

The Scriptures: The Only Guide In Matters Of Faith

Preached At The Baptism Of Several Persons In Barbican, November 2, 1750.

JEREMIAH 6:16.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein; and ye shall find rest for your souls.

In this chapter the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians is threatened and foretold, and the causes of it assigned; in general, the great aboundings of sin and wickedness among the people; and in particular, their neglect and contempt of the word of God; the sin of covetousness, which prevailed among all sorts; the unfaithfulness of the prophets to the people, and the people's impenitence and hardness of heart; their want of shame, their disregard to all instructions and warnings from the Lord, by the mouth of his prophets, and their obstinate refusal of them; which last is expressed in the clause following the words read; and which, though an aggravation of it, shew the tender regard of the Lord to his people, and may be considered as an instruction to such who had their doubts and difficulties in religious matters; who were halting between two opinions, and like men in bivio, who stand in a place where two or more ways meet, and know not which path to take; and in this light I shall consider them; and in them may be observed,

I. A direction to such persons what to do; to stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.

II. The encouragement to take this direction; and ye shall find rest for your souls.

I. The direction given to stand in or on the ways, etc. to do as men do when they are come to a place where two or more ways meet, make a stand, and view the roads, and see which they should take; they look about them, and consider well what course they should steer; they look up to the way-marks, or way-posts, and read the inscriptions on them, which tell them whither such a road leads, and so judge for themselves which way they should go. Now in religious matters, the way-marks or way-posts to guide and direct: men in the way, are the scriptures, the oracles of God, and they only.

Not education-principles. It is right in parents to do as Abraham did, to teach their children to keep the way of the Lord (Gen. 18:19).

The direction of the wise man is an exceeding good one; Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6); that is, easily and ordinarily; and it becomes Christians under the gospel dispensation to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4); and a great mercy and blessing it is to have a religious education; but then, as wrong principles may be infused as well as right ones, into persons in their tender years, it becomes them, when come to years of maturity and discretion, to examine them, whether they are according to the word of God, and so judge for themselves, whether they are to be abode by or rejected. I know it is a grievous thing with some persons to forsake the religion they have been brought up in; but upon this foot, a man that is born and brought up a Turk or a Jew, a Pagan or a Papist, must ever continue so. Sad would have been the case of the apostle Paul, if he had continued in the principles of his education; and what a shocking figure did he make whilst he abode by them? thinking, according to them, he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus (Acts 22:3, 4; 26:9).

Nor are the customs of men a rule of judgment, or a direction which way men should take in matters of religion; for the customs of the people are for the most part vain (Jer. 20:3), and such as are not lawful for us, being Christians, to receive or observe (Acts 16:21); and concerning which we should say, We have no such custom, neither the churches of God (1 Cor. 11:16).

Custom is a tyrant, and ought to be rebelled against, and its yoke thrown off.

Nor are the traditions of men to be regarded; the Pharisees were very tenacious of the traditions of the elders, by which they transgressed the commandments of God, and made his word of no effect; and the apostle Paul, in his state of unregeneracy, was zealous of the same; but neither of them are to be imitated by us: it is right to observe the exhortation which the apostle gives, when a Christian (Col. 2:8); beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Take care you are not imposed upon, under the notion and pretense of an apostolical tradition; unwritten traditions are not the rule, only the word of God is the rule of our faith and practice.

Nor do the decrees of popes and councils demand our attention and regard; it matters not what such a pope has determined, or what canons such a council under his influence has made; what have we to do with the man of sin, that exalts himself above all that is called God; who sits in the temple of God, shewing himself as if he was God? we know what will be his fate, and that of his followers (2 Thess. 2:4, 5; Rev. 20:30; 13:8; 14:11).

Nor are the examples of men, no not of the best of men, in all things to be copied after by us; we should indeed be followers of all good men as such, of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises; and especially of such, who are or have been spiritual guides and governors in the church; who have made the scriptures their study, and have labored in the word and doctrine; their faith we should follow, considering the end of their conversation; how that issues, and when it terminates in Christ, his person, truths and ordinances, the same to-day, yesterday and for ever (Heb. 6:12; 13:7): but then we are to follow them no further than they follow Christ; the apostle Paul desired no more than this of his Corinthians with respect to himself; and no more can be demanded of us; it should be no bias on our minds, that such and such a man of so much grace and excellent gifts thought and practiced so and so. We are to call no man father or master on earth; we have but one father in heaven, and one master, which is Christ, whose doctrines, rules, and ordinances we should receive and observe. We are not to be influenced by men of learning and wealth; though there should be on the other side of the question, it should be no stumbling to us; had this been a rule to be attended to, Christianity had never got footing in the world: Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed. (John 7:48, 49)

It pleased the Lord, in the first times of the gospel, to hide the things of it from the wise and prudent, and reveal them unto babes; and to call by his grace, not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but the foolish, weak, and base things of the world, and things that are not, to confound the wise and mighty, and bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence (Matthew 11:25, 26; 1 Cor. 1:26-29): nor should it concern us that the greatest number is on the opposite side; we are not to follow a multitude to do evil; the whole world once wondered after the beast; Christ's flock is but a little flock.

The scriptures are the only external guide in matters of religion; they are the way-posts we should look up unto, and take our direction from, and should steer our course accordingly: To the law and to the testimony: if men speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isa. 8:20); we should not believe every spirit, but try them, whether they are of God (1 John 4:1); and the trial should be made according to the word of God; the scriptures should be searched, as they were by the noble Bereans, to see whether the things delivered to consideration are so or no; the inscriptions on these way-posts should be read, which are written so plain, that he that runs may read them; and they direct to a way, in which men, though fools, shall not err: if therefore the inquiry is,

1st, About the way of Salvation; if that is the affair the doubt is concerning, look up to the way-posts, look into the word of God, and read what that says; search the scriptures, for therein is the way of eternal life; life and immortality, or the way to an immortal life, is brought to light by the gospel. The scriptures, under a divine influence, and with a divine blessing, are able to make a man wise unto salvation, and they do point unto men the way of it: it is not the light of nature, nor the law of Moses, but the gospel-part of the scriptures which direct to this; there will shew you, that God saves and calls men with an holy calling, not according to their works, but according to his purpose and grace; that it is not by works of righteousness done by men, but according to the

mercy of God, that men are saved; and that it is not by works, but by grace, lest men should boast (2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8,9). That it is a vain thing for men to expect salvation this way; that it is a dangerous one: such who encompass themselves with sparks of their own kindling shall lie down in sorrow: and that it is a very wicked thing; such sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag. These will inform you that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; that he is the only true way to eternal life; that there is salvation in him, and in no other: the language of them is, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved: these words, Salvation alone by Christ, salvation alone by Christ, are written as with a sunbeam on them; just as the way-posts, set up in places where two or more ways met, to direct the manslayer when he was fleeing to one of the cities of refuge from the avenger of blood, had written on them in very legible characters, refuge, refuge. [1]

2dly, If the question is about any point of Doctrine; if there is any hesitation concerning any truth of the gospel, look up to the way-posts, look into the scriptures, search them, see and read what they say; for they are profitable for doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16); for finding it out, explaining, confirming, and defending it: there will tell you whether the thing in debate is so or no, and will direct you which side of the question to take; if you seek for knowledge and understanding in gospel-truths diligently and constantly, as you would for silver, and search after them as for hid treasures, then will you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God (Prov. 2:4, 5).

Thus, for instance,

If the inquiry is about the doctrine of the Trinity; as the light of nature and reason will tell you, that there is but one God, and which is confirmed by revelation; the scriptures will inform you, that there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the holy Spirit, and that these three are one (1 John 5:7); are the one God: look into the first page of the Bible, and you will see how just and right is that observation of the Psalmist (Ps. 33:6); by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath or spirit of his mouth; and that Jehovah, his word and spirit, were concerned in the creation of all things: you will learn from thence that God made the heavens and the earth; that the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and brought the chaos into a beautiful order, as well as garnished the heavens; and that God the word said, Let there be light, and there was light; and that these three are the U S that made man after their image and likeness. (Gen. 1:1-3; 1:26) This doctrine is frequently suggested in the Old Testament, but clearly revealed in the New; and no where more clearly than in the commission for the administration of the ordinance of baptism; Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19); and in the administration of it itself to our Lord Jesus Christ, at which all the three persons appeared; the Father by a voice from heaven, declaring Christ his beloved Son; the Son in human nature, submitting to the ordinance; and the holy Ghost descending as a dove upon him (Matthew 3:16, 17); this was thought to be so clear a testimony for this doctrine, that it was usual with the ancients to say, "Go to Jordan, and there learn the doctrine of the trinity."

If the question is concerning the Deity of Christ, his eternal Sonship and distinct personality, look to your way-marks; inquire into the sacred records, and there you will find, that he is the mighty God, God over all, blessed for ever; the great God, the true God, and eternal life (Isa. 9:6; Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:20); that all divine perfections are in him; that the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him; that he is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; to whom all divine works are ascribed, and all divine worship is given; that he is the only begotten of the Father, the firstborn of every creature; or was begotten before any creature was in being (Heb. 1:3; Col. 2:9; 1:15); of whom the Father says, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee (Ps .2:7); that he is the Word which was in the beginning with God; and must be distinct from him with whom he was; and in the fullness of time was made flesh; which neither the Father nor the Spirit were (John 1:1, 14); and the same sacred writings will satisfy you about the deity and personality, as well as the operations of the blessed Spirit.

If the doubt is about the doctrine of Election, read over the sacred volumes, and there you will find, that this is an eternal and sovereign act of God the Father, which was made in Christ before the foundation of the world; that it is to holiness here, and happiness hereafter; that the means

are sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; that it is irrespective of faith and good works, being before persons had done either good or evil; that faith and holiness flow from it, and that grace and glory are secured by it; Whom he did predestinate, then; he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 9:21; 8:30).

If you have any hesitation about the doctrine of Original Sin, look into your Bible; there you will see, that the first man sinned, and all sinned in him; that judgment, through his offense, came upon all men to condemnation; and that by his disobedience many were made sinners; that men are conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; that they are transgressors from the womb, go astray from thence, speaking lies, and are by nature children of wrath (Rom. 5:12, 18, 19; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Isa. 48:8, Eph. 2:3).

If the matter in debate is the Satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ, read over the epistles of his holy apostles, and they will inform you, that he was made under the law, and became the fulfilling end of it, in the room of his people; that he yielded perfect obedience to it, and bore the penalty of it, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in them; that he was made sin for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him; and a curse for them, that he might redeem them from the curse of the law; that he offered himself a sacrifice for them, in their room and stead to God, for a sweet-smelling savor; that he suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring them nigh to God; and died for their sins according to the scriptures, and made reconciliation and atonement for them (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3, 4; 10:4; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 5:2; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 15:3; Heb. 2:17).

If you are at a loss about the Extent of Christ's Death, and know not what part to take in the controversy about general and particular Redemption, look to your way-marks, the scriptures, and take your direction from thence; and there you will observe, that those whom Christ saves from their sins are his own people, for whose transgressions he was stricken; that he gave his life a ransom for many, for all sorts of persons, for all his elect, Jews and Gentiles; that they were his sheep he laid down his life for; that he loved the church, and gave himself for it; and that he tasted death for every one of his brethren, and of the children the Father gave him; that those that are redeemed by him, are redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation (Matthew 1:21; 20:28; John 10:25; Eph. 5:25; Heb. 2:9-12; Rev. 5:9).

If the affair before you is the doctrine of Justification, and the query is, whether it is by works of righteousness done by you, or by the righteousness of Christ imputed to you, or about any thing relating to it, read over the sacred pages, and especially the epistles of the apostle Paul; and you will easily see, that a man cannot be justified in the sight of God by the works of the law, or by his own obedience to the law of works; that, if righteousness comes by the law, Christ is dead in vain; that men are justified by faith, without the works of the law; that is, by the righteousness of Christ, received by faith; that they are justified by the blood of Christ, and made righteous by his obedience; that this is the righteousness which God approves of, accepts, and imputes to his people, without works; and which being looked to, apprehended and received by faith, is productive of much spiritual peace and comfort in the soul (Rom. 3:20, 28; Gal. 2:16, 21; Rom. 5:1, 9, 19; 4:6).

If the dispute is about Free-will or Free-grace, the power of the one, and the efficacy of the other, in a sinner's regeneration and conversion; turn to your Bible, and from thence it will appear, that this work is not by the might, or power of man, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts; that men are born again, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, his Spirit and grace; that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy; that the work of faith is a work of power, of the operation of God, and is carried on by it, and is even according to the exceeding greatness of his power, who works in man both to will and to do of his own good pleasure (Zech. 4:6; John 1:13; 3:5; Rom. 9:15, 16; Col. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:11; Eph. 1:10; Phil. 2:13).

If the demur is about the final Perseverance of the Saints, read over the gracious promises and declarations in the word of God, and they will serve to confirm you in it; as that the righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger; that God will put

his fear into the hearts of his people, and they shall not depart from him: that they are preferred in Christ Jesus, and in his hands, out of whose hands none can pluck them; who is able to keep them from falling, and will; and that they are, and shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (Job 17:9; Jer. 32:40; John 10:28, 29; Jude 1:24; 1 Pet. 1:5).

To observe no more: if the doctrines of the Resurrection of the dead, and a future Judgment, should be called in question, read the divine oracles, and there you are told, that there will be a resurrection both of the just and unjust; that the one shall come forth from their graves to the resurrection of life, and the other to the resurrection of damnation; that there is a judgment to come; that there is a righteous Judge appointed, and a day let when just judgment will be executed; and that all, small and great, good and bad, must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive for the things done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil (Acts 24:16; John 5:28, 29; Acts 17:31; Rev. 20:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).

3dly, If the inquiry is about Worship, the scriptures will direct you both as to the object and manner of it, and circumstances relating to it; they will inform you, that God only is to be worshipped, and not a creature; and that the Deity to be worshipped is not like to gold, or silver, or stone graven by art and man's device; that God is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth: you will there find the rules for the several parts of worship, for prayer to him, singing his praise, preaching his word, and administering his ordinances, and how every thing should be done decently, and in order (Rom. 1:25, Acts 17:29; John 4:24; 1 Cor. 14:40)

4thly, If the inquiry is about the nature of a Church, its government, officers, and discipline; look into the ancient records of the scripture, and there you will meet with a just and true account of these things, the original of them, and rules concerning them; you will find that a church is a society of saints and faithful men in Christ Jesus, that are joined together in holy fellowship; that are incorporated into a visible church-state, and by agreement meet together in one place to carry on the worship of God, to glorify him, and edify one another (Eph. 1:1; 1 Cor. 11:20); that it is not national, provincial, or parochial, but congregational; that its offices or officers are only these two plain ones, Bishops, or Overseers or Elders, and Deacons (Phil. 1:1); where you will find nothing of the rabble of the Romish hierarchy; not a syllable of archbishops, archdeacons, deans, prebends, priests, chantors, rectors, vicars, curates, etc. there you will observe laws and rules of Christ, the sole head of the church, his own appointing, for the better ordering and regulating affairs; rules about the reception and rejection of members, for the laying on or taking off censures, for admonitions and excommunications; all which are to be done by the joint suffrage of the church.

5thly, If the inquiry is about the Ordinances of the Gospel, stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, in which the saints formerly trod; if it is about the ordinance of the Lord's-supper, the scriptures will inform you of the original institution of this ordinance by Christ, of the nature, use, and intent of it; that it is to shew forth the death of Christ till he come again; to commemorate his sufferings and sacrifice, to represent his body broken, and his blood shed for the sins of his people; and that if any one is desirous of partaking of it, he should first examine himself whether he has true faith in Christ and is capable of discerning the Lord's body (Matthew 26:26-28). If it is concerning the ordinance of baptism, by consulting the sacred oracles you will easily perceive that this is of God, and not of man; that it is to be done in water; that the form of administration is in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost; that the subjects of it are believers in Christ, and the mode by immersion; and that the whole is warranted by the commission and example of our Lord (Matthew 21:25; 3:6, 11, 16; 28:19) But,

1. If there is any doubt about the subjects of this ordinance, whether they are infants or adult persons, stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths not which fathers and councils have marked out, but which the scriptures point unto, and in which John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles, have trod. We do not decline looking into the three first centuries of Christianity, commonly reckoned the purest ages of it; we readily allow, that Infant-baptism was talked of in the third century; it was then moved in the African churches but that it was practiced is not proved. I will not say it is improbable that any were then baptized; but this I affirm, it is not certain that any were; as yet, it has not been proved, and as for the writers of the two first centuries, not a

word of it is mentioned by them. And had it, had any thing dropped from their pens that looked like it, and could by artifice be wire-drawn to the countenance of it, we should not think ourselves obliged to embrace it on that account; what if Hermas, or Barnabas, or Ignatius, or Polycarp, or the two Clements of Rome and Alexandria, or Irenaeus, or Justin Martyr, or Tatian, or Theophilus of Antioch, or Athenagoras, or Minutius Felix declared it, any one or more of them, as their opinion, that infants ought to be baptized, (though none of them have) yet we should not think ourselves bound to receive it, any more than the many absurdities, weak reasonings, and silly notions these men gave into; and even could it be proved, (as it cannot) that it is an incontestable fact that Infant-baptism was administered by one or more of them, it would only serve to prove this sad truth, known by other instances, how soon corruptions in faith and practice got into the Christian churches, even presently after the times of the apostles; nay, the mystery of iniquity began to work in their days. Wherefore, in order to get satisfaction in this point,

Look over the accounts of the administration of the ordinance of baptism by John, the first administrator of it, and see if you can find that any infants were baptized by him. We are told, that there went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan; that is, the inhabitants of these places, great numbers of them; but surely these could not be infants, nor any among them, that went out to John to hear him preach, or be baptized by him: it is added, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins: these also could not be infants, but adult persons, who being made truly sensible of sin, and having true repentance for it, frankly and ingenuously confessed it; which infants are not capable of John preached the baptism of repentance, and required repentance previous to it, and even fruits meet for it, and evidential of it; and when the Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism, who also could not be infants, he objects to them, because not good men and penitent; and even though they were capable of pleading that they were the children of Abraham, and the seed of that great believer (Matthew 3:5-9). And indeed the notion that is advanced in our day is a very idle one, that infants must be baptized, because the seed of believers. Are not all mankind the seed of believers? Has not God made of one man 's blood all nations that are upon the face of the earth? Were not Adam and Eve believers in Christ, to whom the first promise and declaration of a Messiah were made? And do not all men spring from them? Or come we lower to Noah, the father of the new world, who was a perfect man, and found grace in the sight of God; do not all men descend from him? Turks, Jews, Pagans and Papists, are all the seed of believers, and at this rate ought to be baptized: and as for immediate believers and unbelievers, their feed by birth are upon an equal foot, and are in no wise better one than another, or have any preference the one to the other, or have by birth any claim to a gospel privilege or blessing the other has not; the truth of the matter is, that they are equally by nature children of wrath.

Look farther into the account of baptism as administered by Christ, or rather by his orders, and see if you can find an infant there. John's disciple come to him, and say, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come to him (John 3:26).

These also could not be infants that came to him and were baptized; and besides, who they were that were baptized by him, or by his orders, we are afterwards told, and their characters are given; Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (John 4:1): first he made them disciples, and then baptized them, or ordered them to be baptized, and a disciple of Christ is one that has learnt him, and the way of salvation by him; who is taught to deny sinful, civil and righteous self for Christ; and such were the persons baptized in the times of Christ, who must be adult ones; and with this his practice agrees the commission he gave in Matthew 28:19 where he orders teaching before baptizing; and such teaching as issues in believing, with which compare Mark 16:16. True indeed, he says (Matthew 19:14), suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; but they were admitted to come to him, not to be baptized by him, of which there is not one syllable, nor the least intimation, but to lay his hands on them and pray, or be touched by him, very probably to heal them of diseases that might attend them. However, it seems reasonable to conclude, that the apostles knew nothing of any such practice as Infant baptism, enjoined, practiced, or countenanced by Christ, or they would never have forbid the bringing of infants to him; and our Lord laying nothing of it when such a fair opportunity offered, looks very

darkly upon it.

Once more; look over the accounts of the administration of Baptism by the apostles of Christ, and observe who they were that were baptized by them. We read indeed of households baptized by them; but inasmuch as there are many families that have no infants in them, nothing can be concluded from hence in favor of Infant-baptism; it should be first proved that there were infants in these households, before any such consequence can be drawn from them: and besides, it will appear upon a review of them, that not infants but adult persons in the several instances are intended. Lydia's household consisted of brethren, whom the apostles comforted; who could not be infants, but adult persons; we have no account of any other, no other are named; if any other can, let them be named. The Jailor's household were such, to whom the word of God was spoken, who believed in God, and rejoiced with him. Stephanas' household, which is the only other that is mentioned, is thought by some to be the same with the Jailor's; but, if not, it is certain that it consisted of adult persons, such who addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints (Acts 16:15, 32-34, 40; 1 Cor. 1:26; 6:15). It will be easy to observe, that the first persons that were baptized after our Lord's resurrection and ascension, were such as were pricked to the heart, repented of their sins, and gladly received the gospel; such were the three thousand who were baptized, and added to the church in one day. The Samaritans, hearing Philip preach the things concerning the kingdom of God, were baptized, both men and women. The instance of the Eunuch is notorious; this man was a Jewish proselyte, a serious and devout man, was reading in the prophecy of Isaiah when Philip joined his chariot; Who, after conversation with him, desired baptism of him, to whom Philip replied, that if he believed with all his heart he might be baptized; intimating, that if he did not, notwithstanding his profession of religion, and external seriousness and devotion, he had no right to that ordinance; and upon professing his faith in Christ he was baptized. Cornelius and his family, and those in his house, to whom Peter preached, and on whom the holy Ghost fell, were ordered by him to be baptized, having received the holy Ghost, and for that reason. And the Corinthians, hearing the apostle Paul, and believing in Christ he preached, were baptized (Acts 2:37, 41, 42; 8:12, 37, 38; 10:47; 18:8): from all which instances it appears, that not infants but adult persons were the only ones baptized by the apostles of Christ. Now, though we might justly demand a precept or command of Christ to be shewn, expressly enjoining the baptism of infants, before we can go into such a practice, since it is used as a part of religious worship; for which we ought to have thus saith the Lord: yet if but one single precedent could be given us, one instance produced; or if it could be proved that any one infant was ever baptized by John the Baptist, by Christ, or by his orders, or by his apostles, we should think ourselves obliged to follow such an example; let this be shewn us, and we have done; we will shut up the controversy, and say no more. Strange! that in the space of sixty or seventy years, for such a course of time ran out from the first administration of baptism to the close of the canon of the scripture, that in all the accounts of baptism in it, not a single instance of infant baptism can be given! upon the whole, we must be allowed to say, and if not, we must and will take the liberty to say, that Infant-baptism is an unscriptural practice; and that there is neither precept nor precedent for it in all the word of God.

2. If the doubt is concerning the Mode of baptism, whether it is to be performed by immersion of the whole body, or by sprinkling or pouring a little water on the face; take the same course as before, ask for the old paths; inquire how this ordinance was anciently administered in the times of John, Christ, and his apostles. I shall not appeal unto, nor send you to inquire the signification of the Greek word; though all men of learning and sense have acknowledged, that the primary meaning of the word is to dip or plunge; but this ordinance was appointed not for men of learning only, but for men and women also of the meaner capacities, and of the most plain and simple understandings: wherefore let all inquiring persons consult.

The scriptural instances of baptism; read over the accounts of baptism as administered by John, and you will find that he baptized in Jordan: ask yourselves why a river was chose, when a bason of water would have done, had it been performed by sprinkling or pouring; try if you can bring yourselves to believe that John was not in the river Jordan, only on the banks of it, from whence he took water, and poured or sprinkled it; and if you can seriously and in good earnest conclude (with a grave divine) that if he was in the river, he had in his hand a scoop, or some such

instrument, and with it threw the water over the people as they stood on the banks of the river on both sides of him, and so baptized them in shoals. Look over the baptism of Christ by John, and see if you can persuade yourselves that Christ went ankle deep, or a little more, into the river Jordan, and John stood upon a bank and poured a little water on his head, as messieurs painter and engraver have described them; or whether the most easy and natural sense of the whole is not this, that they both went into the river Jordan, and John baptized our Lord by immersion; which when done, he straightway came up out of the water, which supposes him to have been in it; and then the Spirit descended on him as a dove, and a voice was heard from his Father, laying, This is my beloved Son (Matthew 3:6, 16, 17). Carefully read over those words of the evangelist (John 3:23), and John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there; and try if you can make much water to signify little; or many waters, as the words may be literally rendered, only a little rill, or some small rivulets of water, not sufficient to cover a man's body; though the phrase is used even of the waters of the great sea;[2] and persuade yourselves, if you can, that the reason of the choice of this place, because of much water in it, was not for baptism, as says the text, but for the convenience of men, their camels and asses on which they came to hear John; of which it says not one word. To which add the instance of the eunuch's baptism, in which we are told (Acts 8:38, 39), that both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water; and that when baptism was administered, they came up out of the water: now try whether you can really believe that this great man, who left his chariot, went down with Philip into the water, ankle or knee deep, only to have a little water sprinkled and poured upon him, and then came out of it, when in this way the ordinance might as well have been administered in his chariot; or whether it is not most reasonable to believe, from the bare narrative, from the very letter of the text, that their going down into the water was in order that the ordinance might be administered by immersion; and that when Philip had baptized the Eunuch this way, they both came up out of the water: as for that poor weak criticism, that this is to be understood of going to and from the water-side; it may be asked what they should go thither for, what reason was there for it, if done by sprinkling? Besides, it is entirely destroyed by the observation the historian makes before this, that they came unto a certain water;[3] to the water-side; and therefore when they went down, it must be into the water itself; it could not with any propriety be said, that when they were come to the water-side, after that they went to the water-side. But to proceed,

Consider the figurative or metaphorical baptisms mentioned in scripture. Baptism is said (1 Pet. 3:20, 21) to be a like figure to Noah's ark, in which eight souls were saved by water; there is a likeness, an agreement between the one and the other; now see if you can make out any likeness between the ark upon the waters and baptism, as performed by sprinkling; whereas it soon appears as performed by immersion, in which persons are covered in water, as Noah and his family in the ark were, when the fountains of the great deep were broke up under them, and the windows of heaven were opened above them: think with yourselves, whether sprinkling or immersion best agrees with this, that baptism should be called the antitype to it; to which may be added, that Noah and his family, when shut up in the ark, were, as it were, buried there; and baptism by immersion is a representation of a burial. The passage of the Israelites through the Red sea is called a being baptized in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10:1, 2); but why should it be so called? what is there in that account that looks like sprinkling? There is that resembles immersion; for when the waters of the sea stood up on both sides of them, as a wall, and a cloud covered them, they were as people immersed in water; and besides, their going down into the sea, and parting through it, and coming up out of it on the other side; if it may not be literally called an immersion, it was very much like an immersion into water, and an immersion out of it; and both that and baptism represent a burial and resurrection. The sufferings of our Lord, are called a baptism; you would do well to consider whether only sprinkling a few drops of water on the face, or an immersion into it, best represents the abundance and greatness of our Lord's sorrows and sufferings, for which reason they are called a baptism; and the rather, since they are signified by the waters coming into his soul, and by his coming into deep waters, where the floods overflowed him (Luke 12:50; Ps. 69:1, 2). Once more, the extraordinary donation of the holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost is called a baptism, or a being baptized with the holy Ghost, and with fire; which was done when the house in which the apostles were, was filled with a mighty

wind, and cloven tongues, as of fire, sat upon them (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5; 2:1-3): it deserves your consideration, whether this wonderful affair, and this large abundance of the Spirit, is not better expressed by baptism, as administered in a large quantity of water, than with a little. To add no more;

Consider the nature, use, and end of baptism; it is a burial; and the use and end of it are, to represent the burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; hence the phrase of being buried with him in baptism (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12) see if you can make any thing like a burial when this ordinance is administered by sprinkling; can you persuade yourselves, that a corpse is properly buried, when only a little dust is sprinkled on its face? on the other hand, you will easily perceive a lively representation of a burial, when the ordinance is performed by immersion; a person is then covered with water, and when he comes out of it, it clearly represents our Lord's resurrection, and the believer's rising again to newness of life. Upon the whole, having asked for the good old paths, and found them, walk herein, abide by this ancient practice of baptism by immersion; a practice which continued for the space of thirteen hundred years at least, without any exception, unless a few bed-ridden people in the times of Cyprian,[4] who received baptism on their sick and death-beds, fancying there was no atonement for sins after baptism, and therefore deferred it till such time.

But after all, let me advise you in the words of our text to inquire where is the good way, or the better way; for though the ordinance of baptism, and every other, is a good way, there is a better way. This is a way of duty, but not of life and salvation; it is a command of Christ, to be obeyed by all believers in him, but not to be trusted in and depended on; it is essential to church-communion, but not to salvation; it is indeed no indifferent thing whether it is performed or no; this ought not to be laid or thought of any ordinance of Christ; or whether in this or the other manner, or administered to this or the other subject. It ought to be done as Christ has directed it should; but when it is best done, it is no saving ordinance: this I the rather mention, to remove from us a wicked and a foolish imputation, that we make an idol of this ordinance, and place our confidence and dependence on it, and put it in the room of the Savior. I call it wicked, because false; and foolish, because contrary to an avowed and well-known principle on which we proceed, namely, that faith in Christ alone for salvation is a prerequisite to baptism: can any man in his senses think that we depend on this ordinance for salvation, when we require that a person should believe in Christ, and profess that he believes in Christ alone for salvation, before he is baptized; or otherwise we judge he is not a fit subject? but on the other hand, those that insinuate such a notion as this, would do well to consider, if their own conduct does not bespeak something of this kind; or otherwise what means the stir and hustle that is made, when a child is ill, and not yet sprinkled? what means such language as this, "run, fetch the minister to baptize the child, the child's a-dying?" Does it not look as if this was thought to be a saving business, or as if a child could not be fared unless it is sprinkled; and which, when done, they are quite easy and satisfied about its state? But to leave this, and as the apostle says, yet shew I unto you a mere excellent way (I Cor. 12:31), which is Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life.

Christ is the way of salvation, which the gospel, and the ministers of it, point out to men; and he is the only way of salvation, there is salvation in him, and in no other; this is what the whole Bible centers in; this is the sum and substance of it; this is the faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. that Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners. He is the way of access to the Father, nor can any come to God but by him; he is the mediator between God and man, and through him there is access with confidence by the faith of him. He is the way of acceptance with God: we have nothing to render us acceptable unto God; we are black in ourselves with original and actual sin, and are only comely in Christ; our acceptance is in the beloved. God is well pleased with him, and with all that are considered in him; their persons and their sacrifices are acceptable to God through him. He is the way of conveyance of all grace, and the blessings of it to us. All was given originally to him, and to us in him; and from him, and through him we receive it, even out of his fullness, grace for grace; all spiritual blessings are with him, and come to us from him; all grace passes through his hands; the first we have, and all the after-supplies of it; yea, the gift of God, eternal life, is through Jesus Christ our Lord And he is the way to heaven and eternal happiness; he has entered into it with his own blood already, and has opened a way

by it for his people, into the holiest of all; he is gone beforehand as their forerunner, and has taken possession of heaven for them; he is now preparing a place for them there, and will come again and take them to himself, and introduce them into his kingdom and glory. And he is a plain, pleasant, and safe way; plain to him that understands, and has a spiritual knowledge of him, even though but of a very mean capacity; for this is a way in which men, though fools, shall not err; and it is a very delightful one; what more delightful than to live by faith on Christ, or to walk by faith in him, as he hath been received. And a very save one, it must needs be; none ever perished that believed in Christ; he is the living way, all in this way live, none in this way die; though it is a strait gate and narrow way, yet it surely and rarely leads to eternal life; and though it is sometimes called a new way, yet not because newly contrived, for it is as ancient in this respect as the counsel and covenant of peace; nor newly revealed, for it was made known to Adam immediately after the fall; nor newly made use of, for all the Old Testament saints were directed in this way, and walked in it, and were rived by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, as well as we; but because it is more clearly manifested now, and more largely and frequently walked in: otherwise it is the good old path to be asked for; there never was any other way of salvation, or ever will be. I go on,

II. To consider the encouragement given to take the direction, and make the inquiry as above; and in this I shall be very brief; it lies in this clause, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

There is a rest for souls to be enjoyed in ordinances, when men are arrived to satisfaction about them, and submit unto them in a becoming manner; when a man has carefully and conscientiously searched the scriptures, and is come to a point about an ordinance, his mind is easy, which before was distracted and confused; and he is the more easy in that he has acted the faithful part to himself and truth; and I cannot see how persons can have rest in their minds, who have not stood in the ways and looked about them, searched the scriptures, and inquired for the good old paths; and in consequence of an honest inquiry, walk therein; to such, wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and her paths of peace; there is great peace enjoyed in them, though not from them; a believer comes to an ordinance, being upon inquiry satisfied about it, as for instance, the ordinance of baptism; he, I say, comes to it with delight, passes through it with pleasure, and goes away from it as the eunuch did, rejoicing.

There is rest for souls to be enjoyed in doctrines, which a man does enjoy, when upon a diligent search after truth, he finds it, and is at a point about it; a man that is tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, is like a wave of the sea, always restless and uneasy; a double-minded man, that halts between two opinions, and sometimes inclines to one, and sometimes to the other, is unstable in all his ways, and has no true rest in his mind; a man that is carried about with divers and strange doctrines, is like a meteor in the air, sometimes here, and sometimes there; a good thing it is to have the heart established in and with the doctrines of grace; and the way to this is to search the scriptures, to see whether these things be so or no; which when seriously and faithfully done, the issue is peace of conscience, rest in the mind.

But above all, true rest for the soul is to be had in Christ, and such who ask for the good and better way find it in him, nor is it to be found in any other; Christ is that to believers, as Noah's ark was to the dove, which could find no rest for the sole of its feet, till it returned thither: there is rest in Christ, and no where else, and he invites weary souls to come to him for it; his words are (Matthew 11:28, 29), Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; which last clause is the same with this in our text, and the Lord seems to have had respect unto it, and to have took his language from it: and what peace and rest do weary souls find in Christ, when their faith is led to his person, fullness, blood, sacrifice and righteousness? and such who are made partakers of spiritual rest here, shall enjoy an eternal one hereafter, for still there remains a rest to the people of God (Heb. 4:9).

To conclude; let us bless God for the scriptures, that we have such a way-mark to direct us, and point out unto us the way in which we should go; let us make use of them; let us search the scriptures daily and diligently, and the rather, since they testify of Christ, of his person, offices, of his doctrines and ordinances. There are the more sure word of prophecy, to which we do well to

take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place; these are a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths, both with respect to the way of salvation, and to the way of our duty. These guide us to the old paths, and shew us where is the good way in which we should walk; and when we are tempted to turn to the right hand, or the left, it is best to hearken to the voice of the word behind us, saying, This is the way, walk in it (John 5:39; 2 Pet. 1:19; Ps. 119:105; Isa. 30:21). The Bible has the best claim to antiquity of any book in the world; and the gospel, and the truths of it, have the greatest marks and evidences of it upon them. Error is old, but truth is more ancient than that; the gospel is the everlasting gospel; it was even ordained before the world unto our glory (Rev. 14:6; 1 Cor. 2:7); and the ordinances of it, as administered in the times of Christ and his apostles, should be received and submitted to, as there delivered; and we should walk in them as we have Christ and his apostles for an example: but above all things, our concern should be to walk in Him, the way; there is no way better, nor any so good as he; seek rest for your souls in him, and no where else; not in the law, and the works of it, there is none there; not in the world, and the things of it, this is not your rest, it is polluted (Micah 2:10); but seek it in Christ, where you will find it here, and more fully enjoy it with him hereafter.

ENDNOTES:

[1] T. Hierof. Maccot. fol. 31. 4.

[2] Septuagint in Psalm 77:19 and Psalm 107:23.

[3] Verse 36.

[4] Clinici.

THE AGREEMENT OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

A Sermon,

Preached at a Wednesday's Evening Lecture,

in

GREAT EAST-CHEAP, Mar. 24, 1756.

Acts 26: 22, 23.

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great; saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

This Lecture, which I am now about to take my leave of, was set up in the year 1729, between six and seven and twenty years ago. I opened it with a discourse or two on the words of the Psalmist, in Psalm 71:16, I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only: My view in the choice of those words was, partly to observe that I undertook the service of the Lecture, and engaged in this work, not in my own strength, but in the strength of Christ, hoping for and expecting the aid and assistance of his Spirit and grace; and partly to shew that my intentions and resolutions were to preach that great and glorious doctrine of a sinner's free justification before God, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, with all others that are analogous to it, or in connection with it; which Luther rightly called articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ, "the article of the church standing or falling, or that by which it stands or falls;" for as that doctrine is received or rejected, the church of Christ in all ages and periods of time flourishes or declines. And through the grace of God I have been enabled to abide by these resolutions throughout my concern in this Lecture; and now I close it with a discourse on the words read, having therefore obtained help of God, &c., which are part of an apology or defence, which the apostle Paul made for himself in a very numerous assembly; at the head of which were very great personages, as Agrippa king of the Jews, Bernice his sister, Festus the Roman governor, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city of Cesarea, and all in open court; which verified what our Lord had foretold to his disciples, saying, ye shall be brought before kings and governors for my sake (Matt. 10:10). The apostle being permitted to speak for himself, addressed the king in a very polite manner, and gave an account of himself from his youth upwards; "how that he was brought up in the strictest sect of the Jewish religion, a Pharisee; trained up in the belief and hope of the promised Messiah, and of the resurrection of the dead; and possessed with prejudices against Jesus of Nazareth and his followers, against whom he was exceeding mad, and persecuted them to strange cities; and how that in the midst of his career of rage and fury against them, it pleased the Lord to meet with him, and convert him," And then he relates the manner of his conversion; "how an amazing light surrounded him and struck him, and those that were with him, to the ground; that he heard a voice speaking to him by name, and what answer he returned to it; when he was not only effectually called by grace, but the Lord Jesus Christ personally appeared to him, and made him a minister of the everlasting gospel; promised him protection and deliverance from all people, Jews and Gentiles, to whom he should send him; and pointed out the ends and usefulness of his ministration; to open the eyes of men, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ:" upon which he observes to Agrippa, that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; but immediately preached the doctrines of faith, repentance and good works at Damascus; the place where he then was, and at Jerusalem, and through all the land of Judea, and then among the Gentiles; and these were the only causes and reasons of the rage of the Jews against him, and which moved them to seek to take away his life time after time: but notwithstanding, the Lord preserved him for much and long usefulness in the ministry of the gospel; which he takes notice of in the words before us, having therefore obtained help of God, &c. In which may be observed,

First, That the apostle ascribes his continuance in life, and in the ministry of the word, to the help that he had obtained of God, which help,

Designs the care of divine providence exercised towards him in a special way and manner. The providence of God is common to all his creatures; it is owing to that, the souls of men are upheld in life; and as life itself is a grant and favour from the Lord, so it is his providential visitation that preserves the spirits of men. In him all live, and move, and have their being (Ps. 66:9; Job 10:12; Acts 17:28), they not only have it from him, but they are supported in it by him; and there is a special providence which superintends the people of God; though he is the Saviour of all men, yet more especially of those that believe (1 Tim. 4:10); and particularly ministers of the gospel are in a remarkable manner preserved by the Lord; he holds these stars in his right hand (Rev. 2:1); they are his peculiar care and charge, and he continues their useful lives for much service in his church. This was the happy case of our apostle.

It takes in, and has a particular respect unto, the deliverance of him from dangers to which he was exposed, and which Christ promised him, verse 17, and he here acknowledges was made good unto him. As soon as he became a convert, and a preacher of the gospel, the Jews laid in wait for him to take away his life; insomuch that the disciples were obliged to let him down in a basket by the wall of the city of Damascus, to make his escape; at another time they found him in the temple, and fell upon him, and beat him unmercifully, and would have destroyed him, had not the chief captain of a Roman band ran to his relief: and after this, forty of them bound themselves under a curse, not to eat or drink until they had killed him; besides many perils of life was he in among the Gentiles, as at Lystra, Iconium, and other places (Acts 9:24, 25; 14:19; 21:32, 33; 23:12, 13); but he obtained help of the Lord against all his enemies, and deliverance from all dangers; and continued a faithful dispenser of the word, and stood his ground, through all difficulties, and in spite of all opposition.

This includes all that help and assistance which he received from the Lord in preaching the gospel; for notwithstanding his natural and acquired abilities, and the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the spirit bestowed on him, yet he was conscious of his own weakness and inability in himself to perform such service; and therefore asks (2 Cor. 2:16), who is sufficient for these things? He knew he was not of himself, and that the grace of Christ alone was sufficient for him; that it was his strength which was made perfect in his weakness; that it was through Christ strengthening him he did all those wonderful things he did; that though he laboured more abundantly than any of the apostles, yet it was not he, but the grace of God which was with him (1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 4:13); by which he was what he was, as a minister, and had what he had as such, and did what he did under that character; and by which he was enabled to preach the gospel so frequently, so constantly, so fully, and in so many places, from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum.

Secondly, The apostle expresses the nature of the work he was engaged and continued in, by witnessing; it was a testifying of the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24); bearing witness to the truth of it, to the grace of God in it; his free favour in choosing men to salvation, in providing and sending Christ to be the Saviour of them, and in the whole of their salvation by him: it was a giving testimony to Christ, to his person, office and grace; hence the gospel is called, the testimony of our Lord (2 Tim. 1:8): the apostles of Christ were made and appointed to be his witnesses, to testify of his incarnation, works, sufferings, death, resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, and of all things they had heard, and seen, and knew concerning him; and so was the apostle Paul, verse 17, and all ministers of the gospel are witnesses, who prophesy, though in sackcloth, and will do so to the end of the reign of antichrist.

Thirdly, The persons to whom he witnessed, he says, were small and great; having, no doubt, a special regard to the audience he was now addressing, consisting of great personages, as before observed, and of a multitude of the common people; he bore witness to the truths of Christ and his gospel, to all sorts of men, of every age, rank and condition of life, high and low, rich and poor; and of every character, wise and unwise; his commission being the same with the rest of the apostles, reached to all; go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

Fourthly, The subject-matter of the apostle's ministry is signified; 1st, More generally, as what agreed with the doctrine of the Old Testament, with Moses and the prophets: 2dly, More particularly, as it respected, in agreement with them, the sufferings and resurrection of Christ, and his being a light to Jews and Gentiles. And on these two things I shall a little enlarge.

What the apostle chiefly insisted upon in his ministry in general, was the same with what Moses and the prophets had spoken of; saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, or should be: as he agreed with them in the following things, which are particularly respected, so in every thing they said there is an entire harmony and consent between the prophets of the Old, and the apostles of the New Testament; and especially in every thing concerning Christ: they agreed in laying him as the foundation of the church and people of God, and of their faith, hope and happiness; hence he is called (Eph. 2:20), the foundation of the apostles and prophets. The Old and New Testaments are like the cherubim over the mercy seat, which were exactly of the same form and size; their faces were to each other, and both to the mercy seat, a type of Christ; as the cherubim were of the ministers of the word, the prophets of the Old, and the apostles of the New Testament. These two parts of the sacred scripture are the church's two breasts, which are like two young roes that are twins (Cant. 4:5); that are in every thing, in nature, color and proportion like to each other. Our Lord and his apostles appealed to the writings of Moses and the prophets, for the truth of what they delivered; they fetched quotations from them to support their doctrines by; and these are said by them to be able to make men wise unto salvation; and to be profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness; and to make the man of God thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:15-17): there is not a doctrine of the gospel, but what may be established and confirmed by these sacred books. And this will soon and easily appear by a short detail of some of the principal and peculiar doctrines of it. As,

The doctrine concerning the divine Being, and the persons in the Godhead. One branch of which is, that there is but one God. This is the voice of reason and revelation, the language of the Bible, of both Testaments, old and new. Our Lord frequently suggests this truth, and so do his apostles; and the apostle Paul particularly, in the name of the rest, and indeed of all Christians, says to us there is but one God (Matt. 19:17; Mark 12:29, 32; John 17:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 Tim. 2:5); and this is what Moses said, hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord (Deut. 6:4): the prophets say the same, and the Lord by them; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me—is there a God beside me? yea there is no God, I know not any (Isa. 43:10; 44:8), all which is said in opposition to the polytheism of the heathens, but not to the exclusion of any of the divine persons in the Godhead; for another branch of this doctrine is, that there is a plurality of persons in God, and that these are neither more nor fewer than three; for as the apostle John says, There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one (1 John 5:7); and which agrees with the doctrine of Christ, as appears by his appointing the ordinance of baptism to be administered, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19); which three divine persons appeared at the baptism of Christ; there was the Son of God in human nature submitting to that ordinance; and there was the voice of the Father from heaven, declaring, that this was his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased; and there was the Holy Spirit, which descended as a dove upon Christ (Matt. 3:16-17); hence the ancients used to say, "Go to Jordan and learn the doctrine of the Trinity:" and this is no other than what is to be found in the writings of Moses and the prophets. Moses plainly intimates a plurality of persons in the Deity, which he represents God as saying, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:—Let us go down and there confound their language (Gen. 1:26; 11:7); and his account of the creation, plainly suggests there were three, and no more. God, the first person, the Father, made the heavens and the earth; and God the Word, the essential Word, the second person, said, Let there be light, and there was light; and the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of the Messiah, as the Jews call him, the third person, moved upon the face of the waters (Gen. 1:1, 2, 3), and brought the dark and unformed chaos in a beautiful order. All which is summarily comprehended in the words of the Psalmist; by the Word, the essential Word of the Lord, of Jehovah the Father, were the heavens made; and all the host of them, by the breath or spirit of his mouth (Ps. 33:6). And the prophets all agree in, and bear testimony to this truth not to mention any other than those words in Isaiah, and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me (Isa.

48:16); here are Jehovah and his Spirit spoken of, as concerned in the mission of Christ into this world. Another branch of this doctrine is, that each of the divine persons is God; not to say any thing of the Father, the first person, about whom there is no question; the second person, the Son of God, is expressly called by the apostle John, the last of the apostles, with whom the rest agree, the true God and eternal life (1 John 5:20); and this doctrine clearly appears in the writings of the Old Testament, for to the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever (Psa. 45:6); and he that is promised as the child that should be born, and the Son given, is named the mighty God (Isa.9:6); he who is prophesied of as the Saviour of lost sinners, is called their God, your God will come and save you (Isa. 35:4); he that is spoken of that should be incarnate and become man, is said to be not a mere man, but the man, Jehovah's fellow (Zech.13:7); his equal, who thought it no robbery to be equal with God. And as for the blessed Spirit, who, in the New Testament, is called the Lord the Spirit; and lying to him is represented as lying to God (2 Cor. 3:18; Acts 5:3, 4); so in the Old Testament such things are ascribed to him, as clearly shew him to be a divine person such as, his concern in the creation of all things; his bringing the earth into proper form and order, by moving on the face of the waters; garnishing the heavens, and bespangling them with stars; making man, and giving him life and understanding (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; 32:8; 33:4).

The doctrine respecting the person and offices of Christ, is the same in both testaments. Is he called in the New Testament the Son of God? is the doctrine of his divine Sonship written as with a sunbeam, in the books of it? is he owned to be the Son of God, by angels and men, good and bad, as well as declared to be so by his Father himself? is this an article of the apostles creed, in which they all unite, saying (John 6:6, 29), We believe and are sure that thou art Christ the Son of the living God? not by office, but by nature; for this is not a term of office, but of relation. The writings of the Old Testament agree herein, in which the second person is often called the Son of God. Daniel knew him as such, and had instilled such a sentiment of him into the mind of Nebuchadnezzar, an heathen monareh; or otherwise, how could he have said (Dan. 3:25), that the form of the fourth person, in the fiery furnace, is like the Son of God? Solomon, long before him, under the name of Agur, says (Prov. 30:4) of God, and his divine Word, What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell? And David his father, before him, introduces the second person, as declaring what his divine Father had said unto him; The Lord hath said Unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee: hence David exhorts the kings and judges of the earth to kiss this Son of God; that is, to serve, worship, and obey him; who appeals to be a divine person, by his being a proper object of trust and confidence; blessed are all they that put their trust in him (Ps.2:7, 12).

Do the writings of the New Testament speak of Christ as God and man in one person, this being the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16)? The writings of the Old Testament speak of him also in both natures as meeting in him: when they represent him as a child to be born, they declare him to be the mighty God and everlasting Father; and when they intimate he should be a branch of David's family, they give him the name of Jehovah our righteousness; and when they speak of him as a man, they call him Jehovah's fellow Isa.9:6; Jer.23:5, 6; Zech.13:7). Is he in the New Testament said (1 Tim. 2:5) "to be the mediator between God and men?" the writers of the Old Testament speak of him as drawing near to God, engaging his heart to approach unto him; as becoming the surety of his people; as being the days-man that lays his hands on both; as signified by Jacob's ladder, which reached from earth to heaven, and united both; as the mercy seat, from off of which the Lord communes with his saints; and as the Angel of God's presence, who appears for his people in it, and introduces them into it (Jer. 30:21; Job 9:32; Gen. 28:12; Ex. 25:22; Isa. 63:9). Do the apostles of Christ make mention of him as invested with the offices of prophet, priest, and king? This is no other than what Moses and the prophets said should be. Moses foretells that God would raise up a prophet like unto him out of the children of Israel, whom they should hearken to (Deut. 18:15); and David says of the Messiah, that he was by the constitution and oath of God, a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4); and other prophets signify that he should make his soul an offering for sin, and make intercession for transgressors (Isa. 53:10, 12); which are the two parts of his priestly office: and there is no need to say, that he is often promised and prophesied of as a king that should come, it is so notorious; Rejoice, O daughter of Zion,—thy king cometh unto thee (Zech. 9:9).

The several peculiar doctrines of special and distinguishing grace are to be observed in the writings of the Old Testament, as well as of the New. As for instance, the doctrine of eternal, personal election is it a truth of the New Testament, that some men are chosen in Christ their head before the foundation of the world, to be holy and happy? It is suggested in the Old, that Christ is God's, first and chief elect, in whom his soul delighteth, and is chosen by him out of the people; and has a people chosen by the Lord for his peculiar treasure and inheritance (Isa. 42:1; Ps. 89:19; 135:4); for himself, or his glory, to enjoy everlasting communion with him. Know that the Lord hath set apart, in a most wonderful and gracious manner, him that is godly; him to whom God is good and gracious, and who is the object of his free grace and favour, as the word signifies; for himself, his service and honour. The same writings declare, that God has made with Christ, with David, his chosen, an everlasting covenant; that Christ is set up from everlasting as mediator of it; that his goings forth in it were of old, from everlasting; that he is the messenger of it, yea the covenant itself; that all the blessings and promises of it belong to him, and are therefore called the sure mercies of David (Ps. 89:3; 2 Sam. 23:5; Prov. 8:22; Micah 5:2; Mal. 3:1; Isa. 42:6; 55:3); which are all absolute and unconditional, and are all confirmed and established by the blood of Christ, said to be the blood of the covenant (Zech. 9:11; Heb. 13:20), in one Testament, as in the other. The doctrine of particular redemption is held forth in both, and appears alike, the person of the redeemer is the same, that should come to, and out of Zion: the redeemed are the spiritual and mystical Jacob and Israel; the things they are redeemed from, are all their sins, Satan that is stronger than they, and death and hell they deserve (Isa. 59:20; 43:1; Ps. 130:7; Jer. 31:11). The doctrine of justification, our apostle so much insisted upon in his ministry and writings, is clearly expressed by the prophets; from whence it appears that it is God that justifies Christ the head, and all his people in him; that it is in, and by him, that all the seed of Israel are justified and glorified; and it is in him they have their justifying righteousness, which is called an everlasting one; and hence he is called the Lord their righteousness (Isa. 50:8; 45:24, 25; Dan. 9:24; Jer. 23:6). The doctrine of pardon of sin, which is an evangelical one, and of pure revelation, is spoken of by Moses and the prophets, as by Christ; for to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43), and by them it appears that there is forgiveness with God; and that it is of all sins, and is an act of God's free grace and mercy, and peculiarly his; and who, before the face of Moses, proclaimed his name, a God gracious and merciful, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin (Ps. 130:4; 103:3; Isa. 43:25; Ex. 34:6, 7). And the agreement of other doctrines of the New Testament with the Old, may easily be observed, as being no other than what is there asserted; as that conversion is not by might or power of man, but by the Spirit of the Lord (Zech. 4:6); and that they that have the true grace of God shall persevere to the end; shall go from strength to strength, grow stronger and stronger, and hold on their way; and that the fear of God being put into their hearts, they shall never depart from him (Ps. 84:7; Job 17:9; Jer. 32:40); and that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a future judgment; that those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt (Dan. 12:2); and that God will judge the righteous and the wicked, and bring every work into judgment, good or evil, open or secret (Eccl. 3:17; 12:14).

II. The particular things here observed, in the ministration of which the apostle agreed with Moses and the prophets, are such as respect the sufferings and resurrection of Christ, and his being a light to Jews and Gentiles; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and shew light to the people and to the Gentiles.

1st, That Christ should suffer; a suffering Christ is the principal subject of the gospel-ministry. The apostles preached Christ crucified, as having suffered the death of the cross in the room and stead of, and for the sake of men; and the apostle Paul determined to know, that is, to make known none but Christ, and him crucified, as the only Saviour of men. This was the first and principal thing of all which he delivered wherever he came, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2; 15:3). The person said to suffer, is Christ; not the Father, as some, called Patri-passians from thence, are said to hold; they, as the Sabellians, asserting there is but one person in the Godhead; but of the Father our Lord says, ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape (John 5:37). He never assumed a nature capable of suffering; nor the Holy Spirit neither; he formed, prepared, and adorned the human nature of

Christ, and Christ through the eternal Spirit offered himself to God (Heb. 9:14); but the Spirit suffered not; it was the Son of God that became incarnate, and appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh; and whom God spared not, but delivered up into the hands of justice and death for us all (Rom. 8:3, 32): it was not indeed in his divine nature, as the Son of God, he suffered, for that is impossible; but in the human nature he assumed, which he took on purpose, that he might have something to offer; as it was necessary he should, that he might be put to death, in the flesh, and be crucified through weakness (1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 13:4): and yet his sufferings are ascribed to his whole person, and even as that is denominated from his divine nature; just as what belongs to his divine nature is predicated of his person, as denominated from his human nature; for instance, his omnipresence, which is an attribute of Deity, is ascribed to Christ, denominated the Son of man; and no man bath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven (John 3:13): and so, on the other hand, the sufferings of Christ, which are peculiar to his human nature, are spoken of his person, as described from his divine nature; as when it is said, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory, and God purchased the church with his own blood (1 Cor. 2:8; Acts 20:28): this is owing to that strict, close, hypostatical, or personal union there is of the two natures in the Son of God; and hence is the efficacy of the blood, righteousness and sacrifice of Christ: his blood cleanseth from all (1 John 1:7), because it is the blood of him who is the Son of God; and his righteousness justifies from all sin, because it is the righteousness of God, of him who is God as well as man; and his sacrifice expiates all sin, and is a sufficient atonement for it, because it is the sacrifice of himself. Should it be asked, what it was that Christ suffered? The answer is, That he suffered in his name, credit, and reputation, which he willingly submitted to, and therefore is said to have made himself of no reputation (Phil. 2:8); he was content to be reckoned a worm, and no man (Ps. 22:6); he was traduced as a sinful man, as a seditious person, as having a devil, and doing his miracles by his help and assistance. He suffered in his body, being beat and bruised, buffeted and scourged, pierced in his hands and feet with nails, in his side with a spear, and in his head with thorns; he suffered the painful, shameful and accursed death of the cross: he suffered in his soul, partly by the temptations of Satan, for he suffered being tempted (Heb. 2:18): and partly by enduring the wrath of God in the room and stead of his people; in the garden, when his soul became exceeding sorrowful even unto death (Matt. 26:38); and upon the cross, when his God and Father forsook him, and he cried out in the agony of his spirit, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me (Matt. 27:46)? his soul, as well as his body, was offered, and became a sacrifice for sin. And all this he endured, not on his own account; he was cut off in a judicial way, by the hand of divine justice, but not for himself (Dan. 11:26), not for any sin of his; he knew none, nor did any; but, he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; it was for the transgression of his people that he was stricken (Isa. 53:6, 8), smitten and afflicted of God; not for angels, and any sins of theirs, whose nature he did not assume, nor are they spared and saved; but for men, sinful men, the worst of men, the chief of sinners he suffered, the just for the unjust (1 Pet. 3:18); not for all the individuals of mankind; for his redeemed ones are redeemed from among men, and out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation (Rev. 14:4; 5:9); they are a people Christ suffered for, his sheep he laid down his life for, the church he gave himself an offering and a sacrifice for unto God, of a sweet-smelling savour (Titus 2:14; John 10:15; Eph. 5:2, 25): and his ends in all his sufferings were to make peace with God for them, which is done by the blood of his cross; to procure the pardon of all their sins, which is obtained the same way; and to redeem them from all iniquity; which redemption is also through his blood; and to deliver them out of the hands of all their enemies, and particularly from him who had the power of death, the devil; and to bring many sons to glory, for which it was necessary the captain of their salvation should be made perfect through suffering. For there was an absolute necessity of them; Ought not Christ to have suffered these things (Luke 24:26)? He must; partly on the account of God, his counsels and decrees, his promises and prophecies. God resolved on saving sinners by Christ; he appointed him to be his salvation; he determined he should suffer and die and he was given up to men, by the determinate counsel of God, who did to him "none other things than what his hand and counsel determined before should be done;" and to fulfill the decrees of God, it was necessary Christ should suffer for his council shall stand (Isa. 46:10); as well as to make good the many promises and prophecies concerning this matter, delivered out by the mouth of his holy prophets; and had he not suffered, how then could the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be (Matt. 26:54)? And

partly on account of Christ himself, his covenant-engagements, to do this part of his Father's will, and the several predictions he himself gave out, that he should suffer many things of the scribes and Pharisees, and die and rise again. As also on the account of the Lord's people, who otherwise could not be saved for here was a law broken, which must be fulfilled; not only its precepts obeyed, but its penalty, which was death, must be endured; injured and affronted justice to be satisfied, which could only be done by the sinner, or surety for him, suffering the demerit of sin; there was no other way of saving sinners but by the sufferings of Christ; consistent with the purposes of God, his counsel and covenant; with the engagements of Christ, and the happiness of the Lord's people, these sufferings could not be avoided: it was not possible the cup should pass from him; could any other way have been found out, or these sufferings excused, that prayer of our Lord would have (Matt. 26:39) procured it.

Now all these sufferings of Christ were no other than what were foretold by Moses and the prophets. The first promise or hint of a Messiah, suggests, that he would be a suffering one, Thou shalt bruise his heel (Gen. 3:15); and all the prophets speak of him as subject to reproach and trouble, to pains and sorrows, to distress of every kind, and death itself. Read over the 22nd Psalm, and the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, and it will be abundantly evident from thence, and other passages, how the prophets testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (1 Pet. 1:11): these show that he would be a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs; that he would be wounded, bruised, give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; that he would be brought to the dust of death, and his soul be poured out unto death; and that he should be buried, and make his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death. Yea, the several circumstances of his sufferings and death are most minutely and exactly foretold in the writings of the prophets; as that he should be betrayed by one of his disciples, one that ate bread with him should lift up his heel against him (Ps. 41:9); that he should be sold for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a servant (Zech 11:12, 13; 13:7); the goodly price he was prized at by them; that he should be deserted by all the disciples, when he should be seized and smitten; that he should be crucified between two thieves, or numbered among the transgressors (Isa. 53:12); that the soldiers should part his garments, and cast lots on his vesture; that they should give him gall for his meat, and vinegar for his drink, and that his side should be pierced with a spear.

2dly, Another particular in which the apostle agreed with Moses and the prophets, is, that Christ should be the first of the resurrection of the dead, or should rise first from thence: that he is risen is certain, not only from the testimony of the women who first came to his sepulchre, and to whom he first appeared; but from the testimony of his disciples and others: of these, he was first seen of Cephas or Peter, then of the twelve, after that of above five hundred brethren at once; next of James, then of all the apostles; and even after his ascension he was seen by Stephen standing on the right hand of God; and last of all by our apostle, as here declared in the context, as one born out of due time (1 Cor. 15:6-8; Acts 7:55). Now the apostles of our Lord were chosen witnesses of God for this purpose (Acts 10:41), and were men of unquestionable characters; they were thoroughly acquainted with Christ, and could not be imposed upon nor were they over-credulous; nay they were incredulous to a fault, and in this very case; they believed not the first report of it from the women, and the two disciples that traveled with Jesus to Emmaus; and therefore Christ at his first appearance to them upbraided them with their unbelief, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen (Mark 16:11, 13, 14): and they had all the opportunities and advantages of satisfying themselves in this matter they could wish for; he shewed himself alive to them by infallible proofs (Acts 1:3); he was seen of them for the space of forty days, during which time they frequently ate, and drank, and conversed with him; and they were men of probity and honesty, and had no sinister ends, nor worldly views to answer by making such a report; but were sure to meet with reproach and disgrace, with rage and persecution, and with death itself in every shape wherever they came with it: nay, the resurrection of Christ is further confirmed by the testimonies of angels, who declared at the grave, that he was not there, but was risen (Luke 24:6); and not they, and men only, were witnesses of this, but the Holy Ghost also, by signs and wonders of his attending the declaration of it (Acts 5:31, 32). Moreover, not only Christ was to rise from the dead, but he was to rise first, as he did; for though there were others that rose before him, as to time, as the son of the widow of Sarepta, who was

raised by Elijah, and the Shunamite's son by Elisha, and the daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus, by our Lord; yet these were raised, not by their own power, but by the power of another: whereas Christ was raised by his own power, and so declared to be the Son of God: they rose to die again, but he rose to an immortal life, never to die more; he was the first to whom God, in this sense, shewed the path of life (Ps. 16:11); for though he was dead he is alive, and lives for evermore, and has the keys of hell and death (Rev. 1:18): likewise, he was the first in dignity that rose from the dead; he who is the first-born among men, brethren, is the first-begotten from the dead; he rose not as a private person, but as the head of the body, the church, as the representative of all his people, and they were raised up together with him (Col. 1:18; Eph. 2:6); also he is the first in causality; he is the first cause of the resurrection; as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. It is by virtue of his power, and in consequence of union with him, the saints will rise; he is the first-fruits of them that sleep (1 Cor. 15:20, 21, 23); the earnest and pledge of their resurrection; as sure as his dead body is raised, so sure shall theirs; his glorious body, raised, is the exemplar and pattern, according to which the bodies of the saints will be fashioned in the resurrection-morn and it will be owing to his voice, and to the exertion of his almighty power, that the graves will be opened, and the dead will come forth and appear before him (Isa. 26:9; Phil. 3:21; John 5:28, 29).

Now this is a very principal doctrine of the gospel, and of great moment and importance; on this the proof of Jesus' being the true Messiah, greatly depends; this is the sign he chose to give to the adulterous and unbelieving generation of the Jews, when they required one of him, saying (Matt. 12:39), there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; his lying three days and three nights in the whale's belly, a type of Christ's resurrection from the dead on the third day. This doctrine is of so much consequence, that were it not true, the whole of Christianity, the doctrine and preaching of it, the faith and hope of Christians would be affected with it, yea, be all vain (1 Cor. 15:14) and worthless. The resurrection of Christ has a very great concern in the justification of men; for he was raised again for our justification (Rom. 4:25); and it has an influence on their regeneration, to which it is sometimes ascribed; and Kith may be designed by the power of his resurrection (1 Pet. 1:3; Phil. 3:10), as well as the resurrection of his people at the last day, which depends upon it. And the whole of this doctrine is no other than what Moses and the prophets said should be; it is perfectly agreeable to the writings of the Old Testament; it was hinted at in the types, of Isaac being received from the dead as in a figure by his father, after he had given him up for dead for three days; and of Jonas being delivered from the belly of the whale, after he had lain in it three days and three nights; it was foretold by David, Isaiah, and Hosea particularly; who declare he should not see corruption in the grave, that his dead body should arise, and he, and his people with him, should be quickened after two days (Ps. 16:10; Isa. 26:19; Hos. 6:2).

3dly and lastly, Another thing the apostle had asserted, which Moses and the prophets had done before him, was, that Christ would be a light to Jews and Gentiles; or would shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles; first to the people of the Jews, and then to the nations of the world.

To the Jews. Christ was first sent to them, even to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 15:24); and to them only; he was the minister of the circumcision (Rom. 15:8), or of the circumcised Jews, to fulfill to them what God had promised and foretold: and though they received him not, but rejected him, he sent his apostles to them first, and charged them not to go into the way of the Gentiles, or into any of the cities of the Samaritans; and when their commission was enlarged after his resurrection, they were ordered to begin their ministry at Jerusalem (Matt. 10:6, 7; Luke 24:47). Now these people, notwithstanding they had the law and statutes of God, his word and ordinances, and the divine oracles committed to them, yet were in great darkness, and had no true understanding of them; in those times there was a veil over their minds in reading the books of the Old Testament concerning Christ, and the things of the gospel; they were blinded, and so were their leaders the scribes and Pharisees. Christ came a light unto them, and the light of grace and truth came by him; and some through his ministry, and that of his apostles, were spiritually and savingly enlightened.

To the Gentiles. These were in great darkness before the coming of Christ; they were without a divine revelation, without any knowledge of God and Christ; they were suffered to walk in their

own ways of darkness, superstition, and idolatry; their times before this were times of ignorance and blindness: but when Christ came, he sent his apostles to them with the gospel to enlighten them; and they carried it throughout the world; and by means of it, many were called and turned from gross darkness to marvelous light. And now all this was agreeable to the writings of the Old Testament, which represent Christ as the sun of righteousness; as that great light which should arise and shine on the Galilean Jews, that sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and should also be a light of the Gentiles (Mal. 4:2; Isa. 9:2; 42:6); and so good old Simeon understood the prophecies concerning him, that he should be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of the people of Israel (Luke 2:32).

The use of all this is, a wonderful confirmation of divine revelation, of the truth of Christianity, and of Jesus being the true Messiah; for since the various things foretold in the Old Testament by Moses and the prophets, at sundry times and in divers manners, appear to be fulfilled in the New, this proves the revelation to be of God; that Christianity stands upon a sure foundation, and that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ promised and prophesied of from the beginning of the world. And this may serve to recommend the writings of the Old Testament to the reading and perusal of men; since they testify of Christ so clearly, concerning his person, office, and grace, and are so profitable for doctrine, and instruction in righteousness (John 5:39; 2 Tim. 3:16): we have here also the plan of the gospel-ministry; that it is a suffering, risen, and exalted Saviour, held forth as a light to Jews and Gentiles. This was the plan of the ministry of the apostle Paul; and no man need be ashamed to copy after such an example, who was the greatest preacher that ever was upon the earth, excepting our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, my friends, If call you to dear witness that these truths, and what have been briefly suggested in this discourse, have been what I have chiefly insisted upon in the course of this Lecture; namely, the doctrines of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead; of the person and office of Christ; of the person and operations of the Blessed Spirit; of special and distinguishing grace, as it appears in election, redemption, justification, adoption, regeneration, sanctification, and the final perseverance of the saints; with other doctrines which are in consequence of them, and in connection with them. And now I, am about to take my leave of you, and this Lecture, and do: not through any dislike of the work I have been so long engaged in; not through any disgust at any thing I have met with; not through any discouragement for want of attendance or subscription; I have nothing to complain of; the Lecture was never in better circumstance than it now is. But I find my natural strength will not admit me to preach so frequently, and with so much constancy, as I have done for many years past; being now on the decline of life, in the fortieth year of my ministry; so that it is time for me to have done with extra-service, I mean, service out of the church of which I am pastor. But a more principal reason is, that I may have a little more time and leisure to attend to, and finish an arduous work upon my hands,

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Part of which work, I shall immediately propose for publication; and if I meet with encouragement, the publishing of this will be an additional weight upon me; and I have no other way of easing myself, but by dropping the Lecture; and these, and these only, are my reasons for so doing. And now as I would be, and am, thankful to the God of my life, who has given me so much health and strength, to carry on this Lecture for such a course of years, with very little interruption for want of health; so I would, and do return thanks to you, my friends, who have so long encouraged and supported me with your presence and purse; and I heartily wish and pray, that you may be preserved from the prevailing errors of the times, and may be kept stedfast in the faith of the gospel, and abide by the truths and ordinances of it; and that the means of grace you attend upon, in season, and out of season, here, or elsewhere, may be blessed unto you for your comfort and edification; and that you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light.

THE SURE PERFORMANCE OF PROPHECY.

A SERMON,

Preached at a Wednesday's Evening Lecture,

in

GREAT EAST-CHEAP, Jan. 1, 1755.

Isaiah 9:7 (latter part)

—The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

In my last annual Sermon save one, on this occasion, I discoursed concerning the glorious things foretold of the church of God in the latter day, both in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ; and now I shall treat of the certain performance of those things. I gave an hint in my last annual Discourse, that whereas a great portion of prophecy, particularly in the book of Revelation, has been already fulfilled, there is great reason to believe the rest will be; and this hint I shall pursue and enlarge upon at this time; and argue from the actual accomplishment of some things relating to the kingdom of Christ, to the certain completion of others; and into this train and course of reasoning I shall be naturally and easily led in considering the words of my text; which refer partly to the performance of some things foretold, since fulfilled, and partly to others which yet remain to be accomplished; and as sure as the one is fulfilled, so sure shall the other. The things that are already performed are,

The appearance of Christ in the land of Galilee, which is predicted (ver. 1) and which land, as it had been afflicted by the Assyrians, and was to be moved so by the Romans, as it has been in the times of Vespasian and Titus, as the history of Josephus shows; and as it was vile and mean, and lightly esteemed of by men, it should be made glorious and honorable, as the word signifies, particularly by the presence, ministry and miracles of Christ in it; and to this purpose it is quoted and applied by the evangelist Matthew (4:13-23), from whence it appears, that Christ first began to preach in that country: that he called his first disciples near the sea of Galilee; and that he went through that whole land, and taught and preached in the synagogues in it, and healed all diseases; here he wrought his first miracle of turning water into wine; here he lived the greatest part of his private life; and here he resided chiefly during his public ministry; here he promised to meet his disciples after his resurrection, and here he did: in short, being educated and brought up in this country in the former part of his life, and conversing here so much in the latter part of it; the Jews concluded he was born here, and confronted his Messiahship with it, shall Christ come out of Galilee (John 7:41)? And hence he was called by them Jesus of Galilee, and his followers Galileans: all which confirm the truth of this prophecy, and the performance of it; and it is with respect to this, no doubt, that the ancient Jews expected that the Messiah would first appear in Galilee.

Another event in consequence of the former is foretold, and that is, the illumination of the Galileans by the ministry of Christ among them (ver. 2). These people were an ignorant and illiterate people; their common language was rustic, rude and barbarous; their speech betrayed them, as Peter's did, who therefore was supposed to be a Galilean; they were reckoned a people that knew not the law, and were accursed: it was observed, that no prophet arose among them, and no good thing was expected of them; and so are here said to walk in darkness, and to dwell in the land of the shadow of death; and yet these people, according to this prophecy, were first favored with seeing Christ, the light of the world, both with their bodily eyes and with the eyes of their understanding, enlightened by his ministry; the great light of the gospel shining in them, removed their darkness, and filled them with spiritual light and knowledge. Hence, as here predicted,

There was a multiplication of them; thou hast multiplied the nation, that is, Galilee of the nations; which was multiplied with glory and honor, with light and knowledge, with joy and

comfort, and with a number of truly gracious souls that believed in Christ; the five hundred brethren to whom our Lord appeared at once after his resurrection, seem to be Galileans, when he showed himself on a mountain in their country to the eleven disciples; for it will not be easy to say where there was such a number of brethren, or believers, but in Galilee; it is certain their number at Jerusalem was not so large; being about an hundred and twenty.

It is foretold that there should be great joy upon all this; indeed our version renders it not increased the joy; but the Keri, or marginal reading of the Hebrew text is, and increased joy unto it, unto the nation: or it may be rendered with a interrogation, as it is by some, and may take in both the textual and marginal reading, hast thou not increased joy unto it? and in one way or other it must be rendered, or otherwise there is a glaring contradiction in the text ; for it follows, they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil; phrases expressive of the greatest joy among men; as there doubtless was among the Galileans when Christ was present with them, and his gospel preached to them; which is a joyful sound, and brings good tidings of good things, peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by the incarnate Redeemer; and so joy along with it, wherever it comes with power, and is received and embraced; as it did in Samaria, and among the Gentiles.

The ground and reason of this joy would be a deliverance from a burdensome yoke, and from a staff and rod of affliction; which was effected by Christ, who has delivered all his people, and so those believing Galileans, from the yoke of the ceremonial law, a yoke of bondage intolerable; from the tyranny of Satan, and from the servitude of silk; and which should be wrought as easily, and as suddenly, as the deliverance of Israel from the Midianites by Gideon; Christ's own arm bringing salvation to him, and his people, without the help of man: for every battle of the warrior is with confused noise; with the shoutings of soldiers, blowing of trumpets, beating of drums, rattling of armor, and garments rolled in blood; the garments of the slain rolled in their own blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire; through the flaming love and burning zeal and affection of Christ for his people, who,

Is prophesied of as the author of all this, and is the child that should be born, and the Son that should be given; for not Hezekiah is here meant, as the Jews would have it, who at the time of this prophecy was at least ten or eleven years of age, and to whom the august titles after given can by no means agree. The child here is the same that is prophesied of, chapter 7:14, that should be born of a virgin, and called Immanuel; even Jesus the son of Mary, born in the city of David, a Saviour, Christ the Lord, whose birth the angel declared to the shepherds; the Word that has been made flesh, and has dwelt among men; he is the Son of God, his only-begotten Son, his Son in such sense as no other is, and is the unspeakable gift of his love to men. He is here represented as a king, on whose shoulders the government should be; not meaning the government of the whole world, which belongs to him as God and creator; the kingdom is his, and he is the governor among the nations (Ps. 22:28); but the government of the church, his mediatorial kingdom, which is delegated to him, and devolved upon him as king of Zion, king of saints; a kingdom appointed to him, and for which he is and will be accountable to his Father, and will give it up to him complete and perfect and God shall be all in all; his names and titles follow, and his name shall be called ; not that he should be called in common by all the following names, but that he should be or answer to what is signified by them: so he is wonderful in his person as God and man, having two natures united in him; in his offices, in his life and death, in his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, and second coming to judgment: counsellor or, as the Septuagint rendered it, the angel of the great council: who assisted in the everlasting council held concerning the salvation of men; and who by his Spirit in his word, and by his ministers, gives the most wholesome counsel and advice to saints and sinners respecting their spiritual and eternal welfare: the mighty God, as appears from the perfections of deity in him, from the works done by him, from the worship given to him, and from his names and titles: the everlasting Father, who has a spiritual seed and offspring given him, whom he loves with an everlasting love, takes an everlasting care of, and makes everlasting provision for: the prince of Peace, the author of peace between God and men, between Jew and Gentile, and the giver of spiritual and eternal peace. Now all the above things the zeal of the Lord of hosts has performed already.

The things which remain to be performed, are the increase of Christ's Government, and the peace, order and establishment, of it; which are predicted in the beginning of this verse, the latter part of which I have read unto you. The kingdom of Christ is set up in the world, and there was an increase of it in the first times of the Gospel, both in Judea and in the Gentile world, but it was but small in comparison of what it will be; the stone was cut out without hands, but it is not yet, as it will be, a great mountain, which will fill the whole earth; as yet the kingdoms of this world are not Christ's, as they will be, when he shall be king over all the earth; when the Jews will be converted, and the fullness of the Gentiles will be brought in. Little peace has attended the kingdom and church of Christ as yet, but there will be abundance of it, when there will be an increase of his government; when his "kingdom shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," then there will be peace without and peace within; war shall cease from among the nations of the earth, and they shall learn it no more; the church will, be free from persecution, and no more annoyed with it; there will be none to hurt and destroy in all the Lord's holy mountain; and there will be no more animosities and divisions among the saints; "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim" (Isa. 2:4; 11:9, 13): and though Christ is upon the throne of his Father David, and has appointed and ordered the form of government, and enacted laws, and settled ordinances for the execution of it; yet it does not appear with that order and regularity as it will, when the church shall be established upon the top of the mountains, and so continue, being an everlasting kingdom. Now from the exact performance of all the above things in the context, and of all others, we may reasonably and strongly conclude the certain accomplishment of all things relating to the increase, peace, prosperity, order and settlement of the kingdom of Christ; and this is what I shall at present insist upon, in the following method.

I shall consider the things that remain to be performed, and the certain performance of them.

Show to what the performance of them is to be ascribed; to the zeal of the Lord of hosts.

The things that are not yet fulfilled, but will be, as may be argued from the performance of many things already relating to the same subject: and these are the destruction of antichrist, the more extensive call of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews, the setting up by these means the kingdom of Christ in greater glory in the world, and his second coming, which will introduce his personal reign.

First, The destruction of antichrist which as I have observed in the Sermon first referred to, is the leading event to the glory of Christ's spiritual kingdom; which cannot greatly increase, nor the peace of it, so long as this enemy stands in the way; and therefore he must be removed, as it is foretold he shall be. All that believe a divine revelation allow that there is, or will be, what is commonly called antichrist; not only Protestants, but even Jews and Papists: though both these latter have very foolish and fabulous notions concerning him; yet a general notion they have, which is founded on prophecy.

I shall therefore lay before you the more considerable prophecies concerning him, and observe what are fulfilled, and from thence argue the certain performance of those which relate to his utter and final ruin. I shall not take notice of what is only incidentally and occasionally dropped concerning him: such incidental and occasional hints we have as early as the times of David. In his Psalms there are frequent hints of him, and of his destruction; as that the man of the earth shall no more oppress, when the Lord shall reign for ever, and the heathen or Gentiles, a name sometimes given to Papists, shall perish out of his land; and when the Messiah is said to wound the head over many countries; that is, antichrist; who has reigned over the kings and kingdoms of the earth: and respect seems to be had to his followers, when it is wished, that the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked be nomore (Ps. 10:16, 18; 110:6; 104:35); at the end of which verse the word Hallelujah is first used, and which is used at the destruction of mystical Babylon. But I shall only observe such as purposely and largely predict him and his ruin, and shall begin,

1st, With the famous prophecy of him in the seventh of Daniel, in which the prophet is said to have a vision of four beasts rising out of the sea; that is, of the four monarchies rising up in the world, the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman: the fourth and last beast is the Roman

empire, said to have ten horns; now among these rises up a little horn, different from them, and which plucks up three of them; and it is said to have "eyes like the eyes of a man, and a look more stout than its fellows; to have a mouth speaking great things against the most high, and to make war with the saints, and prevail over them, and wear them out; and to think to change times and laws;" and thus it is to continue until a time, and times, and the dividing of time, and then to have his dominion taken away, destroyed and consumed. Now this horn cannot be Antiochus Epiphanes, as Grotius, Junius, and others have thought; for not a single person or king is meant by a horn, but a kingdom or state, and a succession of rulers and governors in it; as by the other ten horns are meant ten kingdoms (ver. 24). And besides, this little horn is a part of the fourth, and not of the third beast, to whom Antiochus belonged; and was to rise, not in the third, but in the fourth monarchy, not in the Grecian, but in the Roman empire; and moreover was to continue until the coming of Christ, even until the spiritual coming of Christ in the latter day, and when his spiritual kingdom will take place in the world and as there is no other that has appeared in the Roman empire but antichrist, or the Pope of Rome, to whom the characters agree as to him; it may be safely concluded he is intended, and as will more fully appear by the account of him; who described,

By his name and title, a little horn. An horn is an emblem of strength, power and authority, and denotes a strong and powerful principality or kingdom, as the ten horns do, as before observed; the allusion is to the horns of beasts, in which their strength lies, and with which they push their enemies and defend themselves: this horn indeed was but a little one, rose from small beginnings, and at its height was but such, in comparison of others; so the Pope of Rome, as to his ecclesiastic power, was but at first a common minister, pastor, or bishop of a single church; then became metropolitan of all Italy, and at last commenced universal bishop: though this seems rather to regard him as a temporal prince; who was but very little indeed at his first appearance; and, when considered only in his own domains, at highest, was but little in comparison of the other horns or kingdoms; though being allowed to exercise power in the rest of the kingdoms, and their power and strength being given to him, he was so formidable that none could withstand him, or make war with him, (Rev. 17:13; 13:4).

By his rise and original from among the other horns or kingdoms, and his connexion with them; he is said to come up among them. When the northern barbarous nations broke, into the empire, and set up ten kingdoms in it, this little horn sprung up among them; and while they were forming kingdoms for themselves, he was contriving one for himself; they arose at the same time, and reigned together: so the ten horns in the Revelation, which are the same with these, and are there, as here, interpreted ten kings, are said to receive power, as kings, one hour with the beast (Rev. 17:12), the same as this little horn. Indeed in verse 24 this little horn is said to rise after them, the other ten; not after the ten kingdoms were at end, but after they were set up, and constituted, and established; as it was proper they should, since they were to give their strength, power and kingdom to the beast (Rev. 17:13), by which he became a horn, a temporal prince. The Septuagint renders it behind them; which Mr. Mede understands of his growing up unawares, imperceptibly, unnoticed, and unobserved by them, till he overtopped them. He is said to be divers or different from the first horns; they only had and exercised a secular power, but he, besides his temporal authority, had and exercised an ecclesiastic and spiritual one; he not only had power over the bodies and estates, but over the souls and consciences of men; and even over the other ten horns or kingdoms, which they had not over one another. hence he is represented by two beasts in the Revelation, the one describing him in his secular, the other in his spiritual authority, as we shall see anon; and this made him different from other kings and princes: Moreover, before him three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots, or, as in verse 20, before whom three fell, and which is interpreted (v. 24) of his subduing three kings or kingdoms; which according to Sir Isaac Newton, were the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the senate and dukedom of Rome. The bishop of Cloger, more lately, has expressed them thus, Campagna of Rome, the exarchate of Ravenna, and the region of Pentapolis; these were plucked up by Pipin and Charlemagne, kings of France, and given to the Pope, and were confirmed to him by their successor Lewis the pious; and make up what is called the patrimony of St. Peter; and in memory of this a piece of Mosaic work was made, and put up in the Pope's palace; in which were represented St. Peter with three keys in his lap, signifying the

three keys of the three parts of his patrimony; and to show his sovereignty over them, the pope to this day wears a triple crown. How surprisingly does the prophecy open unto us! An event is here predicted above a thousand years, twelve or thirteen hundred years, before it was accomplished.

This little horn is further described by its eyes and look; its eyes were like the eyes of man; strange for a horn to have eyes, stranger still for the horn of a beast to have eyes as the eyes of man. These are thought by some to denote the pretended sanctity and religion of the pope of Rome, or antichrist, who, though a beast, would be thought to be a man, a religious creature; others think they design his pretended modesty, humanity and courtesy, when he is all the reverse; but rather his insight into the sacred scriptures, and controversies about them; he pretends to setting himself up to be an infallible interpreter of them, and judge of all controversies; though these eyes seem better to signify what he really had, and not what he pretended to; and so may denote his sagacity and penetration, his craft and cunning, his looking out sharp to get what power and dominion he could, both temporal and spiritual; and his watchfulness and carefulness to keep what he had got, that none encroached upon it, or took part of it away from him and they may also design all instruments and means by which he inspects his own affairs, and those of others; particularly the order of the Jesuits, which are, as his eyes, every where; spies in all kingdoms and courts, that pry into the mysteries of state, and by one means or another get knowledge of what is done in the councils and cabinets of princes: and how many eyes this horn had, is not said; nor is it easy to say how many the Pope has; he has as many as Argus, and more too, and these sharp and piercing: his look is said to be more stout than his fellows; either than his fellow-bishops, claiming an authority over them, giving out that he is universal bishop or rather, than his fellow-horns, the kings and princes of the earth: having a look more bold and daring, more arrogant and impudent; assuming that power and authority to himself they do not; all power in heaven, and in earth; a power to depose kings, and absolve their subjects from allegiance to them; a power over the minds and consciences of men or, as it may be rendered, whose appearance is greater than his fellows; makes a greater show and figure, appears in greater pomp, splendor and glory than the kings; unless this can be understood of the society and college of his cardinals.

This horn is also described by its mouth, and what that spoke; it is said to speak great things, yea very great things; as the Pope of Rome has, in favor of himself; as that he his head of the church, and Christ's vicar on earth: declares himself infallible, and to have a power over the kings and princes of the earth; nay, he is said to speak great words against the Most High; setting himself up as a rival, and upon an equality with him; taking upon him to forgive sin, and to make laws binding on the consciences of men, contrary to the scriptures; and preferring his own decrees, and the traditions of the church, to the word of God; and thus the beast of Rome is described in Revelation 13:5, 6.

This horn is described by what he did, or thought to do; he is said to make war with the saints, and prevail against them and wear them out; which respects the wars of the popes of Rome with the Waldenses and Albigenses, whom they slew in great numbers, and got the victory over; and what by their oppressions and persecutions, murders and massacres, have tired and near wore out the patience of the saints and whereas the beast, the same with this little horn, shall make war with the two witnesses, and overcome and slay them; the saints will then seem to be quite wore out and consumed, when their dead carcasses will lie in the streets of the, great city unburied; so that they will seem to be all destroyed, and be thought by the Papists to be so; and hence that rejoicing and sending gifts to each other, because these witnesses are no more (Rev. 11:8-10), also he shall think to change times and laws, which in chapter 2:21 is ascribed to God as peculiar to him, and joined with removing and setting up kings; which is what the Pope of Rome has taken to himself; to alter the forms and constitutions of kingdoms, and to set up and pull down kings at his pleasure, and free their subjects from obligation and obedience to them; as also to change the use of times and seasons, by setting apart holy days for the commemoration of his canonized saints; and by appointing such days in the week, and such a season in the year, for abstinence from meats; as well as also to change laws, the laws of God and man, and dispense with both, and make new laws and canons to be observed. And this power of his was to continue until a time, and times, and the dividing of time, or half a time, as in Revelation 12:14,

where the same way of speaking is used, borrowed from hence; time signifies a year, the longest measure of time we have, times two years, and a dividing of time half a year; in all, three years and a half; the same with the forty two mouths, the time of the beast's continuance, (Rev. 13:5) and of the treading down of the holy city (Rev. 11:2), and which answer to 1260 days, the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, verse 3, by which are meant so many years; and so long the little horn or beast is to continue; but when this time is up, then his dominion shall be taken away, and be consumed and destroyed; yea, because of the words this horn spake, the beast will be slain, his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame (Dan. 7:11, 26), the whole empire shall be destroyed, the capital of it shall be burnt with fire, the ten kings shall hate the whore, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; this will be the catastrophe of the little horn. And now, who that attentively considers how every part of this vision and prophecy has been exactly fulfilled, except the last, can hesitate in his mind, or doubt one moment of the certain performance of that, even the utter destruction of this little horn, or antichrist? The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this, as well as all the rest.

2dly, Another famous prophecy of antichrist, and his destruction, we have in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 where he is described,

By his names and characters; he is called the man of sin; one addicted and given to sin in a grievous manner, not notoriously sinful, a spiritual wickedness in high places; one guilty of all manner of sin, as the Popes of Rome have been; lying, perjury, adultery, incest, sodomy, simony, sorcery, and every thing that is bad: hence their seat is called Sodom and Egypt, and the antichristian whore, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, all centering here; and therefore with great propriety is he said to be the son of perdition, a name given to Judas that betrayed our Lord (John 17:12) and rightly belongs to antichrist, who is the Apollyon and destroyer of the souls of men, by his false doctrine and worship, and will himself go into perdition: he is also represented as he that opposeth; that opposeth Christ, and is an adversary of his, and therefore called antichrist: he opposes him in his offices; in his kingly office, by asserting himself to be the head of the church; in his priestly office, by pretending to offer up Christ again in the sacrifice of the mass, when he by one offering has perfected the whole work of atonement; and in his prophetic office by coining new doctrines and articles of faith moreover, he exalteth himself above all that is called God; above the gods of the heathens, who ascribe the government of the heavens to one, of the earth to another, of the sea to another, and of the winds to another; but this haughty creature assumes all power to himself, in heaven, earth and hell: he exalts himself above angels, who are called gods (Ps. 8:4). In his bulls he has commanded angels to take such a soul out of purgatory, and to carry such a one to heaven: and above all civil magistrates, who are called gods (Ps. 82:5), assuming a power over them to depose them at pleasure making an emperor to hold his stirrup whilst he alighted from his horse and got upon it, and trampling on his neck, using those words in Psalm 91:13, and throwing a king under his table to lick bones, whilst he was eating: yea, he sitteth in the temple of God as god, shewing himself that he is god; he rose up and appeared in the church of God, at least so by profession, where he took his place, and, becoming apostate, here he continues, and shows himself as if he was God; admitting his creatures and flatterers to call him God on earth, and our Lord God the Pope; receiving worship from them, and assuming that which is the peculiar prerogative of God, to forgive sin. Moreover, he is called the mystery of iniquity; Mystery is one of the names of the whore of Babylon, and was formerly put upon the mitres of the Popes: it may respect both doctrines and practices, which were set afoot in the apostles time, and began to appear and work in Simon Magus, and his followers, and which centered in the papacy. Once more, he is called the wicked one (anom), a lawless person; that dispenses with the laws of God and man, setting up himself above all law; giving out that he is not subject to any human judicature; that he is the spiritual man that judges all, but is judged of none, being not accountable to any; yea, though he should lead millions of souls to hell, yet none ought to say, "O Lord the Pope, what dost thou?"

He is described in this prophecy by his appearance, and manner of entrance, and his influence over men. There was something that let or hindered him from making his appearance sooner than he did, which being removed, he was to be and has been revealed; this was the Roman empire and emperors, which so long as they were, and Rome the seat of their empire, he could

not take his place and seat, and appear in his pomp and grandeur; but this let was removed, partly by Constantine conquering the heathen emperors, abolishing paganism, and establishing Christianity in the empire, and bestowing great riches on the church; but more so by removing the seat of the empire from Rome to Byzantium, called after his name Constantinople, which opened the way for the bishop of Rome to take his place; and chiefly and last of all, the empire being divided into eastern and western, the latter became extinct in Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, who resigned to Odoacer, who took upon him the title, not of emperor of Rome but king of Italy, and retired, from Rome to Ravenna; and the seat being empty, was soon filled by the Pope of Rome, and he quickly appeared in his grandeur and glory; whose coming was after the working of Satan; he came in like him, a deceiver, a liar, and a murderer, and under his influence, and by his assistance: with all power; with pretensions to all power in heaven and in even to power next to omnipotence: and signs and lying wonders; pretending to work miracles, though all were shams and lies, of which the popish legends are full; and under a show of righteousness deceived many; and meeting with carnal professors that loved not the truth, they were given up in a judicial manner to believe his lies, as, that he was head of the church, Christ's vicar, had a power to forgive sin, and grant pardons and indulgences; particularly that great lie of transubstantiation, that he and his priests have power to transmute the bread and wine in the Lord's supper into the very body and blood of Christ; receiving which lies spoken in hypocrisy, they bring damnation upon themselves. And here give me leave,

To observe another passage, though not in this prophecy, yet delivered out by the same inspired writer, which predicts some of the notorious doctrines and practices of antichrist; it is in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 where the apostle foretells a departure from the faith in after-times, and the appearance of seducing spirits, who should teach doctrines of devils. The doctrines of demon-worship; like that of the heathens, their demons being a middle sort of beings between God and men, and mediated between them; and such are the angels and saints departed, the Papists direct men to pray unto; and which is called worshipping devils and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood (Rev. 9:20), forbidding to marry; matrimony, though God's ordinance, and honorable, is forbidden popish priests, and celibacy is enjoined, under a notion of sanctity and purity; and which is the source of great debauchery and uncleanness among them: commanding to abstain from meats: as on Wednesdays and Fridays in every week, and during the quadragesima or Lent, the fast of forty days. And now whereas it is most clearly manifest, that all these characters of antichrist, and all these things predicted of him hundreds of years before his appearance, exactly answers to the Pope of Rome, and have been punctually performed; there can be no reason to doubt of the certain performance of what the same prophetic spirit has declared concerning his destruction; as that the Lord shall consume him with his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming; that is, by the spiritual and powerful preaching of the gospel, attended with the presence of Christ in the beginning of his spiritual reign; when the whole earth will be enlightened with his glory, and antichrist, and all antichristian darkness, doctrine and worship shall disappear; and the rather this is to be credited, since it receives confirmation from a prophecy of Isaiah, delivered many hundreds of years before this, in much the same language, and from whom the apostle seems to borrow his words; for speaking of Christ, he says, he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked: that wicked lawless one, antichrist: The Lord in his great zeal will perform this.

3dly, I will just observe, in brief, the account we have of antichrist in the book of the Revelation: in chapter thirteen he is described, both in his civil and ecclesiastic capacity, by two beasts; the one rising out of the sea, that is, out of the commotions made in the empire by the northern nations; when he appeared as a temporal prince, having his seat on the seven-hill-city, signified by seven heads, and power over the ten kingdoms or ten horns; and is compared to a leopard for his swiftness and insidiousness in obtaining power; to a bear for his cruelty, and to a lion for his strength and terror; and became so powerful, notwithstanding the deadly wound, as to be admired and feared by all the world; and is described much in the same manner as the little horn in Daniel, having a mouth speaking blasphemies against God, his tabernacle and people: and power to make war with the saints, and overcome them, and permission to continue exactly the same time. The other beast, an emblem of him in his ecclesiastic capacity, is said to rise out of the earth; from the dregs of Christians, earthly, carnal and corrupt, from an apostate church; and

pretending to great humility, calling himself servus servorum; having two horns like a lamb, as if very meek, humble and harmless; but spake like a dragon, when he uttered his bulls and anathemas: he is represented as exercising all the power he had as a temporal prince, to oblige the world to worship him, and as doing lying miracles to deceive men; enjoining them to worship his image on pain of death, and causing all to have his mark in their right hand or forehead, or else be deprived of the common privilege of mankind in buying and selling; all which has been done by the Romish antichrist; and the account is concluded with the number of his name 666, about which there have been many conjectures; but none bid fairer than the ancient one of Ireneus, which is Lateinos, the letters of which amount to this number; this was the name of a man, a king of Italy. Now the church of Rome is the Latin church: its service is in the Latin tongue; the Pope is head of it; and his seat is in the Latin empire. In chapter seventeen antichrist is represented by a woman sitting on a beast with seven heads and ten horns, which designs him in his twofold capacity as before; and as sitting on many waters, interpreted of people and nations; and is described as a whore by her dress and attire, by her fornication, filthiness and murder; all which exactly points at, and has been fulfilled in the church of Rome. And now, who that considers these things, and observes the exact accomplishment of them, but will see abundant reason to believe, that what is said of the ruin of this antichrist shall be performed; that the seven vials of God's wrath shall be poured out on the antichristian states; that the whore shall be burnt with fire, and that her seat Rome, mystical Babylon, shall meet with the same fate, and the beast go into perdition? The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Rev. 16:1; 17:8, 16; 18:10).

Secondly, The increase of the kingdom of Christ in the latter day, foretold in this verse, will be owing to the vast numbers of Gentiles that shall be called, and to the conversion of the Jews. Many and ancient are the prophecies concerning the calling of the Gentiles; as, that when Shiloh, or the Messiah should come, the gathering of the people should be to him; that he should be set up as an ensign to them, and they should seek to him, and he be a light unto them, and the covenant of them; and the abundance of them should be converted to him (Gen. 49:10; Isa. 11:10; 43:6; 60:4, 5); which had their completion in part in the first times of the gospel, by the ministry of the apostles every where; and especially when the Roman empire, or the whole world became Christian; and also at the time of the Reformation; but as yet they have not had their full accomplishment, as they will when the kingdoms of this world shall become Christ's, and all kings and nations shall serve and worship him: and since they have been in part fulfilled, we may be assured of the full performance of them; since we have seen the kingdom of the stone cut out without hands, as Mr. Mede distinguishes, we need not doubt of the kingdom of the mountain, which will fill the whole earth, taking place: the conversion of the Jews, as a body, as a nation of men, is what is predicted, and will make much for the increase and glory of Christ's kingdom. That people have been of old the subject of prophecies, which in a variety of instances have been fulfilled. It was foretold to their great ancestor, Abraham, that they his posterity should be strangers, and serve in a land not theirs in much affliction four hundred years, and then come out with great substance (Gen. 15:13, 14), as it is well known they did at that exact time; their going to captivity in Babylon, and their return from thence at the end of 70 years, were predicted many years before these events (Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10), which were punctually accomplished: the various straits, difficulties, and distresses these people should come into their sins, at different times; the besieging of their cities, and the dreadful famine they should be reduced to, so as to eat their own flesh, and delicate women their own children, as at the siege of Samaria, and at the siege of Jerusalem, both by the Chaldeans and Romans; and their dispersion all over the world, and even the very characters of their enemies, are given us, being of a far country, of a fierce look, and of a language they understood not: all these, with many other things, are foretold by Moses in Deuteronomy 28:20-68, some of them, at the distance of two thousand years, and which have had their exact accomplishment: but what is most surprising of all, is the continuance of this people as a distinct people, notwithstanding all this, as it was said they should, and as the Lord promised he would not cast them away, destroy them utterly, or make a full end of them, as he has of other nations their enemies (Lev. 26:44; Jer. 30:11); who are no more, nor their names to be heard of any where, as the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and others; but these are still in being; yea, what is more wonderful, that several of those nations among whom they are now dispersed, have been even since their scattering among them, so mixed and confounded with

other people, that they are not able to distinguish one from another, or trace their original, as particularly in Spain, France and England; yet, these people remain a distinct people, as they do every where, without any king over them, not having their own magistrates, and without the observance of many of their own laws: now what can be the reason of this? no other, than as the tribe of Judah was kept a distinct tribe till the Messiah came, that it might appear that he sprung from it, according to prophecy; so the Jews are kept a distinct people unto the time of their conversion, that they may be manifest to all the world. Moreover, even the ignorance and blindness of this people, their unbelief and rejection of the Messiah, and their obstinate persistence in it, are the fulfilling of prophecy; both our Lord, and the apostle Paul, when they speak (John 12:37-41; Rom. 11:8-10) of these things, refer to ancient prophecy, as being no other than what were foretold. Seeing then all these things concerning them have been accomplished, we ought most firmly to believe, that what concerns them in futurity also will; as that they shall seek and find the Lord, and David their king; that a spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured on them, and they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn; and shall turn to the Lord, and receive him as the Messiah, and embrace his gospel and ordinances; and so all Israel shall be saved in a spiritual sense, and shall return to their own land, and resettle there, as is foretold they shall (Hos. 3:5; Zech. 12:10; 2 Cor. 3:16; Rom. 11:25, 26; Ezek. 37:21, 22): The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Thirdly, By the above means the kingdom of Christ will be set up in the world in greater glory than now it is, of which we have no reason to doubt; especially when we observe the several steps which were to be taken, and have been taken towards the advancement of it; as the opening of the seven seals, and blowing of six of the trumpets. The seven seals are so many several steps, and gradual advances to introduce the gospel, kingdom and church of Christ into the world. The opening of the first seal brought the gospel into the Gentile world, in which Christ is represented riding on a white horse with a bow, and conquering, and to conquer; the second, third and fourth seals opened, brought the sword, famine and pestilence into the Roman empire, as God's judgments for the ill usage and persecution of the preachers and professors of the gospel; and the fifth seal represents the souls under the altar crying for vengeance on their enemies for shedding their blood; and the sixth opened brings utter destruction on the whole Pagan empire, as such, signified by the darkening of the sun, moon and stars, and by other things. And here one might have expected that the kingdom of Christ would have been now set up in all its glory: but though here were peace and prosperity introduced into the church of God, and it was greatly enlarged; yet the worldly wealth and riches brought into it, issued in corruption and apostasy of it; and brought in the papacy, which arose, and continued, and still does, and stands in the way of Christ's kingdom. The seventh seal opened, brings in seven angels with seven trumpets to blow, six of which are blown already. The first four blown, brought in the northern nations, the Goths, Huns, Vandals, &c., into the western empire, which overrun several countries, entered Italy, sacked and burnt Rome itself, signified by the burning mountain, and spread darkness and ignorance over all the empire, designed by the smiting of the sun, moon, and stars; and which broke it to pieces, and divided it into ten kingdoms, signified by the ten toes in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the ten horns in Daniel's vision. The fifth trumpet brought in Mahomet and his Saracens, the locusts; and the sixth trumpet the Turks, the four angels loosed at the river Euphrates into the eastern empire, which set up a kingdom there that still continues. And now since six of these trumpets have been blown, and the effects have followed predicted by them; why should we not most firmly believe, that the seventh trumpet will be blown, when the mystery of God will be finished: when the kingdoms of this world will become our Lord's; when he will take to himself his great power and reign; when he will destroy them that destroy the earth, and give a reward to his servants, and to all that fear his name! The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Rev. 10:7; 11:15-18).

Fourthly, As by the above events, the spiritual reign of Christ will take place in the world, so by his second coming the personal reign will be introduced, which will last a thousand years; and from the fulfilment of prophecy concerning the first coming of Christ, which is predicted in the context, as we have seen, we may most strongly argue the certain performance of all that respects his second coming. He came at first: exactly at the time pointed out in prophecy; before the scepter departed from Judah, while the second temple was standing, into which he came, as he was to

do, and just at the expiration of Daniel's weeks. All characters and circumstances in prophecy meet in him; all things concerning him in the law, psalms and prophets, had their fulfilling end in him; concerning his birth, and the place of it: his mean appearance in the world; his doctrines and miracles; his sufferings and death, and many particular circumstances respecting them; as the betraying of him by one of his disciples; selling him for thirty pieces of silver; crucifying him between two thieves; piercing his hands, feet and side; giving him gall and vinegar to drink; casting lots on his vesture, with other things; also his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God. And since these things have been completely fulfilled, what room or reason is there to doubt that he will appear a second time without sin to salvation? The angels at his ascension affirmed he would descend from heaven, as he ascended: the apostle Paul assures us he shall descend from heaven with the voice of an archangel and be revealed from thence with his mighty angels; and he himself has said no less than three times, in the close of the canon of the scripture, Lo, I come quickly. Let us believe therefore that he will come, and make all things new; produce new heavens, and a new earth, and set up his tabernacle among his people, and dwell with them, and they reign with him; The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Which leads me,

To consider to what the performance of all this will be owing; to the zeal of the Lord of hosts: he is the Lord of hosts or armies, the maker of the host of heaven, and the disposer of them, and rules among them, and does whatever he pleases; nothing is impossible with him, or too hard for him; and as Abraham believed that God, who promised, was also able to perform; so should we believe, that whatever the Lord of hosts has prophesied of, he is able to fulfill, and will fulfill; his truth and faithfulness are engaged, as for the performance of his promise, so of his prophecies; he is the unchangeable Jehovah, God that cannot lie, and who never repents of what he has spoken, but makes all good: his zeal moves and puts him upon it; which may be understood either of his wrath and indignation against his enemies, that jealousy of his that smokes against them; that zeal and vengeance with which he is sometimes clad: this will put him upon performing all that he has said concerning antichrist, against whom his indignation must be raised; who has spoke great things against him, and blasphemed his name, opposed his Son, his kingdom and interest, and persecuted his people: or else it may design his great love and affection. As zeal with men, when right, is no other than fervent charity, burning love, and flaming affection, so it may be considered here; and mean his love for himself, his zeal for his own glory, which is his ultimate end in creation, in providence, in his works of grace, and which will be answered in the destruction of antichrist, and setting up the kingdom of his Son in the world: also his strong love and affection to Christ, both as his own Son, and the mediator between him and his people; and therefore it may be depended on, he will make him his first-born, higher than the kings of the earth: to which may be added, his great love to his church and people; which has been so great as to give his Son for them, to become incarnate, and to suffer and die in their room, and to make him king over them to protect and defend them; and therefore it need not be doubted that the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to them, according to promise and prophecy (Dan.7:27); The zeal of the Lord of hosts, the zeal of his house, and for it, will perform this. I shall close with a word or two.

What has been said will serve greatly to support the credit of divine revelation; the sacred Word will appear from hence to be indeed the Word of God, and not the word of men; we maybe assured the scripture is divinely inspired, and is a sure word of prophecy; for what else could have foretold such numbers of events, which have been exactly fulfilled: particularly what relate to Jews and Papists, who are two such living and standing proofs of the truth of the divine revelation, that all the Deists in the world are not able to set aside? Likewise, this may serve to encourage our faith, as to the performance of whatsoever has been spoken by the Lord; for if he performs all things for us in providence, as he does for particular persons, as Job, David, and others, as he did; then much more may we believe that he will perform all that he has said he will do for himself, for his Son, and for his church and people in the world. But then, though he has so particularly prophesied of, and so peremptorily promised these things, yet he will be enquired of by his people to do them. We should therefore pray continually to him, and give him no rest day nor night until they are accomplished; and for the accomplishment of which we should quietly wait; for there is an appointed time, and when that comes there will be no tarrying: Blessed is he that

waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days (Dan. 7:12). I add no more but this wish, the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting of Christ (2 Thess. 3:5).

THE WORDS OF DAVID, THE WORDS OF JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, AND SPIRIT.

2 SAMUEL 23:2, 3.

The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my Tongue: the God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me.

Having considered in a former discourse the preceding verse, which contains a line description of David, that tends to recommend to our notice those last words of his recorded in the following verses. I shall now proceed to show how they are further recommended to us, from the author of them: for they are to be considered not so much the words of David himself, as the words of a divine person spoken by him, This we may gather from the text. The Spirit of the Lord spake by me. They were his words, and not merely David's. It was the God of Israel that said, it was the Rock of Israel that spake to him and by him. From which we may notice,

I. The author of these words as represented in these several different expressions, which all tend to recommend them to our most serious consideration. And then,

II. The words themselves, which the divine person or persons spake in, by, and to David.

I. The author or authors of them, for these words do not appear to be David's words, properly, but another's, even the Lord's.

1. It is observed, the Spirit of the Lord spake by him. He did not speak what he did, from his own spirit, nor out of his own heart, according to the dictates of his own mind; but the Spirit of the Lord spake by him. We read of some in the times of Jeremiah, "who ran and were not sent, who prophesied, and the Lord had not spoken unto them (Jer. 23:21). The same sort of persons are described by the prophet Ezekiel, "as speaking out of their own hearts, and following their own spirit" (Ezek. 13:2, 3). They said those things which their own carnal minds suggested unto them, and which they judged would be pleasing to natural and carnal men, whereby they might get introduced among them, and so serve their own purposes, either with respect to applause or worldly wealth. And this being the case, some persons pretending to divine and spiritual things, speaking not by the Spirit of God, but from their own spirit, makes the caution the apostle John gives necessary. Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God, because many false prophets are gone forth into the world (1 John 4:1).

All who pretend to speak by the Spirit of God are not to be believed: they speak only out of their own hearts, and follow their own spirits, therefore are to be tried by the word of God, to see whether what they say is agreeable to that or no. What David said was not from his own spirit, but the Spirit of the Lord spake by him. He, and other holy and good men, spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of God; for prophecy came not of old time by the will of man. Even those who were the true prophets of the Lord, and by whom the Spirit of the Lord spake: they could not prophesy, they could not deliver out any thing as from God when they pleased. It was not at their option, it was not according to their will; no, but just as they had an impulse upon their spirits by the Spirit of God. Even Balaam, though a false prophet, yet in the hands of God and under his direction at that particular time, of which he was sensible, was obliged to say, he could not go beyond the commandment of the Lord (Num. 24:13), or say more or less than what was suggested to him.—Nay, if Balak would give him his house full of silver and gold, it could not have been otherwise: he could not go beyond the commandment of God, to do either good or bad.

Now if this was the case with Balaam, we may reasonably conclude, that what the prophets of the Lord spake, was not according to their own will; but according to the will of God, and by the Spirit of God. This was so well known, that Zedekiah, King of Israel, puts this question to Jeremiah, who was a true prophet of the Lord, Is there any word, from the Lord? (Jer. 37:17). He knew very well Jeremiah could say nothing to any purpose, that he could depend upon, unless he had a word from the Lord: and that he gives according to his sovereign will and pleasure.

Well, these last words of David were spoken by him, not out of his own heart, not out of his own spirit, not out of his own head, as pleased himself: but by the Spirit of God. And much less were what he said, from an evil spirit: the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, or what is called the spirit of the world, which rules and governs in the world, and in worldly men. We have received, says the apostle, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us by God (1 Cor. 2:12). Now it was this Spirit of the Lord that spoke by David. Who is of God, comes from God, is of the same nature with the divine Father, and proceeds from him: so our Lord describes the Holy Spirit as proceeding from the Father (John 15:26). What is meant by that proceeding, we know not; we are unable to explain it: we must take it as it is. This we are sure of; that the Holy Spirit is of God, comes from God, and is of the same nature with him, So also he is from the Son, and therefore is called the Spirit of the Son (Gal.4:6).

A dispute there was in ancient times, and that in the churches—whether the Spirit proceeded from the Son as from the Father? It is most certain he proceeded from the one as from the other: but as to the modus of it, it is not in the power of a finite mind to conceive of. This we know, it is the Spirit which is of God: possessed of the same nature, and of the same divine perfections with God the Father, and with the Son, from whom he proceeds. He is eternal, He is called the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14): so from everlasting to everlasting, God. He is omnipresent: a perfection which only belongs to God. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit or whither shall I flee from thy presence? (Ps. 139:7). There is no such thing. He is every where; and therefore must be God. He is a God omniscient: he searches the deep things of God, and reveals them to his people. He can, and has foretold things to come. He, the Spirit of Christ in the prophets, foretold the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Omnipotence is ascribed to him: miracles such as are above the power of nature, and contrary to the laws of nature, are done by him, in confirmation of the truths of the everlasting gospel. You read of wonders, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, by which the gospel was at first continued. Now these abundantly prove him to be the true God, as he is represented. He is Jehovah, whom the Israelites rebelled against; they are said to vex the Holy Spirit (Isa. 63:10). It was Jehovah who said, in a vision of Isaiah, who will go for us? (Isa. 6:8). In the Acts of the Apostles He is said to be the Lord, the Holy Ghost. He is expressly said to be God: lying against him is said to be lying against God (Acts 5:3, 4). The saints are called the temples of God; and this reason is given for it, because the Spirit dwells in them. He is likewise denominated, the Lord, the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17): that is, Jehovah the Spirit.

The same works which are said to be done by the Father, may also be ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The work of creation, this may be ascribed to him. He not only moved upon the face of the waters, and brought the indigested chaos into order after its creation; not only did he garnish the heavens; but he it was that made them: for by the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them, by the Breath or Spirit of his mouth (Ps.33:6). He is expressly said to be concerned in making man. Elihu says, The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life (Job 33:4). These are works that prove him to be the true God. Worship is also to be paid unto him. He is not only to be prayed unto as the Father and the Son are (the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ (2 Thess. 3:5); where he is manifestly distinguished from the Father and the Son); but he is prayed unto along with them (2 Cor. 13;14). The ordinance of baptism is directed to be preformed in His name equally as in the name of the other two divine Persons (Matthew 28:19).

Now it was the Spirit of God, or God the Spirit, that spake by David; the Spirit of the Lord spake by me: the same that spake by the rest of the inspired writers. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God: holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21): and so did David. It is expressly said, in a quotation from a Psalm of his, that the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David (Acts 1:16). The Spirit of the Lord spake by me. It may be properly enough rendered, the Spirit of the Lord spake in me: so respects an internal revelation of the mind and will of God unto him, which he was to declare unto others, which was made by the Spirit of God unto his prophets and inspired writers. He illuminated them, or gave them a clear and distinct view of things internally. So the prophecy of Hosea is said to be the beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea; so it is rendered, though it may as well be rendered, in Hosea. The Apostle Peter does with great

emphasis express it of the inspired writers, that the Spirit of Christ which was in them, testified of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (1 Pet. 1:11).

Now inasmuch as the Spirit of the Lord spake by David, then what he said and delivered under his impulse, influence, and inspiration, must be reckoned the word of God; and should be received, not as the word of man, but as it is, in deed, and in truth, the word of God. So we are to account David's Psalms to be a part of the word of God, (and a most excellent part indeed!) and of Christ who speaks in them. Hence the Apostle says, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly: and what does he mean by the word of Christ? He particularly seems to have regard to the words of David; since it follows, teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs (Col. 3:16). These are the words of Christ, at least a great part of them: the reason is, that the Spirit of the Lord spake in and by David, in penning and delivering these Psalms. Moreover, we should regard what the Lord say by David; because what he delivered was spiritual. That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit (John 3:6): so, what any man says under the influence of the Spirit is spiritual. What David said by divine inspiration was spiritual; and therefore with propriety are his Psalms, in the passage before referred to, called spiritual songs: not only because the matter in them is spiritual, but because the Author of them was the Spirit of God.

It also follows from hence, that what David spake under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, must be holy, for the Spirit of God is holy: an epithet peculiar to the Third Person, called the Holy Spirit, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (Luke 11:13). All that comes from him must be holy. The Law of God is holy; the Gospel is holy; the Scriptures are holy. They are called the Holy Scriptures: the reason is plain and clear; because they come from the Holy Spirit of God; therefore the whole matter of the Scriptures must be holy. The Law is holy, just, and good (Rom. 7:12). The Gospel is so; all the doctrines and truths of it are holy (the doctrine which is according to godliness (1 Tim. 6:3)). They open not a door to licentiousness, as many who are ignorant of them foolishly object, knowing nothing of the power of them; for the grace of God teaches men, that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Therefore, I say, if David spake what he did by the holy Ghost, then what he said must be holy.

It must be true also; because the Spirit that spake by him is the Spirit of Truth. How often does Christ give him that epithet: Even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me (John 15:26): and again, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth (John 16:13). Now, inasmuch as what was said by David, and by any other inspired writer, was by the Spirit of God, the Scriptures must be the Scriptures of truth: for no lie is of the Truth (1 John 2:21).

This also being the case, David speaking by the Spirit of God, as well as all other holy and good men, it follows, that the blessed Spirit is the best interpreter of the Scriptures. It is He that can most truly lead into all truth, and make application of it; lead men into the truths contained in the Psalms of David; open their understandings, that they may understand them. It is He also that can best assist us in singing the psalms which he himself is the inditer of: most wisely therefore did the Apostle resolve, in the strength of divine grace, to sing with the Spirit as well as with the understanding (1 Cor. 14:15).

The Spirit of the Lord spake by me. And it is added, His word was in my tongue. His word: the word of the Spirit of God was in my tongue. Not only did he indite the matter, but he gave him the express words wherewith to deliver that matter.—Some have been of opinion, that the inspired writers of the word of God had only the matter thereof dictated to them, or their minds furnished within views of things, but that they were left to clothe those ideas with words of their own. If this had been the case, if there had not been infallibility with respect to words as well as to matter, they might have made use of improper ones, which would not have conveyed to our minds the proper ideas of things; so that we should have been at an uncertainty with respect to faith and practice. But this was not the case: words were also suggested unto them, by which they were to express those ideas, those impulses upon their minds. His word was in my tongue. What they said, they said, not in words which man's own wisdom taught, but in words which the Holy Ghost

taught (1 Cor. 2:13). The very words they were directed to make use of, as well as the matter. We are said to be nourished up in the words of faith and sound doctrine (1 Tim. 4:6): not with doctrine, but the words of doctrine: not doctrines as to the matter of them—but the very words of those doctrines are laid down in the Scriptures; and therefore we are commanded to hold fast the form of sound words (2 Tim. 1:13)—sound speech that cannot be condemned (Titus 2:8)—which must be that which is under the direction and inspiration of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue—or on my tongue; impressed there; even his very words were so: and thus his tongue became as the pen of a ready writer (Ps. 45:1). Words flowed from him most readily, and he most faithfully delivered and penned them as the Lord says, He that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully (Jer. 23:28). Now this being his word, the word of the Spirit of God, when it comes not in word only but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, it must answer some valuable ends and purposes—for the conviction of sinners, for their conversion, for their illumination and instruction, for the working of faith in them, for the encouragement of hope: it must be effectual to lead them into all truth, effectual for their consolation, and answer all the divine purposes.

2. There is another person that is said to speak by David—The God of Israel. God: He that at the first creation of all things said, and it was done—commanded, and it stood fast (Ps. 33:9). He the great God who said, Let there be light, and there was light: He that said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters: He that said, Let the waters be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear: He that said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit: He that said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven: He that said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life: He that said these things, and they were immediately done (Gen. 1). He spake by David. The God of Israel said. The God of Israel: He that spake to Israel upon Mount Sinai, and said in an audible voice, I am the Lord the God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage (Ex. 20:2). And which was a most wonderful event; for who of any nation (as Moses said to the Israelites) ever heard the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, and lived? Most amazing it was, that God should speak in the manner he did upon Mount Sinai. The same God of Israel said to David what follows.

The God of Israel: that is, the covenant God of Israel. He was so to Israel in a literal sense. He was the covenant; God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. The God of the Hebrews, the God of Israel: so he calls himself. When he sent Moses to demand the free dismissal of the people of Israel out of Egypt, Moses says unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go. Moses also speaks of a very solemn avouchment of this relation between God and Israel. Thou hast (says he) avouched the Lord this day to be thy God—and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people (Deut. 26:17, 18). Now this is to be understood in a national way; but God is the God of his spiritual Israel; the God of all Israel, whether Jews or Gentiles. He is the God of all whom he has chosen for his peculiar people, whom Christ has redeemed by his precious blood, and who are effectually called by divine grace. He is their covenant God in a special sense. This covenant was made with Christ from everlasting. I have made a covenant with David my servant; that is, with the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom that covenant stands for ever. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips (Ps. 89:34).

This is a covenant of grace, we commonly call it so, because it consists of the blessings of grace; and because it is founded on the free sovereign mercy of God. I have said mercy shalt be built up for ever, "and therefore I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant" (Ps. 89:2, 3). It is called the covenant of peace which shall never be removed (Isa. 54:10), because the grand article in it is peace and reconciliation by Christ Jesus the Lord: contrived, agreed upon, and settled in that covenant. It is also called the covenant of life, as well as of peace, because the blessings of life spiritual and eternal were secured in it; all those spiritual blessings wherewith the Lord's people are blessed in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3); but the most grand and principal article in this covenant is, the Lord being the God of his people. They shall be my people, and I will be their God (Jer. 24:7). Men may be temporarily happy with the things of this world; but happy, beyond all expression happy, is he whose God is

the Lord. This is the grand article of the covenant of grace, that God is the covenant God and father of his people in Christ Jesus. "I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:18). This relation always continues: he is their God, and their guide even unto death. Now here we have the God of Israel speaking to David: and what line said, must needs be true, because it is God who said it. He is a God of truth, and cannot lie; and therefore whatever he has delivered out, as his mind and will, must be true: let God be true, but every man a liar (Rom. 3:3, 4). Since it is God that said it, I say it must be true; and as he is the God of Israel, it must be for the good of spiritual Israel. He can say nothing but what is so. All that is contained in the sacred writings, is for the good of spiritual Israel. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16). The whole of the sacred Scriptures as well as the book of Psalms, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope (Rom. 15:4). And he who is the God of Israel that spake by David, could give the best account of the covenant of grace. This is one part of the last words of David "although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant:" and who but Israel's covenant God could give the account he does, of the covenant he has made with them? It is a wonderful instance of his condescending grace, that he should say any thing to the sons of men! Marvelous that he should speak to Israel face to face, as he did; that he should commune with Moses from off the mercy-seat; and that he should speak to his dear children as he does, and disclose the secrets of his heart's love unto them!—The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant (Ps. 25:14).

Now what the God of Israel says, ought most certainly to be attended to. "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." The Lord God hath spoken, (says Amos) who can but prophesy? (Amos 3:8) and when he speaks in compassion to the sons of men, who can but hearken?

3. The Rock of Israel spake to me. The Rock of Israel: which may be understood of the same person still; hence the word Rock in Scripture is often used as expressive of Deity,—as in that passage, Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges (Deut. 32:32): that is, their God is not as our God, as the Psalmist says. Who is a Rock save our God? (Ps. 17:31). Or, it may be understood of Christ, the second person in the glorious Trinity; and it will not be any difficulty, I think, to observe a Trinity of persons in this account.—Here is the Rock of Israel, the second person: and then here is the Spirit of the Lord, that spake by him: all the three divine persons. A glorious testimony of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead.

The Rock of Israel, who appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: who delivered Israel out of the hands of Pharaoh: called by Moses, his God, and his Fathers' God (Ex. 15:2). The Rock of Israel; he that was typified by that Rock Israel drank water out of in the wilderness; of which the Apostle testifies that Rock was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4); a type of him.—The Rock of Israel, or, he who is the safety and security of Israel; the Rock in whom is everlasting strength; that Rock of Refuge which is for saints to apply to in every trouble: The name of the Lord is a Strong Tower, and thither the righteous run and are safe.—The Rock of Israel; on which the spiritual Israel of God is built; the church of God, against which the gates of hell can never prevail: that one and only foundation laid in Zion: that sure foundation, on which, whosoever builds shall be safe:—that Rock of Israel on which every single believer is built; for he is the foundation of the apostles and prophets. All the saints under the old and new testament dispensation are laid on this foundation. Every wise and good man lays his soul, and the salvation of it, upon this Rock, which will bear it against all storms, and tempests whatsoever. He is the rock, and the foundation of all our faith, hope, spiritual peace, and comfort. The foundation of our faith, the anchor of our hope, and the spring of our peace and comfort. A glorious Rock indeed! If there be any consolation it is in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:1). This is the Rock of Israel, that spake in, by, or concerning David as his type: The Rock of Israel spake by me.

I should now have proceeded to consider what the Spirit of the Lord spake by David; what words were in his tongue; what the God of Israel said, and what the Rock of Israel spake by him: spake by him as the Psalmist of Israel; for the words may be connected with those, and the sweet

Psalmist of Israel said—The Rock of Israel spake by him, directed him what to speak: which serves to prove the divinity of the Book of Psalms; it is a part of the sacred Scriptures given by inspiration of God. It is also a testimony of the truth of that Book, and of what is contained therein: a greater testimony sure we can never have, since all the Three divine persons appear in it: there is the God of Israel, the Rock of Israel, and the Spirit of God. There are Three that bear testimony; and if we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. The Rock of Israel spake to me, or concerning me: concerning me as a type of Christ. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega of the Psalms: they all testify of him, concerning his offices, concerning his grace, concerning the work of salvation and redemption; and particularly concerning what he is in himself, what he endured and suffered for his people, what office he bears, what a low estate he should be brought into, to what glory he should be advanced, and of what use and service he should be to the sons of men.

This also serves to establish the character of David as a prophet, which the Apostle gives him in Acts 2:30, where he quotes some passages of Scripture out of the Psalms, and argues that David, being a prophet, said so and so. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ. He then cites from the 16th Psalm. His soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption. There are other passages in the same Psalm, quoted in this chapter, which speak of David as a prophet. All which prove, that the God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake by him. We may then conclude, that we ought to receive what is delivered there, as the Word of God.

But what these Three divine persons said to David, or spake by him, chiefly respects what follows; as, he that ruleth over men, must be just, ruling in the fear of God: or, that there should be such a Ruler (meaning the Messiah), who should be as the light of the morning, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. But the consideration of these things I must defer to another discourse.

(Editors Note: Roman Numeral II. was not recorded as a part of this sermon or any sermon following in this series.)

FAITH IN GOD AND HIS WORD, THE ESTABLISHMENT AND PROSPERITY OF HIS PEOPLE:

A Sermon,

Preached at a Wednesday's Evening Lecture,

in

GREAT EAST-CHEAP, Dec. 27, 1753.

2 Chronicles 20:20

Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established blessed; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

In the beginning of this chapter, we have an account of an invasion of the land of Judea in the time of Jehoshaphat, by the neighboring nations, who joined in confederacy against the Jews. These people were always a typical people, and in this their case and circumstances were an emblem of the church and people of God; who in their present state are militant. They are surrounded with enemies, as the Jews were, which are many, lively and strong; they have numerous fleshly lusts which war against their souls; and some enemies that are not flesh and blood, but spiritual wickednesses, with whom they wrestle; and even the whole world is against them, and hate, oppose, and persecute them, in one shape or another, to the uttermost; so that upon one account or another, for the most part, without are fightings, and within are fears (2 Cor. 7:5).

The method of Jehoshaphat and his people took in this their distress, was to seek the Lord by prayer, and ask help of him. Prayer is a special piece of the Christian armor; it is the last that is mentioned in the account of it; it is the dernier resort of believers, and which they often use to good purpose and great advantage. There were some sort of devils in Christ's time, who could not be dispossessed by any other means; Satan has often felt the dint of this weapon of our warfare, and dreads it; and dreaded it has been by some of his instruments. Mary queen of Scots used to say, that she dreaded more the prayers of John Knox, a famous Reformer, than ten thousand armed men; so effectual is the fervent prayer of the righteous, as for the bringing down the blessings of the covenant of grace upon them, so for the intimidating of their enemies, and for their protection from them.

The excellent prayer of Jehoshaphat on this occasion is recorded; which begins with taking notice of the place of the divine residence, heaven; in like manner as our Lord taught his disciples to pray, saying first of all, Our Father which art in heaven (Matt. 11:9); and of the sovereignty of God over all the kingdoms of the world: and of his uncontrollable and irresistible power; and of his being the covenant God and Father of his people; all which are necessary to be observed by us in our addresses to him, to raise in our minds just ideas of him, and to encourage our faith and hope in him. The royal saint goes on to make mention of the works of God of old; his works of power and might, of grace and goodness, in driving the heathens out of the land of Canaan, and giving it to the seed of Abraham for ever; from whence he hoped and concluded, it would not be given up again into the hands of their enemies. He takes notice of the sanctuary or temple that was built in it, where Jehovah dwelt, granted his presence to his people, and heard and helped them in the times of their distress; which was a type of Christ's human nature, the temple of his body, the true tabernacle which God pitched, and not man, in which dwells all the fulness of the Godhead; and for the sake of him the Lord hears and answers the prayers of his people, when they look, as Jonah did, towards his holy temple (Jonah 2:4); and which, with great pertinency, is here observed. Next the ingratitude of their enemies is taken notice of; when Israel came out of Egypt, and passed through the wilderness, they were bid not to meddle with or distress the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, but turn away from them, as they did; who now reward them evil for good, by attempting to dispossess them of the land given them to inherit: and

therefore it was hoped the Lord would judge their cause, and right their wrongs; since the king and his people had no power to oppose such a numerous army that was come up against them; but their eyes were to the Lord, and on him was their dependence, and with him they left the issue of things.

The Lord presently showed himself to be a God hearing and answering prayer; for immediately, as the king and all the people stood before the Lord to hear what he would say unto them, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel a Levite, who stood up and prophesied, and bid the people not to be dismayed at the number of their enemies; told them where they were to be met with; assured them of victory, nay, that they had no need to fight, the Lord would fight for them; and that they had nothing to do, but to stand still and see the salvation of God; which message Jehoshaphat and the people received with faith, with holy fear, bowing their heads and worshipping; and so fully assured were they of the truth of what was promised them, that they sung praises of God, before the deliverance was wrought; upon which they marched out to meet the enemy, when Jehoshaphat at the head of his army addressed it in the words first read; believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established blessed; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper: "do not trust in your numbers, nor in your strength, courage, and skill; but trust in your covenant-God, so shall ye be strengthened, confirmed, and animated to engage your enemies with true fortitude of mind; believe what he has said by his prophets, particularly Jahaziel, who has just now delivered a message from him to you; so shall ye succeed against your enemies, and obtain a complete victory over them." This is the sense of the words respecting the present case; but they may be applied to believers in any age or period of time, in whatsoever case or circumstances they may be; the main and principle thing in them is faith or believing; concerning which,

I shall consider the kind and nature of it.

The objects of it, as here expressed, the Lord God and his prophets.

The advantages arising from it, establishment and prosperity.

I shall consider the kind and nature of faith: There are various sorts of faith, as the apostle suggests, when he says (1 Cor. 13:2), though I have all faith; that is, all sorts of faith, which he supposes a man may have, and not have charity, love of true grace; he means all sorts but one, namely, special faith; for whoever has that, has charity or love: for faith worketh by love (Gal. 5:6): however there are several sorts or kinds of faith.

There is a faith of miracles, or of doing miracles; and which the apostle in the above words has in view, since it follows, so that I could remove mountains; referring to what our Lord said to his disciples; if ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; nothing shall be impossible unto you (Matt. 17:20). Christ, when he gave his disciples a commission to preach the Gospel, gave them power of working miracles to confirm it; he gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of diseases; and Judas no doubt had this power as well as the rest; for a man in these times might have such a faith, and such a power, and yet not have that special faith which issues in salvation. We read (Matt. 7:22, 23) of some that cast out devils in the name of Christ, and yet are not, and will not be known and acknowledged by him as his.

There is a faith which is commonly called an historical faith; which is a mere assent to a set of propositions as true, and which are true in themselves as,

That there is but one God: that there is a God may be known and believed by the light of nature, may be concluded from the things that are made by him; and that this God is but one, is the voice of reason and revelation; the language both of the Old and of the New Testament; the faith of Jews and Christians; and it is right to believe it; and which may be done where there is not true special faith: thou believest that there is one God, thou dost well; the devils also believe and tremble (Jam. 2:19); that is, they believe there is one God, and know there is but one, and tremble through fear of his awful majesty.

With this sort of faith, a man may believe all that is said and is true of Jesus Christ; as that he is

God over all blessed for ever, the true God of eternal life: that he is the Son of God, and Savior of the world; that he is God and man in one person; that he became incarnate; that he suffered and died for the sins of men; that he was buried, and rose again from the dead; that he ascended up to heaven, is set down at the right hand of God, and will come a second time to judge the world; all which a man may believe, and yet be destitute of the true grace of God. There are indeed some strong expressions in the epistle of the apostle John, where he says, that every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God (1 John 4:2); and whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God (1 John 5:1): whereas now there are whole nations that believe these things, of multitudes of whom it cannot be thought that they are regenerate persons. It will help us over this difficulty a little, by considering times, and times: in the apostles times, these truths were generally denied; the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, opposed them; and then for a man to believe and profess them in the face of all opposition, and under the scandal of the cross, was a great matter; it was reckoned a proof of true grace, and a criterion of a man's regeneration: but now, since Christianity is established, and become the religion of nations, to believe all this is no mark or sign of being born again; for such a national faith is no better than the faith of Indians and Mohammedans, only it happens to have a better object; for the ground and reason of it is the same; namely, being born and brought up among those who generally believe in the same way. Though it may be, the true sense of the above expression is this; that Christ is come in the flesh, or is become incarnate, is on the side of God and truth; and that whoever believes that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah, is a regenerate person; that is, not barely assents to this truth; but whereas his work, as the Messiah was to make atonement for sin, and procure the pardon of it, and bring in everlasting righteousness, and obtain salvation for men; he deals by faith with him for these things; with his atoning sacrifice for the expiation of sin; with his blood for pardon and cleansing; and with his righteousness for justification; receives him as a Savior, and depends upon him for life and salvation; otherwise, barely believing him to be the Messiah, is no other than what the devils themselves do; who in the days of his flesh knew and owned him to be the Christ, the Son of God (Luke 4:34, 41).

With this sort of faith a man may believe all the doctrines of the gospel, and yet not have the root of the matter in him, or true grace. Men may have the whole form of gospel-doctrine in their heads, and deny the power of it, or not feel it in their hearts; they may believe the things concerning the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ, as Simon Magnus did, or however professed to do, and yet be, with him, in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Yea, many have had such a degree of knowledge in evangelical things, as to be able to preach the gospel clearly and distinctly, to prophesy or preach in Christ's name, and yet knew him not spiritually and experimentally, nor were known by him; they may speak with the tongues of men and angels, have all knowledge and all faith of this kind, and yet be without charity or true love to God, to Christ, and to divine and spiritual things. Indeed, without believing the gospel of Christ, and the things concerning him, there can be no true faith in him; men cannot be children of light without believing the light of the gospel, or giving credit to the gospel-revelation; and therefore our Lord exhorts men to believe in the light, that they might be children of the light (John 12:36): the way and means of being so, is to attend unto and believe the gospel-scheme; but then this may be believed, and yet men fall short of the true light of special grace.

This faith is but temporary faith, a believing for a while; and it need not be thought strange if persons that have only this should make shipwreck of it, and put away a good conscience; and which is no instance of a true believer's falling away from grace; whereas those who have true faith, and live by it on Christ, are not of them that draw back into perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul; which brings me to observe,

That there is a special and spiritual faith, to which salvation is annexed; with which he that believes shall be saved, according to the gospel-declaration; and which directs and encourages sensible sinners to look to Christ, and believe in him, assuring them they shall be saved. The scheme of salvation the gospel publishes and proclaims, is, that it is by grace through faith in Christ: hence, I suppose, it is, that this sort of faith is commonly called saving faith, to distinguish it from others; though I think not with strict justness and propriety, and could wish the phrase was disused; since it seems to derogate and detract from the glory of Christ, who is the only Savior,

and to carry off the mind from the object of faith, to the act of it. But be this as it will:

This sort of faith is not of a man's self; it does not owe its original to the creature; it is expressly denied to be of man; that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8); it is not the effect of pure nature; it is not the produce of man's free-will and power; all men have not faith (2 Thess. 3:2): there are few that have it, and those that have it, have it not from nature, but by the grace of God. No man, says Christ, can come unto me; that is, believe in him, for coming to Christ, and believing in him, are the same thing, except it were given him of my Father (John 6:65). And again, no man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him (John 6:44); that is by the influence of his Spirit and grace.

Nor is this sort of faith of the law of works; for as the law is not of faith (Gal. 3:12), so neither is faith of the law; the law is not so much as the means of it, nor does it reveal the object, nor require the act, or direct and encourage to it; it is not the means of true faith in Christ; faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17); but by what part of it? not the law, but the gospel; received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:2)? That is, by the preaching of the law, and works of it, or by the preaching of the doctrine of faith? By the latter, and not the former: and as the Spirit is not received in that way, or by such means, so not the graces of the Spirit, and particularly faith. How should it come this way, since the law does not reveal the object of it, Christ, or give the least hint concerning him? By the law is the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20); but not the knowledge of a Savior from sin: did it reveal Christ to a poor awakened sinner, it would not work that wrath in his conscience, or leave him without hope of mercy, as it does; and if it knows nothing, and makes known nothing of the object of faith, how can it be thought it should require the act of it? does it require an act upon an unknown object? does it require men to believe in an object it does not reveal, or give the least discovery of? How should they believe in consequence of such a requirement, of whom they have not heard the least title from the law? Nor does the law give any direction or encouragement to souls to believe in Christ; its language is, do this and live (Gal. 3:12), but not believe in Christ and be saved (Acts 16:31); this is the voice of the gospel, and not of the law. Should it be said that faith is reckoned among the weightier matters of the law (Matt. 23:23); this is to be understood either of fidelity, of faithfulness among men, or of trust in God, as the God of nature and providence, &c., giving credit to the revelation of his will, and the worship of him according to it.

True faith in Christ, comes from another quarter than from the covenant of works, and flows in another channel; it is a blessing of the covenant of grace, of that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure (2Sam. 23:5); for the glory of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and for the good of the covenant-ones; it provides all blessings of grace for them for time and eternity, and among the rest faith in Christ Jesus. This lays open and exposes a mistaken and false notion of some, who assert, that faith and repentance are conditions of the covenant of grace, when they are the blessings of it, included in that promise; a new heart also will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh (Ezek. 36:26); and these are gifts without repentance, which God never revokes or takes back, or suffers to be of no effect. Faith in Christ is the fruit of electing grace, and is as sure as salvation itself; the one is in the decree of the means, the other in the decree of the end; that decree of election which secures the end, salvation, secures also the means, sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth (2 Thess. 2:13); or faith in Christ, who is the truth; so it has been in all ages, now is, and ever shall be, that as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed (Acts 3:48). Hence true faith is called the faith of God's elect (Titus 1:1); it being certain, proper and peculiar to them; and this is the true reason why one believes, and another does not; as our Lord says of some, ye believe not, because ye are not my sheep (John 10:26): the sheep which the Father gave unto me in election, and in the covenant of grace: let any man rise and give a better reason if he can, that this that Christ has given, why one believes in him, and another does not. Believing in him is the pure gift of God, of his rich, sovereign and distinguishing grace; he gives it to one, and denies it to another, as he pleases: he hides the things of Christ, and of the gospel, from the wise and prudent, and does not vouchsafe unto them faith in them; and reveals them unto babes; and gives them faith in his Son; and no other reason can be given than his sovereign pleasure: even so, Father, says Christ, for so it seemed good in thy sight (Matt. 11:26).

Special faith in Christ is of the operation of the Spirit of God: he produces it by his mighty power in the soul; he enlightens the mind, reveals the object, brings near Christ, his righteousness and salvation, and enables the sensible sinner to look unto him, lay hold on him, and receive him as his Savior and Redeemer; hence he is called the Spirit of faith (2 Cor. 4:13); because he is the author of it, who begins and carries on, and will perform the work of faith with power: the principal use of which grace is to receive all from Christ, and give him the glory. God has put this honor upon it, to constitute and appoint it to be the receiver-general of all the blessings of grace. It receives Christ himself as the Father's free-gift; it receives out of the fulness of Christ, even grace for grace, or an abundance of it; it receives the blessing of righteousness from the Lord of justification; it receives the remission of sins through his blood, according to the gospel-declaration; it receives the adoption of children, in consequence of the way being opened for it through the redemption which is in Christ; it receives the inheritance among them that are sanctified, the right unto it, and the claim upon it; and to this point it is advanced, that all the glory might redound to the grace of God; it is of faith, that it might be by grace (Rom. 4:16): there are other uses of faith, and actings of it, which will be observed under the following head. I now proceed to consider,

The objects of faith, as in the words directed to, the Lord God and his prophets. 1st, The Lord our God, who is the one Lord to be believed in; hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord (Deut. 6:4); from which passage the ancient Jews^[1] have established the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the godhead, as well as the doctrine of the Unity of the divine Being; and certain it is, that Father, Son, and Spirit, are the one God; and each, and every one of them, are to be believed in, and are the proper objects of faith.

God the Father is the object of faith, who is to be believed in; and to believe in him is not merely to believe his existence and perfections, for he is a fool indeed that believes there is no God; nor merely to believe in him as the God of nature and providence, and to trust in him for the preservation of life and the continuance of the blessings and mercies of it, and to glorify him for them; though there are some who believe there is a God, yet do not glorify him as such, nor trust in his goodness, nor are thankful for providential favors: but to believe in him with a special faith, is to believe in him as he has proclaimed his name in Christ, a God gracious and merciful, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin (Ex. 34:6); it is to believe in him as our covenant-God and Father, for so he is to his people in Christ; he is to them what he is to him, as he says, I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God (John 20:17): it was a noble act of faith expressed by David, I trusted in thee, O Lord; I said, thou art my God (Ps. 31:14); and such should believe that this God, who is their God, will be their God and guide even unto death; since covenant-relation always subsists, and can never be made void. And whereas the Father of Christ stands in the relation of a Father to his people; it becomes them, having had the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing to their spirits that they are the children of God, to call him in faith, and with a filial fear and reverence, their father, and not turn away from him: to believe in him, is to believe in his everlasting and unchangeable love; and to believe that it is so, and their interest in it, it being shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit given unto them; this love being declared unto them by the Lord himself, and affirmed in the strongest terms, saying, I have loved thee with an everlasting love (Jer. 31:3); of which he has given full proof, not only by his choice of them in Christ, and by the redemption of them through him, but by drawing them with loving-kindness to himself in effectual vocation; it should be believed: it is a glorious act of faith of the apostle's when he says, I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38-39); this is to be rooted and grounded in it. To believe in God the Father, is to believe in him as the God of all grace, the author of it; that his grace is sufficient for us in all times of need; that he is able to cause all grace to abound toward us; and that he will supply all our wants, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus: it is to believe in his promises, which are exceeding great and precious; that he is faithful who has promised, and will perform; that he will never suffer his faithfulness to fail, nor any good word which he has spoken; that all his promises are yea and amen in Christ: it is to believe in his power, that he is able also to perform and make good what he has said; and likewise that there is in him everlasting strength, and that, according to his

promise, as our day is, our strength shall be; and that we are, and shall be kept by his power, through faith, unto salvation.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is also the object of faith: ye believe in God, believe also in me (John 14:1), says Christ himself; who is God as well as the Father, and to be believed in equally with him: the gospel directs to faith in Christ, and it is the principal thing it encourages; the ministers of it point him out to sensible and distressed sinners, saying, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved (Acts 16:31): the sum of the gospel of the word of faith is, that if thou shalt confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Rom. 10:9, 10). The Targum, or Chaldee paraphrase of our text, is, believe in the word of the Lord your God; where the Paraphrast, by the memra Jehovah, or word of the Lord, does not mean the written word of the Lord, the scriptures; nor the oral word of the Lord, what was spoken by the prophets, as it is said he sometimes does; since it follows in the same paraphrase, believe in his law, and in his prophets; wherefore it is to be understood of the essential Word, the Son of God, who is to be believed in; and various are the acts of faith which are exercised on him, or believing on him is expressed by various things.

Faith in Christ is signified by seeing him, and looking unto him; an unknown Christ cannot, but an unseen Christ is, and may be, the object of faith: faith is the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1), the principal of which is an unseen Christ: the believer by faith beholds the glory of his person, the fulness of his grace, the excellency of his righteousness, the preciousness and efficacy of his blood, and the suitableness of his salvation; and it looks to him, for peace and pardon, for righteousness, eternal life and happiness; and keeps looking to him as the author and finisher of faith. It is a motion of the soul towards Christ; it looks at him, gazes with admiration and pleasure on the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace, but goes out unto him; faith is the soul's coming to Christ, which it is encouraged to do, by his kind invitation; come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matt. 11:28); and by his gracious declarations and resolutions, that he will in no wise cast out him that cometh to him (John 6:47): yea, it is expressed by a swift motion to him; by a fleeing to him for refuge under a sense of sin and danger; by running to the name of the Lord for safety, which is as a strong tower; and by turning into the strong-hold Christ, as prisoners of hope: to believe in him, is not only to behold him with an eye of faith, to flee and come unto him in a way of believing, but to lay hold upon him, and embrace him; for Christ is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon him, and happy is every one that retaineth him (Prov. 3:18): it is to lay hold upon the skirt of him that is a Jew; to lay hold upon his righteousness; to lay hold upon his strength; to lay hold on him as the mediator of the of the covenant; to hold him fast, and not let him go; saying with Job, though he slay me, yet will I trust in him—he also shall be my salvation (Job 13:15, 16). Faith in Christ is a leaning on him, while passing through this wilderness; it is a recumbency, a relying upon him for salvation; a staying a man's self upon the mighty God of Jacob; laying the whole stress of his salvation on him; casting all his care, and all his burdens on him, who has promised to sustain him and them; believing he is able to keep him from falling, and to keep what he has committed to him: for to believe in Christ, is to give up all into his hands, our souls, and the eternal concerns of them; to expect all grace, and all the supplies of it from him, even all grace here, and glory hereafter: it is in one word, to deal with his person for acceptance with God; with his blood for pardon and cleansing; with his sacrifice for atonement: with his righteousness for justification; with his fulness for every supply of grace, looking for his mercy unto eternal life.

The Holy Spirit of God is likewise the object of faith; we read and hear of faith in God, and of faith in Jesus Christ, but very little of faith in the Holy Ghost; and yet as he is the one God with the Father and the Son, he is equally to be believed in as they are: and we are not only to believe his being and perfections, his deity and personality, his offices as a sanctifier and comforter, and the operations of his grace on the souls of men; but there are particular acts of faith, trust, and confidence, to be exercised on him: as he is God, he is to be worshipped, and this cannot be done aright without faith; he is particularly to be played unto, and there is no praying to him, nor praying in him, without faith; we are to trust in him for his help and assistance in prayer, and

indeed in the exercise of every religious duty, and even of every grace. I fear ministers of the word do not trust in him as they should do in the discharge of their work, nor private Christians in the performance of theirs: and besides all this, there is an act of special faith to be put forth upon him, as upon the other two persons; for as we are to trust in God, the Father to Keep us through his power to salvation, and to trust in Christ for the salvation of our souls, and to trust the salvation of them with him; so we are to trust in the Holy Spirit for carrying on and finishing the work of grace on our souls, who is equal to it; we are to trust the whole of it with him, and be confident of this very thing; as we may be, as of any one thing in the world, that he, the Spirit of God, which hath begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6).

2dly, The prophets of the Lord are to be believed; first the Lord, and then his prophets, being set by him, and coming from him, bringing a message from him, and declaring his will; so the children of Israel at the Red sea believed the Lord and his servant Moses (Ex. 14:31).

By the prophets are meant the prophets of the Old Testament, who are to be believed, since they spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; the Spirit of the Lord spoke by them, and his Word was in their tongue (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Sam. 23:2): he dictated to them what they should say; he led them into all the truths they delivered; he indited the scriptures of truth, and therefore they ought to be credited as such: nay, not only all scripture is given by inspiration of God, even all the writings of the prophets; but whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope; the whole of scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness (Rom; 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16); which several advantageous uses should the more recommend the writings of the prophets to our faith and love; and especially since they contain many things in them concerning Christ, the more immediate object of special faith; there are many things in the Psalms, and in the law, and in the prophets, concerning him; Moses wrote of him, and all the prophets bear witness of him, of his person, offices, and grace, of what he should be, and what he should do and suffer; they testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; and especially we, at this time of day, have great reason to believe the prophets, since the far greater part of what they prophesied of, is exactly come to pass. The prophecies of Isaiah, concerning the captivity of the Jews, and their deliverance from it by Cyrus, who is mentioned by name a hundred and fifty years or more before he was born, have been punctually fulfilled. Also Daniel's prophecies concerning Darius king of Persia, and Alexander the Great, under the names of the ram and he-goat, and of the kings of Egypt and Syria, and what should be done in their times; and not only these, but others of greater importance, concerning the Messiah, his birth of a virgin, the place of his birth, his miracles, sufferings, and death; his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, the effusion of the Spirit, and the spread and success of the gospel in the Gentile world, as well as the destruction of the Jewish nation, for their rejection of him; on account of all these things, and more, the prophets of the Old Testament claim our faith and credit.

The prophets of the New Testament are to be believed. The apostles of our Lord are by him called prophets and wise men; some of which, he says, the Jews would kill, and crucify, and others scourge (Matt. 23:34): they are so called, both because they were extraordinary preachers of the word, and foretellers of things to come, and on both accounts were to be believed. John the divine, was eminently a prophet in both respects, as he was a faithful dispenser of the word, and bore record of it, and of the testimony of Jesus, and as he foretold things to come under a divine inspiration: his Revelation is a prophecy of what should be in the world and church, from his time, to the second coming of Christ: great part of which has already been fulfilled; and there is all the reason in the world to believe the rest will be accomplished. The sayings in it are the sayings of God, and they are faithful and true; believe what he has said by this his prophet. The ordinary and common preachers of the word are called prophets and their preaching prophesying (1 Cor. 14: 3, 4, 5, 29, 32, 37); and though we are not to believe every spirit, and every man that pretends to be a spiritual man and a prophet, but try the spirits whether they are of God, by his word, the standard of faith and practice; because many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 John 4:1): yet such who bring the doctrines of Christ with them, such as are agreeable to the word of God, which are taken out of it, and established by it, ought to be believed and received, not as the

word of man, but as in truth the word of God.

The whole of divine revelation is to be believed, which God has made by his prophets, whether of the Old or of the New Testament; and which is all comprehended in these words our Lord began his ministry with, believe the gospel (Mark 1:15); not to believe this, is the damning sin of unbelief, so much spoken of in the New Testament; this was the sin of the Jews, and in which the greater part died, that they believed not the Jesus was the Messiah, and other important truths concerning him, though they came with such full evidence; this is the sin of all, to whom the external revelation of the Gospel comes, and they believe it not; this is the sin of the Deists of the present age, of all deniers, rejecters, and despisers of the Gospel; who either neglect to examine the evidence of it, or notwithstanding the evidence of it, reject and condemn it: what will the end of such persons be, that obey not the gospel of Christ, that do not embrace, but neglect or despise it? They will be punished with everlasting destruction; he that believeth not this revelation shall be damned. This is the condemnation, the cause and aggravation of it, that light is come into the world and men love darkness rather than light (John 3:19); the darkness of nature, rather than a divine revelation. This sort of unbelief, and not want of special faith in Christ, is the cause of men's damnation. No man will be lost or damned, because he has not this faith; to say that God will damn any man because he has not this special faith in Christ, is to represent him as the most cruel of all beings, as the Arminians say we make him to be; to damn a man for that which is solely in his power to give; for no man can believe in Christ with this sort of faith, unless it be given him of his Father; and which yet he determines not to give unto him, as unto all the non-elect: and which man never had in his power to have or to exercise, no, not in the state of innocence. Can any man believe, that God will ever damn a man on such an account as this? This is just such good sense, as if it should be said, that a malefactor dies at Tyburn, for want of receiving the king's pardon, he did not think fit to give him; it is true, if the king had given his pardon, and he had received it, it would have saved him from dying; but then it is not the want of the king's pardon, or of his receiving it, that is the cause of his condemnation and death, but the crimes he was charged with, and convicted of in open court. So, though if it pleases God to give men special faith in Christ, for the remission of their sins, they will certainly be saved; but then it is not the want of this faith in the blood of Christ, for the pardon of sins, that is the cause of any man's condemnation and death, but the transgressions of the law of God, and the contempt of his gospel they have been guilty of. As is the revelation which is made to men, such is the faith that is required of them. If there is no revelation made unto them, no faith is required of them; and unbelief, or want of faith in Christ, will not be their damning sin, as is the case of the heathens; for how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher (Rom. 10:14)? No, they will be condemned, not for their want of faith in Christ, or his gospel, which they never heard of, but for their sins committed against the law and light of nature; as many as have sinned without the law, shall perish without law (Rom. 2:12): if a revelation is made, this is either external or internal; if only an external revelation is made, the faith required is an assent unto it, and a reception of it; and such who do not attend to the evidence it brings with it, or reject and despise it, shall be damned: but if besides the external revelation and internal revelation is made by the spirit of wisdom, in the knowledge of Christ; or God by his word calls men effectually by his grace, and reveals his Son in them, as well as to them; this sort of revelation comes with such power and influence upon the mind, as certainly to produce a true and living faith in the soul, which infallibly issues in eternal life and happiness; and of such persons, and such only, acts of special faith in Christ, are required: and though the sin of unbelief is often found in them, it is such as is consistent with true faith in Christ, and which in the issue is overcome by it: this is the sin of unbelief, that is opposite to special faith, and obstructs it in its acts; but partly because it is pardoned with the other sins of believers, and partly because it is finally subdued and vanquished, it is never the damning sin of any. So I think the truth of things stands. I proceed,

To consider the advantages arising from faith in God, and in his word, establishment and prosperity. Now, though establishment is annexed to faith in the Lord our God, and prosperity to faith in his prophets; yet this is not so to be understood, as if establishment only followed upon faith in God, and not upon faith in his word; and as if prosperity was the consequence of faith in the word only, and not of faith in God; whereas, as on the one hand, the prophets and ministers

of the word, are the means of establishing believers; hence the apostle Paul was desirous of imparting the spiritual gifts he had received, to the end the saints might be established (Rom. 1;11), and speaks of God as of power to establish men, according to his gospel (Rom. 16:25); so, on the other hand, spiritual peace and prosperity flow from faith in God, who keeps such in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on him, because he trusteth in him (Isa. 26:3); wherefore these things are to be considered, not in a strict separate sense, but promiscuously, as they are the joint effects of both faith in God, and in his word.

1st, Establishment; which is to be understood, not of the state of believers, but to their hearts, frames, graces and duties.

Not of the state of the people of God, which is in itself firm and stable, and cannot be made more so: they are safe in the arms of everlasting love; they are not only engraven by the Lord upon the palms of his hands, and set as a seal upon his arm, but also as a seal upon his heart. Nothing in heaven, earth, or hell, can separate them from his love; it is invariably the same, in whatsoever condition or circumstance they are; when he hides or chides, he still loves; he rests in his love; it is more immovable than rocks or mountains. They are fixed in the hands of Christ, out of whose hands neither sin, nor Satan, nor the world can pluck them, and out of which they shall never fall. What was said by the queen of Sheba, concerning Solomon, with respect to Israel; because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them (2 Chron. 9:8), may be said of Christ, with respect to his people; that because he loved the saints, and in order to establish them for ever and ever, he put them into the hands of Christ, where they are safe from all danger, and from every enemy. They are secured in the covenant of grace, which is sure and immovable; its blessings are the sure mercies of David; its promises are yea and amen in Christ; it is established on better promises than any other covenant; and the persons in it can never be removed out of it. They are settled on the rock of ages, on which the church is built, against which the gates of hell can never prevail; they are built on a sure foundation God has laid in Zion; so that, though storms and tempests of corruption, temptations, and afflictions should beat upon them, they stand unmoved against them all, being built on a rock. They are in a state of grace, in which they will ever remain; they are in a state of justification, and shall never enter into condemnation; they are in the family of God, by adopting grace, out of which they will never be turned; for, if a son, no more a servant, but an heir of God through Christ (Gal. 4:7); they are in a state of regeneration, and can never be unborn again; they have the principle of grace, which springs up unto eternal life: these things are so chained together, that not one link can ever be broken; whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Rom. 8:30). Now this establishment does not arise from faith, nor is it by it; if all the faith that ever was in the world, from Adam to this moment, was engrossed and possessed by one man, it would not make his state, God-ward, a whit the surer and firmer that it is. But,

The hearts of God's people are very unsettled, and need establishing; they melt like wax, and flow like water, through fear, and want of stronger faith. They are unstable as water, as is said of Reuben, and do not excel (Gen. 49:4); their frames are changeable and various; one while their mountain stands strong, and they say they shall never be moved; presently God hides his face, and their souls are troubled (Ps. 30:6, 7): one that could say, the Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in him, soon comes into such distress as to put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope (Lam. 3:24, 29); he whose love is as strong as death, exceeding fervent and ardent, the coals thereof give a most vehement flame, which many waters cannot quench (Cant. 8:6, 7); through the prevalence of corruption, the force of temptation, and the snares of the world, waxes chill and cold. And he that seemed to be steadfast in the faith, falls from some degree of his steadfastness in it; and instead of quitting himself like a man, is like a child tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, wavers in his profession, slackens in his duty, and is negligent of it. Now faith in God, and in his word, has a tendency to establish the heart, and make it fearless; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings, even he whose heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; his heart is established, he shall not be afraid (Ps. 112:7, 8): as is a man's faith, so are his other graces; if faith is in lively exercise, hope will be lively too, and be as an anchor sure and steadfast; his love will abound, for faith works by it; he will become established in the truths of the gospel he

believes, and has an experience of; he will be more stable and constant in the discharge of duty; he will be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

2dly, Prosperity arises from faith in God and his word; not temporal, but spiritual prosperity; not prosperity of body, but prosperity of soul, such as Gaius had, whom the apostle John thus salutes, Beloved, I wish above all things, that they mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth (3 John 2); on which soul-prosperity faith has a very great influence. The soul is in good health and in a prosperous condition, when there is an appetite for the word; when it hungers and thirsts after righteousness; when it desires the sincere milk of the word; when it finds it, and eats it by faith; when the word is mixed with faith upon hearing, and it is taken in and digested by it; as also when a soul has a comfortable view by faith of the forgiveness of its sins through the blood of Christ: sins are diseases, pardon is the healing of them; and then is a believer in a prosperous condition, when the sun of righteousness rises on him with this healing in his wings (Mal. 4:2); and when he, the inhabitant of Zion, shall not say I am sick; the reason of which is, because the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity (Isa. 33:24): so likewise when a man has much spiritual peace and joy through believing in the righteousness of Christ for his justification; in his blood for the remission of his sins; and in his sacrifice for the atonement of them; and spiritual joy is such a certain concomitant or consequence of faith, that it is called the joy of faith (Phil. 1:25); and whoever is possessed of it must, in a spiritual sense, be in prosperous circumstances. Such a one is fat and flourishing, and all he does prospers: and as prosperity in the text carries in it an idea of victory over enemies, this may be ascribed to faith; it is by faith the believer resists Satan and his temptations: by holding up the shield of faith, he quenches his fiery darts, and obtains a conquest over him; as he does also over the world, the men, things and lusts of it: This is the victory the overcometh the world, even our faith; who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God (1 John 5:4, 5)? What heroic actions, what wonderful things have been done by faith! Men through faith have subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, &c (Heb. 11:36), and such must be in prosperous and flourishing circumstances.

From the whole we learn, what an excellent and precious grace the grace of faith is; what use it is of, what purposes it serves, and what influence it has upon the stability and prosperity of the believer; it is a pity it should be put out of its place; for when it keeps its place, it is very useful and serviceable; but if it is put in the room of Christ, it is good for nothing. Careful we should be, not to ascribe that to the act, which belongs to the object. It may be known, whether a person has this grace or no; for where it is, Christ is precious, to them that believe he is precious (1 Pet. 1:7); it works and shows itself by love to him, his word and ordinances, his people, and his ways; and it is attended with good works, the fruits of righteousness; for faith without works is dead (Jam. 2:26): and if persons are satisfied that they have this grace, they should be thankful for it, and attribute it, not to the power of their own free-will, but to the free Grace of God, whose gift it is; for it comes along with the abundant and superabundant grace of God in conversion. And such who have it should pray for an increase of it; since their stability and prosperity have such a connection with it; and should guard against unbelief; and upon every appearance of it, pray as the poor man did, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief (Mark 9:24). To conclude, since such are the advantages of believing in God and his word, Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God (Heb. 3:12).

ENDNOTES

[1] See my Exposition of 1 John 5:7