is no other way, this doing is that which makes a man excellent. You hear men complain of the barrenness of their grounds many times, we may likewise justly take up the complaint against the barrenness of the lives of men.

How goodly a sight is it when a man looks into the husbandry, to see the vine full of clusters, to see the furrows full of corn, to see the trees laden with fruit; when we look upon men, it is the goodliest sight we can behold in God's husbandry, to see men full of actions and good works; I beseech you consider of it seriously, and now set upon the doing of it while there is sand in the hour-glass, your life will not last long, the day doth not continue always, the night will come when no man can work. When a candle is put out, you may kindle it again, when the Sun is set, it riseth again; but when our life is past, when the glass is run, it ariseth no more, it is turned no

more, It is appointed to all men once to die: if ye might die twice or thrice, it were another case; but now it is your wisdom therefore while it is time, while this short day, lasts, to do that you have to do concerning your salvation with all your might, because the time is short.

There is nothing that is a truer property of wisdom than for a man to take hold of opportunities, not to lose the day, nay not an hour in the day; for time is most precious, it is like gold of which every shred is worth somewhat: it is your wisdom therefore to be oft sowing seed to the spirit, there is none of those good works, not the least of them but will do you good in the latter end; for alas what are your lives but your actions? So much as you do, so much you live, your lives are short of themselves, why do you make them shorter by doing nothing? For as we have said heretofore, one man may live more in a day than another in twenty, because he doth more, you live more as you act more.

Besides, what is it a man serves for in all his labor under the Sun? What is it that he desires but pleasure, comfort and contentment? Now, my brethren, this consists in doing, in working, for all pleasure followeth upon operation, and further than there is working there is no delight. Therefore it was a wise saying in that Philosopher, that the happiness and comfort that a man hath in this life consists not in abundance of wealth, in swimming in delights, but it consists in doing the actions of a living man, which is the greatest comfort you can find here in this life: Do the exercises and actions of holiness, and the more ye do, the more comfort ye shall have; for even as light followeth the flame, so pleasure and contentment followeth action.

And besides (my brethren) what do you live for, is it not to glorify God? You profess so much, and how is it done? Not by your desires or good meanings, but by your actions, those are the things that men see and feel,

and glorify your heavenly Father: for when your actions shine before men, Herein is my Father glorified, saith Christ, that ye bring forth much fruit: the doing of much is that which brings glory to God, the more you do this, the more glory you bring to him.

Again, another end of your life is to do good to mankind; shall they be able to fare the better for your purposes, for your good resolutions? No, they fare the better only for that you do for them and to them, it is your actions that benefit men.

Lastly for yourselves, what is it that helpeth you and doth you good? Only your good deeds and your actions, it is that which furthers your reckoning and account: That place is much to this purpose, Phil. 4:17. I care not for a gift, but I desire fruit, because it will further your account: mark the phrase, the meaning is this, every good work that a holy man doth from the time of his regeneration, (for till then no actions are spiritually good) it is put upon his score, it stands upon his reckoning, there is not a penny nor a half penny lost, that is, the least good work is not done to no purpose, but the Lord will repay him again every penny and farthing: this (saith he) will further your account. And when will the Lord pay? Not only in the day of judgment, then indeed you shall be paid to the uttermost, but you shall be paid even in this life; mark that too, You shall have an hundredfold here, saith Christ, They that forsake father, or mother, or wife, or children, shall have an hundredfold in this life. Therefore brethren if there be any wisdom in the world, this is the only wisdom, to be still doing, to be much in actions; Why do you trifle out your time therefore to no purpose? Why sit ye idle here? Why do you not rise up and bestir yourselves? Why do you not fill your lives with many actions? You have good purposes in you, why do you not stir them up? It is true indeed we are becalmed many times because the

Spirit doth not blow upon us, but yet notwithstanding if we would pray for the Spirit, the Lord would quicken us.

But you will say, alas what shall we do, it may be our callings give us no opportunity to do that which other men's callings do: if we might be Preachers, and have such and such business wherein we might only mind the things that belong to salvation, then it were easy.

My brethren, you must know that you shall find continual occasions of doing good actions every day, whatsoever your callings are. It is an error among the Papists, to think that to give alms, to crucify the flesh and to use that hardly, to fast, and the like, that these are the only and the most glorious actions: they are exceeding wide; good actions are nothing else but to do the will of the Lord, and to bring forth fruit; the fruit of every tree in the orchard is but as the actions of every man; and then are the trees good to the husbandman, when they are full of fruit. Every action that you do is that fruit which God looks for, now that fruit is good works, that is pleasing to the gardener, to the husbandman: Therefore to do the Lord's will is to do a good work. Now by this you may see what a large field you have for good works, in what calling soever you are set, though it be never so mean a place you have.

To suffer imprisonment and disgraces for good causes, this is a good work, for it is a great work to suffer, and in that you do the will of the Lord. When a man is sick, and lieth in his chamber upon his bed, sick of a consumption or a fever, that he is not able to stir; yet to do this with obedience, to submit then to the will of the Lord, is a good work: for to bear a burden is a work, to bear sickness and calamity after this manner, is a work, to think the Lord hath put me into this condition; he might have given

me strength to go abroad as others do, but he hath laid sickness upon me, I say the right bearing this burden is a good work.

Again, to take pains with our hearts, to master our unruly lusts and affections is a good work. Do not you reckon it a work to break horses, to master colts? It is the trade of some men to do so: and is it not a good work for you to get victory over your lusts, to tame your unbridled natures, to curb your unruly hearts and affections in all the variety of occasions that ye pass through? It is a work to behave ourselves as becomes Christians decently and comely, and holily, in poverty, in riches, in honor, and disgraces; to behave ourselves under these things in a right manner, to carry ourselves patiently and holily through them as becomes good Christians, this is a good work, and this belongs to everyone, though his calling be never so mean.

When Paul stood at the bar, and Festus reviled him, and said he was a mad fellow, the suffering of this was a work in Paul: Mark his manner of carriage in it, I am not mad most noble Festus: there was a work in that. So I may instance in the things wherein you may seem to do the least; the standing still in some cases is a work the Apostle makes among the great works that are to be done by Christians, this to be the chief, To keep our selves pure and unspotted of the world, to pass through all occasions, and to be never the worse for them, to go through all defilements of this present life, and not be tainted: and if this be a work, how much more is it then to be still doing, to be in act and operation always? Therefore do not say you want when you shall always have occasion enough of that.

But you will say, these generals are good to exhort us to be doing, but yet in particular what would you have us to do now?

I will instance in some few things, there are certain times of working; as husbandmen, sometimes they have times of harvest, and sometimes they have seed times, wherein it is required, that they work more than at other times: so the Church of God hath times and seasons, and the common wealth hath some seasons and times when men should be set awork to do more than ordinary, to do more than at other times; and you all know this is such a season, wherein there should be working of everyone in their several places, I say it is time now for men to be working more than ordinary.

But you will say, what is it you would have us to do?

My brethren, Contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints, mark it, the work must be to contend for it, you must be men of contention, let the world say what they will of you, it is a duty that lies on you, it is that which the Spirit calls for from you, that ye be men that should contend; you must not do it coldly, and remissly, but earnestly to strive for it, let not pretense of indiscretion hinder you, for discretion when it is right, teacheth a man not to do less but more, and better then another man, discretion we say doth not take metal from Horses, but guides those horses and puts them in a righter way, discretion makes no man less active, but it gives his actions a better tincture.

So again, let us not say we must be moderate, for what is that moderation? Indeed the moderation that keepeth from actions, wherein is excess, is good; but if you mean by moderation to go a slow and easy pace in the ways of God, that is coldness, idleness, carelessness, there is no excess in any good way. Therefore that is your work now to contend for the Faith, that is, for all the points of faith, for every jot of that is precious: saith the Apostle Jude, it is but once delivered to the Saints, as if he should say, it is too precious a treasure oft to be dispensed, it was but once delivered to the

world: if Christ did mean to come again, and renew the Articles of our faith, we might be more remiss and negligent, for if we did lose them he might restore them again, but they are but once delivered, therefore your care must be to keep them the better.

Besides, it is the common faith, therefore every man hath interest in it; do not say therefore, what have I to do, it belongs to these and these men to look after it: it is the common faith, and every man hath part in it, and should contend according to his place and power, and within his sphere; and remember it is a matter of much moment, for every part of the faith or little matter of faith (I speak now of the whole doctrine of faith) that you should be exceeding exact in keeping of it, that it receive no detriment, especially in matter of opinion. For my brethren, you must know, that it were better there should be great offenses committed in the land, great and notorious crimes, then that there should be any loss in the matter of faith, because where the opinions of men are set wrong, that is a principle that carries them still on. Great sins come from great passions, and men are able to see them, and when the passion is gone over, they are easily recalled again; but errors in opinion are matters of great moment, therefore it belongs to everyone to look to it, to us that are Preachers in our places, to Magistrates in their places, to every man to contend for the common Faith: and know this my brethren, that there are certain opportunities which the Lord gives you, and you must take heed of neglecting them, it may be to let a thing go sometimes, it will never be recovered again. Therefore look that you be diligent in it, stir up yourselves to do it, while there is occasion offered. In other things, men are apt to be men of action, they would have employment, and work that they may be somebody in the world, and it is very well, there is something in that, it is a nobleness of disposition so to do; but alas, what

poor and weak reward have you for that? It may be a little vain-glory, it may be some applause from Princes or people, it may be some empty airy preferment. To do the will of the Lord, the work he hath given you to do, it is no matter what it is for, a servant must not choose his work; I say whatsoever it is, though in never so mean a thing, the greatest excellency is to do his will that makes us Kings and Princes to him that makes us partakers of the Royal blood, as Christ saith, These are my brothers, and Sister, and Mother, that do the will of my Father. It is this doing of his will, this action that puts you into a high condition: I see not that Paul was ambitious of anything but of this, that he might be doing, that he might live a useful, a profitable life, in the Rom. 15:20. I was ambitious saith Paul, to Preach the Gospel, even where it had never been preached, this is all my ambition to put myself upon the hardest tasks: so it should be your ambition to do something for the Church. When you read the story of Moses, that He was mighty in word and deed; of David, of the Judges, and the Worthies of the Church, they should be so many incentives to you, to stir you up to be doing in your place.

But this is not all that we would commend to you at this time, to be men of action, and to observe the opportunities, but there is another thing, and that is this, that likewise the season commends to you, that is, to fast and pray: as in husbandry, so in the Church, there are certain seasons of actions, and those seasons must not be omitted. Mark what the course of the Scripture was in every calamity, in Joel when there was a famine begun, Sanctify a fast, saith the Lord, call a solemn Assembly: when there is a plague coming, when there are great enterprises in hand, when there is anything plotting for the advancement of the good of the Church, do you not think now, that the omission of opportunities are sins, for you to neglect

this duty, do you not think the Lord will require it? It is true indeed, it is a business that is not ordinary, it is extraordinary: but do not extraordinary times and occasions call for it?

Again, is it not evil in such extraordinary cases to omit such an extraordinary duty? As we find in Scripture, when the Lord would call for fasting, and they did it not: Indeed to turn it to jollity and feasting is another thing, a sin of a greater nature; but now the very standing still and omitting of this duty is disobedience to the Lord, and to be guilty of the judgments that are upon a people, I say the standing still and not hastening to the gap: What shall we say then of those that resist this course, and thrust men out of the gap? Consider it therefore seriously, this is a special duty required, the season looks for it that we should humble ourselves before God.

Again, there is one thing more that we will speak of, but in a word; that is, that every man for his own particular renew his special Covenant with God concerning the amendment of his life in particular: for I find that in all times when the Lord hath stretched forth his hand against a Church and Nation, that this hath been required, that they should come and enter into a Covenant with God: You shall find that Asa did it, 2 Chron. 16, that Nehemiah did it, that it was done in Jeremiah's time, when they had wars in hand: We have many examples of it in Scripture, every man did it; and because every man could not come to do it personally, the head did it for the rest. I say the Lord looks for this from every man in private, that he should do this in a particular manner, to consider what have I done amiss in my life? What have I done to provoke the Lord? What sins of commission, and what of omission? Have I been cold and lukewarm? Have I been too much conformable to the times? For this is it that brings judgment upon a people: the Saints when they are not zealous, when they fall from their first

love, may help forward a judgment as well as gross sinners, yea and more too: let every man therefore stir up himself to do his duty. In a word, we should strive and contend for the advancing of Christ's kingdom, for the furtherance of the Gospel, for the good of mankind, for the flourishing of the Church, wherein our own good consisteth; and we should do it earnestly, we should contend for it, contend with God in prayer, contend with our Superiors by entreaty, with our adversaries by resistance, with cold and lukewarm men by stirring them up, by provoking one another to good works. These are the works that we exhort you to, and thus you shall be assured you have faith that works by love. Learn this, to join these together.

And so much shall serve for this time, and this Text.

FINIS.