



Monergism

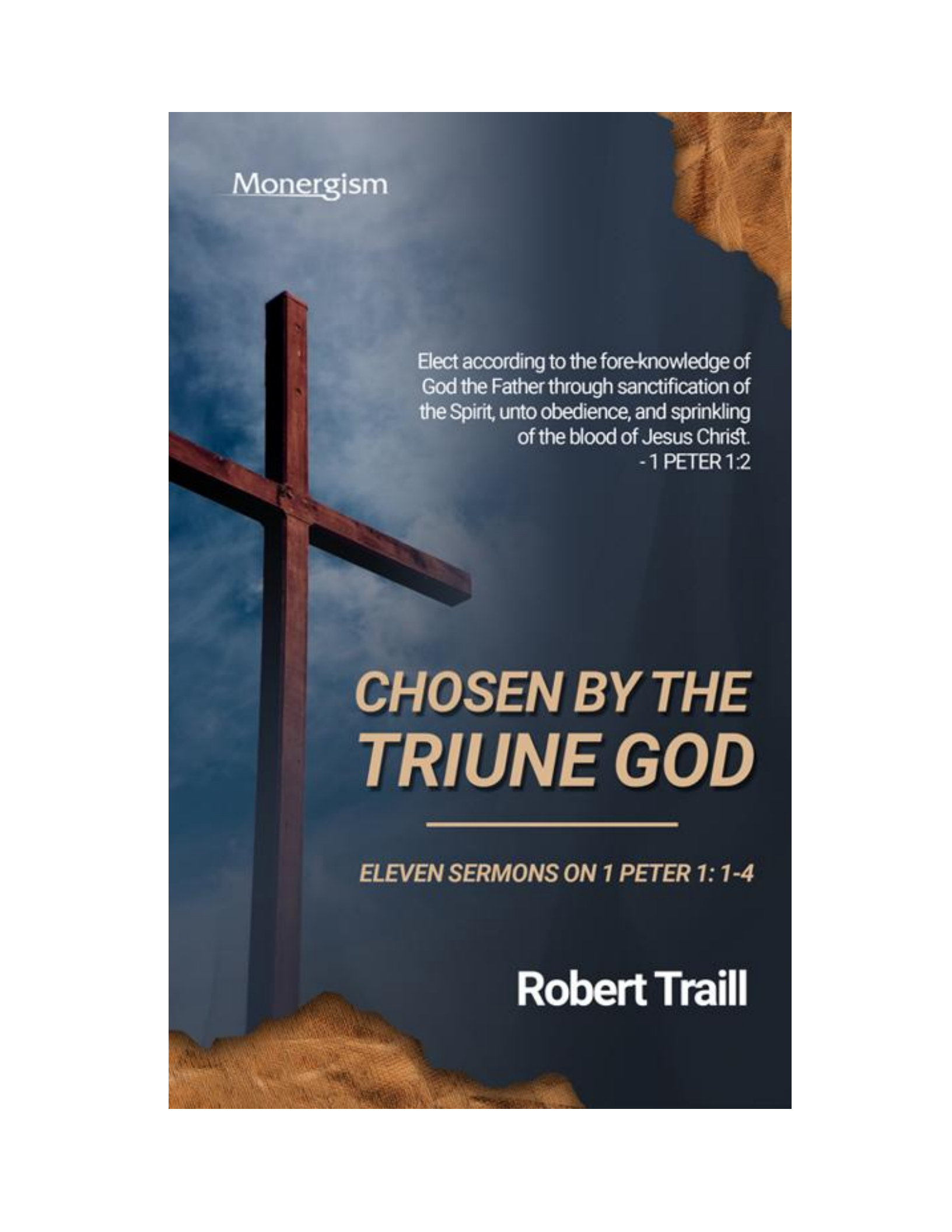
Elect according to the fore-knowledge of
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the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling
of the blood of Jesus Christ.

- 1 PETER 1:2

CHOSEN BY THE TRIUNE GOD

ELEVEN SERMONS ON 1 PETER 1: 1-4

Robert Traill



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SERMON I

Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. -
1 PETER 1:1, 2

I DESIGN (if the Lord will) to speak on some verses of this chapter. I thought it fit not to pass by even the preface of the apostle to this epistle, which is contained hi the verses that I have now read unto you. And there are three things in these verses that I would labour to speak something unto. 1st, The penman, or the writer of this blessed letter, Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ. 2 dly, The parties to whom this epistle is directed; and they are described in these two verses, as strangers scattered throughout several countries, but yet elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, &c. 3 dly, There is the apostolic wish and prayer for them, Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

I. I would speak a little concerning the first of these, the penman of this epistle, Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ. He describes himself from his name and also from his office. His name was Peter: this was a name that Christ gave him, and therefore you may well think that the man would remember it; his own name, (if I may so say) his Christian name. His circumcision name was Simon, and Jonas was his father; and of this our Lord puts him in mind, John 21:15, 16, 17, Mark 3:16. Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was the name

that Christ gave him, Simon whom he surnamed Peter, recorded by all the Evangelists.

Again. We have a description of the man from his office: An apostle of Jesus Christ. I shall not now speak of his apostolic office; it died with him, and I believe will never rise again: for it was an office only adapted to a particular state of the church of Christ: which state will never return, and therefore the like officers will never be renewed again; Acts 1:21, 22.: for the apostolic office was (as you have often heard) to be a witness unto, and the apostle, one of personal acquaintance with the man Christ, both before and after his death and resurrection.

But, however, there are several things concerning this man, the author of this epistle, that I would take notice of for your edification. As,

1st, The strange way of the man's calling; how he was called to be an apostle: an extraordinary miracle was wrought, and. extraordinary terror seized on him when he was thus wrought upon; it is said, Luke 5:8, 9 that he was astonished, and fell down at Jesus knees, and said, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. Is there any hope that Christ and this man will ever be acquainted together, when at his first meeting, the first prayer that the man makes is, Lord, be gone, and leave me?

2. Another great fault that we find in this man, was the bad counsel that he gave to his master, for which the meek Jesus called him by the name of the Devil. Matth. 14:22, 23. Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things, that be of men. I confess the sin was great, the folly and the forwardness of the man was great. It is said in the text, then Peter took Christ; the meaning is, that he took him aside from the company; the bold man would deliver a rebuke to Christ: he took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee.

3. Another thing concerning this man, was his woful denial of his Master; now who would think that ever this man should be an apostle of Jesus Christ, that had denied his master so dreadfully? Three of the Evangelists make mention of the history of it, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Matth. 26, Mark 14, Luke 22; and John makes mention of the threatenings of it, John 13:38. Peter's denying of Christ was a dreadful sin, and there were prodigious aggravations of it. 1st, Christ warned him of it, and he did not believe his master. It is a sad matter, sirs, when Christians (for Peter was so, and a good one too, notwithstanding all these sins), when Christians, I say, will hold up their good thoughts of themselves against all the awful warnings of the word of God; Though all men deny thee, yet will not I; "it may be the rest will do so, but, Lord, do not suspect the like of me:" Peter refused to take in the warnings Christ gave him. 2dly, He fell on a slight and slender temptation, only the voice of a damsel in charging him to be one of them. Peter would have fared never the worse, if he had said; "Yes, I am one of them, and I count it my glory to belong to such a master;" he would have had never the worse fare: for he had his master's pass, If ye seek me, let these go their way, John 18:8.: that was a security sufficient, for them all. 3dly, His sin was greatly aggravated, in that it was a repeated transgression; thrice did he do this: had he only denied his blessed Lord and Master through a sudden pang of fear, he might have recovered himself again on better thoughts; but a good while after he doth it again, and a little while after that, he doth it a third time, with cursing and swearing. 4thly, The worst of all was, that all this was done when his master was at his lowest, and done in his hearing too: for his master was but at a very little distance from him; it may be there stood only a small guard between our blessed Lord and Peter, and behind that woful company the man was denying his master. It is said, Luke 22:61. The Lord turned and looked on him; to be sure he was within his eye, if not within his hearing: from whence take this observation, It is certainly a great aggravation of sin, when it is committed in the special presence of God; then it is in a special way provoking.

4. We have another thing remarkable in Peter, namely, his being restored again: notwithstanding all this, the man became an apostle of Jesus Christ! Peter, the denier of Jesus Christ, is Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ! How came this man to be raised again? What assurance have we from the word, that the man after his awful fall was well raised up again? 1st, He was raised up again to his apostolical office, in the beginning of it, by Christ's looking on him, and looking repentance into him. Luke 22:61, 62. The Lord turned and looked on Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice; and Peter went out and wept bitterly. 2dly, We find that he was restored again by that gentle message that the angel sent by the women, Mark 16:7. Tell his disciples and Peter: it shewed the Lord's special remembrance of Peter; it spoke forth certainly Christ's special minding of him: for the angel delivered nothing but what was the mind of Christ. 3dly, Our Lord restored him thrice very solemnly, suitable to his threefold denial of him. Christ asked him three questions, and Peter returneth him an answer to each; and Christ sends him back to his apostolical office upon his reply. Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? Lord, saith the man, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Well, would our Lord say, art thou risen so far as to be a sound-hearted lover of me? Go, take care of my people, feed my sheep, feed my lambs, John 21:15, 16, 17. 4thly, The apostle Peter was specially installed, and owned in his apostolic office, by a signal testimony of the Holy Ghost, in the second of the Acts: and it may be from that day to this (and there have been a great many years since), never was there any preaching that had so much of the divine power going along with it; with one sermon three thousand were converted! Well might the man be called an apostle of Jesus; he was indeed a messenger of Christ, and had his master's presence with him. 5thly, We have another evidence of this, and that concerns us; the first fruit of the Gentiles was committed to him, Acts 10. He had the honour of converting and bringing into Christ the first fruits of the Gentiles. The first church could hardly bear the thoughts of this; and this he remembered many years after. Brethren, saith he, Acts 15:7. Ye

know, how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

There are only two words that I would say; as the USE you should learn to make of such an explained history.

1. Learn to know how far the corruption that is in the hearts of believers may go in a day of God's leaving them; and in a day of great temptation; the corruption, I say, that remains in a true believer, who is sanctified in part, but who is justified wholly; the corruption that is lodged in a true believer may work very strongly. God save any of you from making a bad use of this! It is a certain truth, No creature knows how bad even a good man may be if God leaves him; what dreadful sins a believer himself may commit if God leaves him to himself; Therefore it was a grave rebuke that a foul malefactor, condemned for his wickedness, gave to one who checked him, and asked him, how he could do such wickedness? the poor wretch replied, What will not that man do whom God leaves? A most savoury and true answer. Let no persons therefore settle themselves upon this, that their state is good, and that a saving change is wrought in them by the Spirit of God; all this may be true, and yet you may be left of God to do very wicked things. Peter abhorred the thoughts of denying Christ, and resolved rather to die than do it, and yet did it, because he was then left of God.

2. You are from hence called to admire the grace of God; and the sovereign grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in passing by one, and in taking up another, by preventing utter ruin when some of his people were very near to it: none in all the world can tell how many times they have been just on the brink of hell, and our Lord Jesus Christ hath put forth his hand and supported them, that they fell not quite in. Peter was in this case: and truly, if we weigh the matter in a just balance, there was but one thing wanting that Judas had; Judas did not betray his Master for any hatred he bore him, nor did he betray him with a design of having him killed: for we find that the man was

surprised when he saw that Christ was condemned, and brought back the money again to the high-priest. The poor wretch only betrayed him for the lucre of a little money; he thought to cheat the chief priests of so much money, he would put Christ into their hands, and supposed that he would get out again, and there would be an end of it. Judas' design in betraying Christ was not so naughty as people commonly imagine; and really, sirs, abstracting from the circumstances of men, how little difference was there between Judas's going to the chief priests, and speaking a few words, and making a bargain about the taking of Christ; and Peter's denying and forswearing that ever he knew Christ, and yet Judas stumbled and fell, and was never recovered: but when Peter fell, grace rescued him, and plucked him back, and made him again an apostle of Jesus Christ. The word is to be observed that this Apostle himself used concerning Judas, Acts 1:25. From which ministry and apostleship Judas by transgression fell. Peter might have remembered, and no doubt but he did remember, that in the justice of God, he also felt from his, office by transgression, and it was only his Master's grace that prevented the same dreadful issue. So much for the first thing in these words, the author of this epistle; Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ.

II. The next thing to be considered in these words is, the parties to whom this epistle is written; and they are described to us two ways: from their condition before men, and from their condition before God; in their condition before men they were strangers scattered through several kingdoms; but their condition before God was the best that could be, with respect to All the blessed Three. They were elect according to the foreknowledge of God, sharers of God's everlasting love: sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and justified by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

1st, Their outward condition before the world was that of strangers and pilgrims. You know, without any great need of being told, that a great deal of holy scripture was written to particular persons and people, about some particular cases, yet it was designed for the

public good of all; and so, though this epistle be directed to the scattered Jews, yet in the wisdom of God, it was designed for the use of us Gentiles. And it may be that this is the meaning of that dark place, 2 Pet. 1:21. No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation; that is, no man applies the scripture well, that applies it to one person, or to one time: for it was designed for common public good to all who read it, to the ends of the world. These things, saith the apostle, were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come, 1 Cor. 10:11. I would not stand long upon this: these strangers here spoken of, as to their outward condition before men may be taken either literally as to their outward state, or spiritually as relating to their inward state as Christians.

You may take it literally, and then it is, that those believing Jews that Peter here writes to, were scattered in their habitation through several parts of the world. This apostle had the ministry of circumcision committed especially to him, and therefore he not only laboured among them in Judea, but he sometimes made visits to them in other places; it is said, Peter was come to Antioch, Gal. 2:11 which was a good way distant from Jerusalem. What I would mainly observe from, hence is, that wheresoever the elect of God are, gospel-grace will find them out. Here are many countries mentioned by the apostle, throughout which they were scattered, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia: how this scattering came, is not for us to determine; but one of these things certainly attended it; either it was the judgment of God upon them, in driving them from their own land, and so it was with many of them: or else it was their sin, in chusing to live out of the holy land: for it was a great sin for a Jew, before Christ came, to live contentedly for his accommodation any where but in the holy land. You may read how the Lord threatened such of the Jews that would go down to Egypt, Jer. 42; for the holy land, before Christ came, was a type of their hope of a better life; and in it God's ordinances were to be enjoyed, and therefore a willing estrangement from that land was their great sin. Also it was their great unhappiness to be out of the land of Judea in those times that Christ lived in it: for they wanted that blessing which Christ

pronounced, Luke 10:23. Blessed are the eyes that see the things that ye see. And the apostle seems to have a reflection on their unhappiness on this account, in the following words, ver. 8. Whom having not seen ye love: "If you had been in the land of Judea you might have seen him; for he lived there and died there in your time." But yet notwithstanding all this, gospel-grace reaches them. Wheresoever any of the elect of God are, gospel-grace will reach them; either they shall be brought where the light shines, or the light shall be sent after them to find them out. This is expressed by our Lord in two parables, Luke 15 the man seeking his lost sheep, and the woman looking for her lost piece of silver. Sometimes the elect are brought where the gospel is; and it is remarkable that the pouring out of the Spirit was adapted to the time of Pentecost: when there was the greatest assembly of the Jews from all parts of the world to worship there; then and there Christ and his gospel met them, Acts 2:1. This is a matter of great consolation; gospel-grace will find out all the elect of God, wheresoever they are scattered; either the gospel shall be sent after them and find them out, or they shall be brought where it is.

Let us now consider the spiritual meaning of these words, with respect to their Christian state; for I judge there is something more than their bare outward state meant here by the apostle, because he names it so frequently in his epistle; they are called strangers scattered, ver. 1 they are also called sojourners, ver. 17. Pass the time of your sojourning in fear. He calls them strangers and pilgrims, chap. 2:11 and warns them to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul; which Fairly relates to their spiritual state.

That which I would speak a little to from these words is this, That Christ's people are strangers in this world. Let them live where they will, whether at home in their own land, or in any other place, they are strangers still; they are never at home till they are in heaven. A great deal of the faith of the Patriarchs appeared in this; They declared plainly, saith the Holy Ghost, that they sought a country, a better, that is a heavenly country, Heb. 11:14, 16. Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob, proclaimed themselves to be strangers on earth, Gen. 23:4 it was their boast before all men. So said Abraham to the children of Heth, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you. So it is said, that Isaac sojourned in the land of Gerah with Abimelech, Gen. 26:3. So saith Jacob also, concerning himself, to Pharaoh, Gen. 47:9. The days of the years of my pilgrimage are on hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and I have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage. Strange! what running is there upon this pilgrimage, that in this short answer to the king he hath it up two or three times over! But now, lest any man should think that they were indeed strangers, whilst they only sojourned in the land of promise, because that was not God's time for them to possess it; but that surely they thought themselves well at home when they were settled in the land of promise, and that God had given it them to possess it; see what David saith, 1 Chron. 29:15. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers. Quoted also in the Psalms, Psal. 39:12. A little to this now, that true Christians are strangers in this world.

1st, They are not born here, that is one thing that makes them strangers, they are not born in this world: they have indeed their natural being here as other men have, but their spiritual being is from above; they are not children of this world, but of another; they have the spring of their being from above. Whensoever any poor sinner is made a partaker of the heavenly nature, that will make him a stranger in this world as long as he lives, and it cannot be otherwise.

2dly, Christians must be Strangers, for they have received another spirit than the men of the world have: We have not received, saith the apostle, the spirit of the world, but the spirit that is of God, 1 Cor. 2:12. The world and we should agree well enough, if their spirit and ours were of the same sort; but, saith the apostle, We have received the spirit of God; and the spirit of this world and the spirit of God, are constant, perpetual opposites.

3dly, That they are strangers appears in this, that they have another language, which the men of this world do not understand. Never an unbeliever can understand the language of a believer, though they are both Englishmen, and both of them speak English; they may indeed understand the words, but yet let a believer speak of the things of God, and of another world, the unbeliever (though the English be ever so plain) cannot understand a word of it; the thing is still strange to him; there is something lying under the shadow of those words, that no natural man can conceive. Every unbeliever in the world is convinced in himself, that there is something in the ordinary spiritual language of a Christian that they do not understand, therefore they call it cant; a profane word flowing from a profane heart. For a man to speak of the things of God, and the work of God, and of matters of experience according to those words that the Holy Ghost directs, and uses in the holy scriptures, for them to reproach this as cant, is as much as if they should say, "This is a strange language that we do not understand." So let them say, and thereby be convinced that they belong to another world than believers do.

4thly, Believers are strangers here, for they have strange apparel, such as this world can neither perceive nor like. A believer hath two sorts of clothing, the one the world cannot see, and the other they cannot love though they do see it. The one is their clothing before God, and that is the righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith; this the world cannot see, they do not understand it; they never saw how a soul is beautified in the sight of God, by the righteousness of another, even of Jesus Christ. The other garment of a believer, is that wherewith he is clothed before the world, and that is holiness; this indeed the world sees, but they cannot abide it. Sirs, if it were possible that true faith in Christ could be smothered, and not break forth in good works, believers would then meet with nothing of the hatred of this world; for they cannot hate an unseen thing. The state of a believer, as standing justified in the righteousness of Christ, an unbeliever cannot see it, nor can he hate it, although he hates the expressions of it; but when holiness shines forth in all manner of

conversation, this is what the ungodly world cannot abide. Because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore doth the world hate you, saith our Lord, John 15:18. I might speak of several other things concerning this matter, but I pass them. I shall only add a word or two of use upon this head, and then proceed.

Use first, If believers are strangers in this world, we need not wonder at the bad entertainment that they meet with in it. It is a wonder of divine power and wisdom, that a poor believer gets leave to live in this wicked world; it is a wonder that they are not all knocked on the head and murdered. The devil has many times cut off thousands of them, and indeed we may well wonder that any of them are suffered to live in this wicked world, that know the godly better than many of them know themselves, and they hate them when they know them. Think it not strange, saith the apostle, chap. 4:12. of the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened to you: it is the common and ordinary lot of all the people of God.

2dly, If believers are strangers on earth, then no wonder that they be so often solitary and heavy. This is one offence that men now take at the godly, they are solitary folks, and very sorrowful; and is there not good reason for it? they are strangers, and not at home: if you could but see them at home, never was there a merrier company seen in this world, than they will be when they are got on Mount Sion with the Lamb; then there will be a joyful company indeed; but now they are strangers, and therefore their cheer is here but small.

3dly, Let every believer take care to answer his name; it is given to you, and you should remember it that you are but strangers, and therefore prove yourselves to be so, by an estrangement of affection from this world; and by a warm heart towards heaven. This is the way to prove yourselves strangers, by being mortified to things below, and having your affections set on things above. (1.) If you are strangers in this world, then let your affections be weaned from the things that are here below. When a man is posting from one kingdom to another, he will not care much about what he meets with by the

way; if he gets a bad lodging to night, he thinks he will get a better tomorrow, and a few days more be out of that strange land. So it is with the believer, he meets with bad entertainment here; well, a little time will put an end to all. Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. 4:17. (2.) Prove yourselves to be strangers by your warm thoughts of heaven; strangers should love their home. If heaven be our inheritance, how delighted should we be with the thoughts of it? how frequently should we converse with it? how often should we send to it? Do ye belong to heaven, and are you strangers on earth? then, whilst we are denied entrance to our home, let us entertain correspondence with it, like a child that is sent by his father to travel in a strange land; whilst he is denied his father's sight, he will yet entertain correspondence with him by letters.

I would now speak a word or two to the next word, that they are strangers scattered. The original word is strangers of the dispersion; and this was a common word among the Jews, by which they did express that number of their countrymen who were scattered among the nations round about, Will he go to the dispersed among the Gentiles? say they of Christ, John 7:35.

The only thing I would note from hence is, That Christ's people hitherto are scattered abroad; they were never yet gathered all together, nor ever will till the last day. They have been scattering (if I may so say) for these six thousand years; one generation goes and another comes: and they are also scattered through many countries; many of them never yet saw one another's faces, and if they should see one another, they would not understand one another's speech; and the Lord has ordered this in great wisdom, that his elect shall be scattered, and not confined to one place, it may be you would think it a brave thing, if all the elect of God were confined to this land, or to the neighbouring nation, and that they were all brought forth in one age; you would think that to be a lovely land indeed, if all the inhabitants in it were truly godly; but the wisdom of God sees it far fitter as it is, that the elect should spring up in every age as he sees

good. They are scattered now, some spring up in one part of the world and some in another, but they shall be brought all together, to the praise of his grace. They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God, Luke 13:29. He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another, Matt. 24:31. But I shall not stand on this: for it is a plain noted truth, that the elect of God are a scattered company through all ages, and through all parts of the world, as God sees good. Their gathering together begins in churches; that is something like a gathering them together: The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved, Acts 2:47 that is, the scattered elect were gathered together to that first church; For as many as were ordained to eternal life believed, Acts 13:48. But the great day of gathering them together, is at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is the apostle's expression, 2 Thess. 2:1. I beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him. The apostle calls this great and last day by this name; it is not only the day of the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it is the day also for gathering all his people to him. This gathering together is also spoken of by our Lord himself, John 10:16. I have other sheep, them also I must bring in, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

All the USE I shall make from this head is this. Are the elect of God a scattered company through the world? See what your estate is like to be then by what it is now; though believers are scattered through the nations, yet they are all centered in one head; though they do not know one another, yet they all know or shall know Jesus Christ, and he knows them exactly; though they have not communion with all the members of the body, yet they have all communion with the head; what then should be people's great concern, but to labour to know this about themselves, that they are of the scattered remnant that shall be gathered together into one at that day? It will be a sad charge, if Christ shall have to give it in against any of you, Matt. 23:31. How often would I have gathered you, and ye would not?

Christians should cheer their hearts, and rejoice their spirits, in the lively hope of this blessed gathering together, when all the elect of God shall be gathered together into one place, never to be scattered any more. So much for this first thing; the first description of these strangers scattered abroad, as relating to their outwaad condition in the world.

The second description of them is from what they were before God; they were a company of distressed and dispersed strangers, but yet they were God's elect ones. They were elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, and elect to the sanctification of the Spirit, and elect to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; a strange description of election! Election is properly of eternal life, and to the utmost period of it, saith the apostle, 2 Thess. 2:13. God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation. But the apostle here speaks of election to justification and to sanctification: here he comprehends the steps and methods and means by which the purpose of election is made effectual. The last design of election is to possess the elected of eternal life; but not by skipping immediately from the grace of election to the state of glory; no, there are several steps between them, Rom. 8:30. Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. But I cannot enter on these things now, and shall only add a word or two in general.

The Lord needed not us, nor any of those creatures that are better than we; his setting his love Upon a company of the children of men, and giving them to the Son to be redeemed by him, is an act to be wondered at in time and to eternity: it is wondered at on earth, and will be more and better wondered at in heaven. The Lord now and then takes a few, and picks them up through the nations where they are scattered; they were all of the same mass, of the same lump, lying in the same pit; Peter was no better than Judas, nor Judas any worse than Peter; Cain was no worse than Abel, and Abel was no better than Cain, till grace made the difference. Jacob and Esau were alike, till grace made the difference; when they were in the same womb, at

the same time, yet, saith the Lord, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated. Unaccountable love! and unaccountable hatred too! Deep! O how deep are the ways of God, and his judgments past finding out? Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who being his counsellor hath instructed him? he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth that he doth. For bold ignorant creatures to open their mouth against God, is but like the clay grumbling against the potter; woe be unto them that strive with the Lord: we should not strive with our Maker, but lie down and look with wonder at the inconceivable depth of his wisdom; and we should learn to say over our Lord's thanksgiving, Luke 10:21. We thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes. There are but few of the great and the wise, the mighty men after the flesh that are Called; But God hath chosen the weak and the foolish, and the things that are not, to confound the things that are mighty, that no flesh might glory in his presence, but that he who glorieth might glory in the Lord, 1 Cor. 1:27, 28.—The Lord hath revealed to us in his word, and he makes it good to us in his daily dealings, that his people are a scattered company throughout this world; but it will be a lovely sight to see them all together, to see them complete, to see them gathered together into Christ the head; such a head! and such a body! will be a marvellous sight indeed! never was any thing like it seen since the creation. It was doubtless a lovely sight, if there had been any with the Divine Being, to have looked and seen all things starting from nothing: to see the heavens extended, and the earth established; to see the sun, the moon, and the stars starting up and shining at the commanding word of their maker. It was a great change, from the chaos and the confusion of the first mass, to that beautiful world God made; but there will be a far greater and a more notable change between the state of the church militant, that are fighting and suffering and strangers here below, and that glory which is to be revealed at the appearing of Christ, when he comes in his own and in his Father's glory. A poor believer now seems to be a distressed creature, despised of men; but he is precious in God's sight: where there is but the least drop of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus,

there God's heart is; that covers all, that ennobles all: if we are but sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ we need fear nothing; we may keep the passover and the sprinkling of blood, and the destroying angel shall not touch us.

The next thing that the apostle speaks of is the sanctification of the Spirit, which is given to all the people of God, as though yet in small measures; it is but like a little leaven in a great deal of meal, and we are to wait for the blessing of God till it leavens the whole, and we be sanctified throughout.

SERMON II

Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. -
1 PETER 1:1, 2

THESE words, which are the apostle's preface to this epistle, contain three things. 1st, The penman, how he is described, an apostle of Jesus Christ: what sins this man was guilty of, and what grace he met with to raise him again to this dignity, I spoke to in the former discourse. 2dly, I also made some entrance upon the second thing, the description of the parties to whom the epistle is directed; and they are described two ways: 1st, As to their condition before the world: they were strangers, and strangers scattered abroad; and here are no less than five different countries named, that they were scattered in, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia; and Bithynia. Never

a word of England here, no, there was nothing but darkness in this land at that time: we should reckon it a great comfort and honour, if the name of the land that we were born and live in, was found in the holy scriptures. There is not the name of any country, that hath the gospel in any measure flourishing in it at this day, that is named in all the New Testament. There is Italy named there, and Rome, that is now the seat of the beast; there is Spain named there, that is now the darkest kingdom in all the world that bears the name of Christian: Greece and Illyricum are named in the New Testament, and many other places that are now under the dominion of the Turks. Those strangers that the apostle writes to were scattered through the countries here. I showed you how they were strangers, and how they were scattered strangers; all believers are strangers whilst they are here, and generally they are scattered through several parts of the world; but there is a day coming, when they shall all be gathered together into one. Thus far I have gone. 2dly, The persons that he writes to, though they are described as strangers in the world, yet they were not so with relation to God: They were strangers scattered; but were they strangers to God too? no, far from it. For they are said here to be "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." There are several things that I would first take notice of in general from the view of these words, before I enter on any of the three particulars in them. We find in this description, a plain hint of that divine truth, the Trinity of persons in one God: the blessed three are all here named, God the Father, God the Son Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Ghost, the Spirit, with a distinct regard to poor sinners; the Father electing, the Son redeeming, and the Spirit sanctifying. This is a mystery of faith plainly revealed in the word, but is plainly knowable by no man: for always the nearer that a divine mystery lies to the being of God, the greater depth it is. The will of God about our duty is not without a mystery; his will about the lot of men, according to his own sovereign counsel (of which we shall have occasion to speak), is yet a deeper mystery; but revelations about himself, are yet a great deal deeper than any of them. The word reveals them, 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. A place of scripture, that the devil's diligence hath not been small to weaken, and to beat out of the Bible, though in vain. When our Lord was going to heaven, he charged his disciples to baptize men in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; these are three names; but these three names have but one name; the great name of God is ascribed to them all. There has been a great deal of disturbance given to the church of Christ in several ages, on account of the faith of this truth; the wisdom of corrupt men is a very fertile soil in objections and quarrellings, with divine unsearchable truths; the plain course of a Christian is to believe and adore what is plainly revealed, though it cannot be perfectly known.

II. I would note from these words in general, that these three have a distinct part about man's salvation; I say these three, they have each of them a distinct part about man's salvation, and thence they come to be known best to us, as their power is felt and experienced by us: I make no doubt but there were undeniable proofs in the Old Testament of a trinity of persons. Divine power and godhead is ascribed to one, and to another, and to a third; frequently it is so in the Old Testament, but this is plain, that the light about this great doctrine of the Trinity, broke forth more especially when Christ came into the world. The Son of God came from the Father, and the Son as from the Father sends the Spirit. This is Christ's own testimony of himself; I come forth from the Father, John 16:26. "You call him your God; he sent me; and I as his Son, send the Spirit." The church of God, in the Old Testament times, had but small light about the doctrine of the Trinity, in comparison of what came into the world with Jesus Christ; and therefore we find this broke forth in his conception, and yet more at his baptism, when the Father from heaven owned him to be his Son, and the Holy Ghost descended like a dove and lighted upon him, Matth. 3:16, 17. This doctrine of the Trinity appears in the threefold share that they have in man's salvation; election is ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, and sanctification to the Holy Ghost. Not only did this doctrine appear more brightly when Christ came into the world, but it appears

most of all to people when salvation comes to them. A great many persons think that this doctrine of the Trinity is a vast deep, and so it is, and they think it is not a subject to be preached on, and that there is danger of unsavoury, unwarrantable, and presumptuous thoughts about it; I do acknowledge something of all this to be true, that there is danger in it, and that it should be warily handled; but when is it that poor souls begin to find the doctrine of the Trinity true, and believe it, and know their concern in it, but only when the salvation of Christ is begun to be applied to them? whensoever this salvation is applied to the poor soul, then immediately the believer begins to be concerned about all the Three; then he begins to be concerned about the Father's electing love, and to be concerned about the redeeming grace of the Son, for an interest therein; then he begins to be concerned about the sanctification of the Spirit, and the influences of his grace; there is never a believer in all the world, but his daily exercise lies about all these three. As the blessed Three in the Godhead have a distinct part in the work of our salvation, so every believer has a distinct exercise about each of these distinct persons.

III. These distinct parts that the blessed Three have about man's salvation, are always towards the same persons: the same that are elected according to the fore-knowledge of the Father, the same are sanctified by the Spirit, and sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. There is no difference in these things; there is not one man sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ, and another man sanctified by the Spirit, and a third man elected according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, but all that have either have all; all the elect are justified and sanctified.

IV. These distinct parts that the blessed Three have in our salvation, each of them is a divine act, and proves the person that acts it, to be a divine person. This I gather from the running of the words; these three things, election, justification, and sanctification, are distinct acts of distinct Persons in the Godhead, and the very acts prove that they are acts of God. Election is an act of a God of infinite divine sovereignty (of which I shall speak more by and by). The sprinkling

of blood is an act of God (of the God) Jesus Christ the Son: for there is no other person in the Godhead that hath the blood of a man: For he took part of flesh and blood, that in all things he might be made like unto his brethren, Heb. 2:14, 17. And his blood was the blood of God, because it was the blood of that man, that was personally united to the Son of God. Feed the church of God, saith the apostle, which he hath purchased with his own blood, Acts 20:28. So sanctification is a divine act, and it is only a divine person that can effect it; for wheresoever omnipotent power is put forth in an act, the agent must be God: for omnipotency belongs to God only. Now the sanctifying a creature that is all over so filthy, so foul, and so defiled, is a work that craves no less than creating power, and creating power belongs to God only. Eph. 2:5, 10 and 24. Col. 3:10.

V. The distinct parts that these Three in the Godhead have in our salvation, have their order and their dependence; they have their order and their dependence one upon another; this is plainly asserted here by the apostle. Election is the spring; sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, are the streams. The first spring of our salvation lies in the good-will of the Father in election, and this flow down to us through the redemption of the Son, and this redemption is applied by the sanctification of the Spirit.

VI. and last, These acts of God thus passing upon men, are their great distinguishing glory and dignity, and therefore doth the apostle name them here: You are indeed strangers, scattered throughout many places of the world; but here is your honour, you are elected according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, sprinkled by the blood of Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit; and whosoever are partakers of these three blessed acts of the blessed Three, and yet but One, about their salvation, they are honourably distinguished thereby, let their circumstances be what they will; and therefore, saith the Psalmist, Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, Psal. 65:4. So much in general from the words.

It now follows, to enter a little on the first particular in them: Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. I am well aware, that this business of election is a great deep of God, and a great many poor creatures have been drowned in this deep, for want of light and knowledge about it, and about the right guiding it. I would therefore speak a few things concerning it, as they lie before us in the word of God.

1st, Election always passes upon persons; it is never spoken of, either in the New Testament or the Old, but as an act of grace falling upon persons: Election, I say, is of persons, and not of qualifications and conditions. There is an Arminian notion drank in by a great many ignorant people, that God hath chosen them to salvation, who he foresees shall believe and persevere in faith and holiness; they will own that all such are chosen, but this is to choose nobody: Election falls on persons, that they may believe, and that they may persevere. Faith and holiness are not the causes but the fruits of election.

2dly, Election not only falls on persons, but it always falls on them with a distinction, with a discrimination and difference; election, I say, always makes a difference: If any are elected, then surely all are not elected; if some are elected, then some are surely passed by; the apostle calls them the rest. The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded, Rom. 11:7. Oh, how hard is it for proud self-conceited man to receive and submit to this awful truth of God, that election passes upon some and passes by others, and no account at all to be given of it!

3dly, Election here in my text, is plainly ascribed to God the Father, as his special part in the business of our salvation. Election, I say, is frequently ascribed to the Father, both in the Old and New Testament. Our Lord takes frequent notice of this; I have manifested thy name unto the men that thou hast given me out of the world, John 17:6 that is election. I would speak very soberly and warily about this; but you will find one thing, if you take notice of it, in the economy (as they call it), the dispensation of God towards men in the

matters of salvation, it doth answer mightily the interest and the influence, that the three blessed Persons have one upon another. The Father is independent, and therefore the sovereignty of election is ascribed to him; the Son is of the Father, as he is the Son, and therefore redemption is accordingly committed to him; and the Spirit, as he is the third Person, proceeds from the Father and the Son, and therefore in the work of sanctification, he is sent from the Father and the Son. I say, the dispensation of God in the matters of salvation, doth resemble, represent, and answer, the mutual influence that there is between the blessed three Persons in the Godhead.

4thly, Election is in my text ascribed to the foreknowledge of this God the Father; this is the same word that the apostle Paul useth, Rom. 8:23. Whom he did fore-know he also did predestinate; and in Acts 2:23. Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, speaking of our Lord's death. Of this foreknowledge of God, I shall speak but a very little: I know blind ignorant mortals can make but poor guesses at the knowledge of God, far less are they able to guess at his foreknowledge; only this is plain, All God's works are known to him from the beginning of the world, as James saith in the assembly of apostles and elders and brethren, Acts 15:18. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world; and according to his fore-knowledge he hath determined all the issues of all the works of his hands. He knew all the creatures that he was to make before he made them, and he foresaw all their issues, and determined them: for divine prescience and divine ordination, are but different words for one and the same thing, and therefore his decrees are said to be according to the counsel of his own will. There is WILL as a sovereign act, and COUNSEL as a wise knowing one; so that the reasons are not knowable by us, yet there is infinite wisdom in all the determinations of divine purpose.

5thly, This great purpose of God about men in electing them is knowable, and it is of great use when it is known; therefore it is that

the word of God speaks of it so often; and therefore it is that the apostle here speaks of it as to be known; but it is only knowable by the first fruits of it; we cannot know it any other way: for election is the eternal purpose of God in his own heart, and unless he had revealed it no man could know it. Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? saith the apostle, speaking of the depth of the riches both of the knowledge and wisdom of God, Rom. 11:33, 34. We find, (1.) that election is knowable by a man for himself, blessed be God for it; that a man may know that he is elected, though it be only by the fruits of it, and these are mentioned in the text. Is a man sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit? then he may know that he is chosen: for, saith the apostle, He hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, 2 Thess. 2:13. (2.) This election may be known as to other persons also; so we find it in the text, the apostle calls them Elect; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father: knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God; for our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; and thereby we know our election, 1 Thess. 1:3, 4, 5.

6th, and lastly. This great purpose of God in election, is not only to the end, but also to the means in order to the end; and if this were but duly considered, it would remove many cavils in the hearts of men against this truth. I say, election is not only to the end, but also to the means; in my text the end is concealed, and the means only expressed; but in some other places of scripture, the end only is expressed, and the means are concealed, but they should still be joined together. Election, properly, is the appointing of some to eternal life, for that is the end of election: so saith the apostle, 1 Thess. 5:9. God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. There the end is only mentioned, and not the means. Sometimes the means are only expressed, as here in my text, Elect to the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, where he only names the means, but not the

end; though he names it a little after ver. 4. Unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens for you. Remember this always, that the purpose of God, according to his fore-knowledge, is an appointment with respect to the end and the means also: It is a purpose of God falling on persons in great wisdom, and in great sovereignty, and it is always unto the end with the means; we are elected to the end, and to the means, in order to the reaching that end. There are three things that I would say by way of use, from this general glance that I have given you of these words, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father; and so shall conclude at this time.

Use first. Learn to adore and worship an electing God. Here is the name of God shining forth; he doth whatsoever seemeth good in his sight: Our Lord Jesus Christ himself adores his Father on this account, Luke 10:21. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. That Even so, Father, is, Amen, Father; "I pay my praise to thy name for doing so, and I put my amen to thy determinations." Adore, I say, an electing God. Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay? Rom. 9:21. Shall God, in the infiniteness of his wisdom and good-will, make a world of creatures, and shall he not have the disposing of them, and all that belong to them? Sirs, there is the height of corruption working in that heart which cannot stoop to an electing God, to a God, determining the final and the eternal issue of all the works of his hands.

Use second. Admire electing love: as you are to adore an electing love, so you are to admire electing love. Electing love hath no cause at all for it; redeeming love hath no cause in us, but it hath a cause; sanctifying grace hath no cause in us, but it hath a cause. Let us consider a little how this matter rises; a poor believer is brought to the possession of eternal life because he is a man in Christ; when

Christ redeemed this poor creature, there was no cause at all in the man, but there was a good cause for the thing. For this cause, saith our Lord, came I unto this hour, John 12:37. viz. his Father's will. Why a believer in Christ Jesus should be admitted to glory, there is a good cause for it; it is promised that a man in Christ Jesus shall not perish: Why did Christ die? there was no cause at all in us, for we were a company of poor lost creatures, but Christ had good cause for it; This commandment, saith he, have I received of my Father, John 10:18 "and I must obey it." But if we rise higher to electing love, there is no cause at all for that; when we come to the top, there indeed we are swallowed up, only this, Even so, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Electing love is a marvellous thing, and therefore though it be a sovereign thing, it is always managed in the depth of love, saith the apostle, Eph. 2:4, 5. God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us. When did he love us with that great love? From everlasting; and that love broke forth in quickening them together with Christ.

Use third. Wisely search into your own concern in this matter; learn I say, to search wisely into your own concern in this great deep of election; do the other two things, and you will find this to be the easier. Learn to adore the great God, in his choosing and doing with his own creatures as he will; and admire that marvellous love, which acts in chusing some to everlasting life, and then come in and search for your own concern in this matter wisely. Election is a great heigh it is, if I may so say, the uppermost round of the ladder of salvation: all comes down from that to us, but we must not strive to set our foot first upon that, no, we must rise up to it by sanctification of the Spirit, and by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; it is by the fruits of electing love that we must come to know it: so saith the apostle, 2 Thess. 2:13. God hath chosen you from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. When faith on the truth of the gospel, and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit is wrought in the heart, then the poor creature may say, "Now I see that I have an interest in the electing love of God:" and as salvation comes this first way, and hath its first spring in electing

love, so at last it issues in it. The glory of salvation shines in this: so saith our Lord, Matth. 25. Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: as if our Lord should say, "You were many times in the dark, and oftentimes doubted what my Father's love and purpose were about you; but now I bring you to the kingdom of glory, and tell you it was prepared for you by my Father from the foundation of the world." But as yet we can only see into the borders of this depth. Oh! what an ocean is the wisdom and knowledge and counsel of a sovereign God! how unsearchable are his ways, and his judgments past finding out? It is long since that he said to Moses, I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion upon whom I will have compassion: so that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. Rom. 9:15, 16. We should bless God for this doctrine of election; so doth the apostle, Eph. 1:3, 4, 5. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, that we might be to the praise of the glory of his grace: To him be glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON III

Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and

sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. - 1 PETER 1:2

YOU have heard of the penman of this epistle, Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ: you have heard also the description of the parties to whom it was written, namely, to the scattered Jews in several parts of the world; and he describes them, as ye have heard, two ways: 1st, From their outward condition before the world, they were scattered strangers. 2dly, He describes them from their state in God's sight, and in this view they are described as elect, as sanctified, and as redeemed. The first part of this description, I have spoken to, Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father: a deep truth that should be firmly believed, and not curiously pryed into. This electing love and grace is the part of God the Father in our salvation.

I would now, in the next place, speak unto the part of the Son of God in our salvation, from that clause, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. I know that this is the third thing in the order of the words, but it is the second thing in the order of nature: for the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ doth necessarily precede, and go before the sanctification of the Spirit; and therefore (not only because the natural order is so, but also because of the work we have this day to do in remembering this blood of our Lord) I shall first speak to this latter part of the text, The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

And I would in the first place lay this before you, that the apostle Peter was a Jew, and is here writing to the Jews, who well understood the Old Testament, and knew by the apostle's words, what this sprinkling did respect and allude to: therefore I would take a little notice of those sprinklings of blood that we find in the Old Testament; those sprinklings that were typical of our Lord Jesus Christ: and those the apostle doth certainly refer unto in this expression, the sprinkling of blood.

1st, The first sprinkling of blood that we find in scripture, was the sprinkling the blood of the Paschal Lamb at the first passover; for it

is not certain whether ever the same practice was used afterwards. Though the Paschal Lamb was eaten for many ages after, yet the sprinkling of the blood thereof upon the threshold, I do not find by the word of God, that ever it was practised but the first time, and there was a special reason for it: the reason of that appointment was this; the first passover that ever was kept, was kept by the children of Israel in Egypt; and it was on the same night in which the hand of God went forth in destroying all the first-born in Egypt; the eldest in every family was slain by the angel of the Lord, and immediately on that they were delivered.

They eat the passover for their supper, and at midnight the angel slew the first-born; and immediately on that there was a cry of death throughout all the land of Egypt; and the Israelites were thrust out, and Pharaoh sent them away free. You may find the institution of this ordinance, Exod. 12:6, 7, 12, 13. And ye shall kill it in the evening, and they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-posts of the houses; for I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt; and the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt. And it is again repeated, ver. 22, 23. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel, and the two side-posts, with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning; for the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians: and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel and on the two side-posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you. What a clear type was this of Jesus Christ! the sprinkling of the blood of the true passover, was declared hereby to be the only preservative from the destroying angel; so that let it be an Israelite, of what family soever he was, yet if the blood was not upon his house, the destroying angel would certainly have come in. It is with respect to this that the apostle speaks of Moses, Heb. 11:28. Through faith he kept the

passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them. "Through faith he kept the passover:" What an unlikely mean was this (but by God's appointment) that the sprinkling of a little blood upon the doors, should be a preservative against the destroying angel! but it was a mean of God's appointment, and by faith they used it, and the blessing followed.

2dly, The next sprinkling of blood that we find in the Old Testament, was at Mount Sinai, which was one of the most solemn appearances of God that ever was in the world: there was some abatement of the rigour and severity of the Mount Sinai dispensation, in that second visit which God made to them, and allowed them to make to him. *Exod. 24:6, 7, 8.* And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar; and he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words. This solemn action of sprinkling the blood of the covenant, the apostle to the Hebrews describes expressly and fully, nay, more fully than it is recorded in *Exodus. Heb. 9:18, 19, 20.* Neither was the first Testament dedicted without blood: for when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the Testament, which God hath enjoined unto you: so that even in the giving of the law in that most solemn appearance of God, there was a hinting of this, that the acceptance of the people must be in the virtue of this sprinkled blood.

3dly, The next sprinkling of blood we find was in their daily sacrifices, and that was a sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice on the altar, *Lev. 1:5.* And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar, that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And again, you find it enjoined in

another offering, ver. 11. And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar: and this was in order to an atonement. Now this the Jews knew very well, for it was their daily practice; for there were two sacrifices to be offered up daily, every morning and evening, besides occasional sacrifices to be offered by the people upon conviction of any sin against the law.

4thly, The most solemn typical sprinkling of blood, was that on the great day of atonement; they had one grand yearly sacrifice in the seventh month, which the apostle to the Hebrews marks, chap.9:7. The high-priest went alone once every year not without blood. You have a large account of this in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus; a chapter that has a great deal more of the gospel in it than many New Testament Christians understand. There are three sprinklings of blood there spoken of: (1.) The sprinkling of the blood of the bullock for the sins of Aaron and his house, Lev. 14:14. And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy-seat eastward, and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. (2.) The next sprinkled blood was that of the goat, to whose lot it fell to be slain; for on that day of atonement, there were two goats set before the Lord alive, and the lot was cast between them, and that goat upon which the lot fell was to be slain, and the other was to escape; ver. 15. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and sprinkle it on the mercy-seat and before it. It was only on this solemn day of atonement that the mercy-seat was to be sprinkled with blood; for never in all the year did the high-priest enter into the holy of holies but on that day. (3.) We find the sprinkling of blood spoken of again, ver. 18, 19. And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it; and he shall take of the blood of the bullock and of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about, and shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. The other goat that was left alive, was sent away with the sins of Israel confessed over it:

this deep type of one of the goats being made a sin-offering, and the other live goat being sent away with the sins of all Israel, seemed to have a clear meaning this way; the goat, that was slain, pointed forth the death of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the live goat, that carried away the transgressions of Israel, pointed to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ: For we are justified by his blood, and saved much more by his life, as the apostle's expression is, Rom. 5:9, 10. These sprinklings of blood were a great deal better known to the Jews than they can be to us: one of them was done every year, and some of them very frequently, though it is likely that the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb was done but once.

Concerning all these sprinklings of blood, there are three things that you must remember and know full well; and when they are rightly known, you will the more easily understand the meaning of the apostle in these words of my text, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. (1.) This blood that was sprinkled, was always the life-blood of the sacrifice; the blood that was shed when its life was taken away: for the life is in the blood, and that blood must be shed. (2.) This sprinkling of blood under the Old Testament, was always the priest's act; the man brought his sacrifice to the altar, he laid his hand upon it, and acknowledged his sin over it, and offered the atonement before the Lord; but the priest slew it, and he only sprinkled the blood of it. (3.) All the springling of blood under the Old Testament, was for atonement and expiation; and therefore, concerning that solemn day of atonement, it is said, Lev. 16:30. On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. This is expressed by the apostle to the Hebrews, chap. 9:22. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission. And therefore it was needful that the blood of Christ should be shed; for all the sheddings of blood under the Old Testament were but typical of this. So much for the account that is given us in the Old Testament of the sprinkling of blood. I would now come to speak to this sprinkling in my text; the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus: and there are two things that I would discourse on;

1st, Of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus in itself, and then, 2dly, I would speak to the relation and respect that electing grace hath to it; for it is said in the text, that we are elected to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

1st, Concerning the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus in itself: and here there are three things. 1st, I would speak of the blood of Jesus Christ, and what it is. 2dly, Of the shedding of that blood; for there could be no sprinkling of blood till it was shed. 3dly, I would speak to the sprinkling of it.

1st, The blood of Jesus Christ is the life-blood of that man Jesus Christ the Son of God (which he assumed into personal union with himself): they are but ridiculous and Popish notions that many people have of the blood of Christ. This blood was shed many ways; it was shed in circumcision; it was shed in the garden when he was in an agony; it was shed by scourging, and shed by the crown of thorns on his head. But the blood that we mean here was the life-blood of the man Christ Jesus; that blood which is called by our apostle, 1 Pet. 1:19. The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot. The same blood is called the blood of God. Acts 20:28. Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. And therefore whosoever they are that do deny or doubt that Jesus Christ is a true man, or deny that Jesus Christ is true God, they are not to be called Christians; call them what you will, Christians they are not; call them Pagans, Heathens, Mahometans, give them what name you will, they are no Christians that do not believe Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and that he was God before he came into flesh, that he was truly God in the flesh, and that the Godhead remained united with the flesh as our great Emmanuel.

2dly, How came Christ's blood to be shed? for it could not be sprinkled unless it was shed. If I may so say, as long as Christ's blood ran in his veins, it could sprinkle none. How Christ's blood came to be shed, every one, even carnal Protestants and Papists know, and can give a ready answer to it. As that Christ's blood was shed by the

cruelty of barbarous people, who murdered him by nailing him to the cross, where he bled to death in great torment, according to the nature of that violent death. But how far is this from the gospel account of it? from what Christ and his servants say of it? The Son of man, saith our Lord, Matt. 20:28 came to give his life a ransom for many. Christ died, saith the apostle, 1 Cor. 15:3 for our sins, according to the Scriptures. Of this blood-shedding take these four or five things, and lay them together. 1st, That Jesus Christ the Son of God was sent into the world in the room and in the stead of his elect. He did not come as a single person into the world, but he came as a public person, representing a great many, even all that were given to him by his father; for their sakes, saith our Lord, do I sanctify myself, John 17:19. 2dly, By virtue of this substitution of Jesus Christ, all that the elect were indebted for, was justly charged on him: I say, by virtue of his coming in their place, in their name and stead, all that was owing by them to the law and justice of God, was justly exacted of him; and therefore it is said, That he died for our sins, 1 Cor. 15:3 because our sins were charged on him: if he had no relation to our sins, there could be no justice in punishing him for them. He had indeed no guilty relation to them, but he had a near and gracious relation to them: for they were debts that he undertook to pay. 3dly, This debt that was exacted of Christ. and which he paid, was for our disobedience to the law of God, and for the punishment due to us for that disobedience. The law saith, Do and live; Sin and die; and therefore our Lord's undertaking was made up of two parts, a perfect obedience to the precept of the law, and a severe punishment according to the threatening of the law, commonly called the active and passive obedience of Jesus Christ, by both which he brought in that righteousness that we are saved by. 4thly, The debt of sin being death, Christ therefore died: he owed death to the law of God; he had never transgressed it, but he bore the sins of many transgressors: He was numbered with transgressors, Isa. 53:12 and dealt with as a transgressor, and died as a transgressor. The justice of God can slay no man, nor smite any man but for sin; it would cease to be the sword of justice if it should fall upon any that were perfectly innocent. Indeed the Son of God was perfectly innocent in himself,

but as he stood in our room and place, he was the greatest of all transgressors. Saith the apostle, 2 Cor. 5:21. He hath made him to be sin for us that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 5thly, This debt that Christ owed to the law, as our surety, was brought upon him by the surest way, of blood-shedding; the surest way of dying in the world, is when all the blood in the body is shed; and our Lord died by this violent sort of death, blood-shedding: our Lord's blood was shed. If people regard only the Jews, and Pilate, and the soldiers that stood round about him, and look upon them as the only persons concerned in the shedding of Christ's blood, if they look no higher they can see no good at all in this blood-shedding.

Whensoever you think and read of our Lord's blood being shed, there are two things that should always be in your eye. 1st, Who was the highest author of it. 2dly, What were the blessed ends of it. The highest author of it was the justice of God; this cup, bitter as it was, was the cup that his Father gave him to drink. His Father's hand was in it; The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? saith our Lord, John 18:11. Christians, in looking on Christ's death, should learn to see these two things; to see the Father slaying his Son Christ Jesus, and to see our salvation springing up from his death: Who his ownself, saith the apostle, 1 Pet. 2:24 bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live to righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. Where is our faith that Should see this? I cannot tell whether there was any faith so active at our Lord's death, as to believe and rejoice on this account. Here is the justice of God taking a true sacrifice, and we shall be saved by the virtue of it; the believing thief bid fairest for it of any; the very disciples knew it not at that time, though they knew it well afterwards.

3dly, What is the sprinkling of this blood of Christ thus shed? You understand what the sprinkling the typical blood of the sacrifices was; it was the natural blood of a poor beast that was sacrificed, sprinkled by the hands of the priest on the altar and on the mercy-

seat: But what is the sprinkling of this blood of Jesus? The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ is nothing else but this, the spiritual application of its power and virtue. It is an old doting dream of the Antichristian party, to make a great deal of noise about the material blood of Christ; it is probable that the natural blood of Christ sprinkled the garments of many of his murderers, who were never a whit the better for it; and that the earth drank it in, like the blood of another man; but the spiritual heavenly virtue of it is quite another thing. This is what we are to speak to, what the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ is? that is, wherein was this virtuous blood applied. 1st, This blood of Jesus Christ sprinkled the altar of justice, at which it was shed for atonement and propitiation. I say, the blood of Jesus Christ sprinkled the altar of justice; that is, the power and virtue of it made satisfaction to the justice of God for sin: it was a satisfaction to justice and the law, for an atonement for all his people. The law and justice of God shed this blood, and the virtue of it satisfied both. Eph. 5:2. It was a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God; so that justice had no more to crave, and sin had no more to oppose: for he put away sin by the Sacrifice of himself, Heb. 9:26. He was offered to bear the sins of many, ver. 28 and by bearing of sin he took it away, so that from the day our Lord died, sin shall never be a powerful impediment in the way to heaven to a believer in Christ; and the reason is, because Christ has condemned sin, as the apostle discourses at large; Rom. 8:1, 2, 3. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit: for the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death: for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. 2dly, The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, that is, the power and virtue of it, reaches heaven. Heb. 9:12. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us; ver. 24. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Sirs, when we say that Christ

entered into heaven with his own blood, it would be a foolish thing for any body to imagine that our Lord ascended into heaven in a state of infirmity, and in that weakness of flesh in which he died; no, our Lord Jesus was glorified, and he went in glory to glory. But Christ's entering into heaven with his own blood, was an allusion to the high priest's entering into the holiest of all with the blood of the sacrifice, and points forth to us the virtue of the blood of Jesus Christ, making heaven patent to us, like a victorious head, opening the door to all that were to follow through faith in him. 3dly, The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus is upon the new covenant. This the apostle to the Hebrews speaks of, chap. 9:15. For this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. Christ's blood, I say, sprinkled the new covenant, it was the seal of it; it was sprinkled on it, if I may so say, to seal it, (as the blood of the sacrifice was called the blood of the old covenant, so the blood of Christ is called the blood of the new and everlasting covenant.) Oh that believers would learn to know what the promises are, and learn to read the promises well, and look well on them. We look upon the promises thus: This is God's word, and this word of God holds forth great blessings to me, and these blessings I very much need, and therefore I pray upon the promise; and all this is well done: Aye, but when do ye see the promises sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ? That is a work for your faith; every promise in the Bible, the blood of Christ is upon it, to seal it, to purchase the blessings contained in it, and to secure the performance of it to every one that believes. 4thly, and lastly, The virtue of the blood of Christ is sprinkled upon believers, upon their persons and upon their consciences. Of this the apostle to the Hebrews speaks, chap. 9:14. How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God? And this is what we should seek to feel. What Christ did to justice is a matter of faith; the satisfaction that his blood gave to justice: what Christ doth in heaven by the virtue of his blood, that is matter of faith; he makes intercession there in virtue of his blood: what Christ doth with respect to the new covenant, this is also a

matter of faith: but the power and virtue of the blood of Christ on the conscience, is not only a matter of faith, but it is also a matter of feeling; that which we must feel ourselves, the virtue of the blood of Christ purging our consciences: therefore the apostle, in that place I last quoted, speaks of it with a How much more; how much more shall the blood of Christ do it? Surely the blood of bulls and of goats was far inferior to the blood of Christ, and the purifying the flesh was a far inferior effect to the purging of the conscience; but yet the apostle lays a stress upon this word, How much more shall Christ's blood do so? If the Lord was pleased to appoint such an ordinance, that the sprinkling of the blood of certain beasts should convey along with it a sort of Levitical cleanness, much more shall the blood of Christ have its spiritual saving gospel effect in purging and sprinkling the conscience; and this is that which gives a man confidence towards God. The law of God is backed by the justice of God, and the law of God is levelled at the conscience of a sinner; the law saith, The sinner shall die; conscience saith, I am a sinner, and I must die; it is only having the conscience purged by the blood of the sinless Son of God, that can give us confidence towards God, though we are guilty in ourselves.

A few words by way of APPLICATION.

Use 1. Learn to come to this blood of sprinkling. It is a duty, and the great privilege of true believers, expressed by the apostle, Heb. 12:24. But ye are come to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, he is good company; well, what great thing do ye mind when you come to Christ? Ye are come to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. It is the blood of sprinkling, and it is blood that hath a voice, (blessed are the ears that can hear it!) it is only the ear of faith that can hear what mighty shouts arise from this blood of sprinkling; what great and good things it speaks for poor sinners; it speaks to God for them. A few things concerning this coming to the blood of sprinkling.

1st, You that would set about coming to the blood of sprinkling, that it may be upon you, learn to know and lay to heart your own filth and defilement. There was no sprinkling of blood but in the case of sin; the sprinkling of blood was for atonement, and the user of it was to acknowledge his sins: they who are too high and too proud to own themselves to be sinners, will not be found too good to go to hell: all such shall perish. Christ came into the world to save sinners, and no man can come to him to be saved but a sinner.

2dly, You must be persuaded of this, that nothing cleanses you from sin but the sprinkling of this blood, and that this can do it effectually. When the stain of sin is seen upon people's consciences, there are a great many wells of water that the devil and the world dig up; they think to cleanse themselves in their duties, and in their performances, their vows, their purposes, their resolutions, their praying, reading, hearing, and meditating; these are used by a great many, just as water, to wash away the stain of sin on their consciences. Vain, dangerous, wicked ways! things not wicked in themselves, but most wicked as so used. Prayer is a duty, but to put prayer in Christ's place is an abomination. All the ordinances of the gospel are things commanded us, but to use them so as to keep at a distance from this blood of sprinkling, is to pervert them to our destruction. It is a great matter to believe firmly, that nothing but this blood of sprinkling can justify and cleanse us; and it is also a great matter to believe that this can do it effectually. The poor creature thinks it is now about seventeen hundred years since Christ's blood was shed at Jerusalem, and so it is; but what then? the virtue of it is everlasting to cleanse us from all sin. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin, 1 John 1:7.

3dly, If you would come to this blood of sprinkling, that it may be upon you, you must adventure upon it, and place all your confidence in it, and make it your only plea for your acceptance and justification before God. We are justified by his blood, saith the apostle, Rom. 5:9. The believer is to see his justification streaming from the life-blood of the Son of God. When a poor creature sees the holiness of God's

law, and the severity of his justice, and feels a disturbance in his own conscience, it is no easy matter to believe that the blood that was shed without the gates of Jerusalem, in the day when this great sacrifice was offered up, is able to wash away all our sins; and that we have nothing else to betake ourselves to; God would have nothing else. Christ tells his Father, Heb. 10:5. Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: burnt-offerings and sacrifices of the law, the Father would take none of these of Christ, but he took his own sweet life, he took his own heart blood for the expiation of the sins of his people.

4thly, In coming to this blood of sprinkling, I would give you this advice: Attend upon all the means of Christ's appointment, in order to the getting the sensible sprinkling of this blood upon your consciences. When you believe its great power and virtue, you must put in for a share therein; and the Lord's appointed means for this end they should all be well used. When you come to pray, it should be in virtue of this blood, that you may feel more of it, and be brought nearer to God by it; for if ever you have any communion with God, it must all be through the virtue of this blood; if we are brought near to him, it is by the blood of Jesus. Eph. 2:13. But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. Ye were without Christ, and without hope, and without God in the world, but now the matter is far changed, ye are brought near by the blood of Christ. This should be especially minded when we come to the Lord's table; the great thing we come there for is to remember our Lord's death, to his praise and to our profit: all the saving blessings that we stand in need of for time and for eternity, are all the fruits of his death. This is the first exhortation, Come to the blood of sprinkling.

Use 2. Abide by this blood of sprinkling, stay and dwell by it; this fountain is opened for sin and uncleanness, and as long as sin and uncleanness remain in us, we have work and employment still for this blood of Jesus. Take heed to yourselves, that ye fall not in the crying sin of this day: Sirs, there is a plague growing in the land and

city we live in, and a dreadful one it is; I will take the liberty to speak of it, for it has been many times the very thoughts of my heart, That never were there so many guilty of sin against the Holy Ghost at any time, or in any place, as are now in London. Read what the apostle saith of them, Heb. 10:29. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath despite unto the spirit of grace? These three go together, treading under foot the Son of God, counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and doing despite to the spirit of grace. These blasphemies that are daily sounding in our ears, that Jesus Christ is but a mere man, are here charged by the apostle to be a treading under foot the Son of God; but he will have them under his foot ere long; His foes shall be made his footstool, Psal. 110:1. The Son of God and all his enemies, were they ever so many, are a very unequal match. Let believers cry to him to assert his own name, his interest and glory, and to trample upon his enemies in his fury. It is here charged on them, that they count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, that is, they count it to be a common thing. Those are grievous apostates indeed, that count no more of the blood of Christ, than of the blood of a good honest man, shed by the hands of wicked men for the truth's sake. They reckon that the blood of Jesus Christ hath no more power for the saving of men than the blood of one of the martyrs; and it is said of these, that they do despite to the spirit of grace. Take heed to yourselves, there is a great snare and a great danger here; remember it, Your salvation, if ever you come by it, must come by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus could never have saved any man, except it had been the sprinkling of the blood of God. Acts 20:28.

Use 3d and last. As to this blood of sprinkling, you must not only come to it and abide by it, but you must learn to die in it, and pass to heaven in it. Jesus Christ entered into heaven with his Own blood, and we must imitate him, and follow him with his own blood; that is, if I may so say, we must take and keep the mark of the sprinkled

blood of Jesus upon our consciences, as our grand pass for heaven and eternal life. The poor dying believer thinks with himself, "I have nothing to trust to but the blood of Jesus Christ; I have ventured on it, and the virtue of it hath reached my conscience many times, and now I would go down to the grave, and rise again in judgment, with this sprinkling of the blood of Jesus upon me, as my only ornament, my only plea, and my only praise, to eternity." We want to have the virtue of this blood more and more sprinkled upon our consciences, that we may lift up our faces with confidence towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the atonement.

SERMON IV

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. -
1 PETER 1:2

I TOOK up the preface to this epistle, contained in the two first verses of it, in three things; 1st, the name of the penman or writer of it, Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ; what he was by nature, and what he was raised to by grace. How he fell, and how he was raised again, I have spoken to.—The second thing in the words is the description of the parties that he writes this epistle to; and they are described by their state before the world, strangers scattered through several countries; that I have also considered. They are also described further by their state before God; Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus—Of the first of these, the first spring of eternal salvation, the election of grace, I formerly discoursed. There is a great reverence to be paid to this unsearchable counsel of God; it is to be firmly believed, it is plainly to be declared, but it is not curiously to be inquired into. The next thing in the description of the parties here written unto, and to which election has a respect, is the blood of Jesus Christ, and the sprinkling of it; for though it is the third thing in the order of the words, yet because it is the next in the order of nature, I thought fit to consider it in the second place. The last occasion, I discoursed something concerning this, though but briefly, in regard of the greatness and weight of the theme. I told you what the blood of Jesus was, and how he came by it; God's own Son did partake of flesh and blood, in God's wisdom and wise counsel about our salvation. How it was shed, and what the sprinkling of it was I spoke to; the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus is nothing else but the displaying and exerting of its merit, power, and virtue: for the blood of Christ, when it was shed on the cross, fared

just as did the blood of another man, when drawn forth by violence out of his veins; it poured down on the earth, and by that bloodshedding he did die; just as another man would have died: but the sprinkling power and virtue of it, was of greater extent than any created blood could ever have. Abel's blood had a voice in it; The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground, said the Lord to his bloody murderer Cain, Gen. 4:10. The meaning was, that his crime in shedding it did cry to the righteous Judge of the earth, for vengeance on the shedder of it. And it is this blood only, so far as I remember, that is spoken of in the word as having a voice in it; and it is twice spoken of, Gen. 4:10 and Heb. 12:24. And some think there was something of this meant in those words, He being dead yet speaketh, spoken also of Abel, Heb. 11:4.

APPLICATION. I would speak a few more things in the application of this truth, That the sprinkled blood of Jesus is one great mean of our salvation, that is, the Son's part; there is the part of the Father in our salvation, in his gracious chusing us; and there is the Son's part, in his gracious redeeming us by his blood; and there is the Holy Ghost's part, in sanctifying by his grace; and all these three are in our text. The first is an eternal act of God the Father; the second is an act of God the Son, done at once in the fulness of time; the third is a constant act of God the Holy Ghost towards all the heirs of eternal life. All that were chosen, were chosen from eternity, and all that were redeemed were bought in one moment by the blood-shedding and death of the Son of God; but sanctification is a work on our persons and on our nature, and is a constant work throughout all ages and generations. The Father's election was at once from eternity, the Son's redemption was at once, in one act in time: By one offering, saith the apostle, Heb. 10:14. he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; but the sanctification of the Spirit, that comes upon the heirs of glory from one age to another. The Holy Ghost is still sanctifying, but Christ is not still redeeming, far less is the Father still electing; there is no time-election, though there is time-sanctification.

Use 1. The first use that I would now make of this truth, That the sprinkled blood of Jesus Christ hath so great a hand in our salvation, and is so great a part of it, shall be to call upon you to a holy wondering and admiring at this strange way of our salvation; at this saving us by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus! A great many people are minding heaven, and praying to be in heaven, and hoping for heaven, that yet to this day never knew the way to heaven; but think the way to heaven is to be good, to pray, to be holy as they call it: these things indeed are the exercise of a man that is in the way to heaven, but these are not the way to heaven; the way to heaven is Jesus Christ; I am the way, the truth, and the life, saith our Lord to Thomas, John 14:6 and Christ is the way to heaven, as a slain Saviour; but how few are there that know him? Therefore our first exhortation is, To take a view of this sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, and wonder at it, that this should have so great a hand in our salvation. I shall offer a few things about it.

1st, There appears in this way most wonderful love towards persons. Pray observe what I say, in making this sprinkling of the blood of Jesus to be the grand means of our salvation, there appears to be wonderful love towards persons. Jesus Christ did not die at a peradventure, the great price of his blood was not laid down and he ignorant of what should come of it: he knew exactly (if I may so say) every penny that he laid down, and every redeemed soul that he was to take up. He gave his life a ransom for many, Matt. 20:28 and every one of those many were known unto him. I know my sheep, saith our Lord, and I lay down my life for them, John 10:14, 15. Oh what rotten doctrine is that which possesses the minds of a great many people, who think that the Son of God laid down his life to be a sufficient price for the saving of men, and then left it to men to improve this price, according as their own free-will should incline them; so that at this rate Christ might have died and no man been saved by him. If I may so say, this was to make Christ die as a fool dieth; but he is infinitely wise, and knew well wherefore he laid down his life. There was love in it to persons, therefore you still find it running this way, he loved ME, and gave himself for ME, Gal. 2:20. "If he had not

loved me he had never died for me." Rev. 1:5. To him that loved us, and washed US from our sins in his own blood; if I may so say, all the life-blood of the Son of God was drawn out of his veins, by the force of the love of his heart. Husbands, love your wives, saith the apostle, Eph. 5:25. as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it. Whenever you read this word, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, and hear of its great interest in our salvation, you should say, Behold how he loved us!

2dly, There is herein to be observed the most wonderful abasement and condescension of Jesus Christ, that he should stoop so low as to shed his blood that it might be sprinkled upon ungodly sinners. There is none that the Father loves so as he did his Son, and there is nothing that he hates as he doth sin; now, that the only beloved of the Father's soul should be given for the expiation of the only thing that his soul abhorreth, what marvellous condescension is here! That Christ himself should stoop so low, who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, or as God, Phil. 2:6, 7.; that he should stoop so low as to be made of no reputation, and to take upon him the form of a servant; that this great one should count it no shame to be made sin, and to be made a curse for us, 2 Cor. 5:21, Gal. 3:13 what wonderful condescension is this! Who being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, he by himself, saith the apostle, Heb. 1:3. purged our sins. You would think that the purging such an abominable kennel as our sins, was a work base enough, and low enough for a devil; aye, but the Son of God himself stooped to this, and his condescension was his glory.

3dly, In this interest that the springling of Christ's blood hath in the way of our salvation, there is the infinite wisdom of God to be seen. It is called the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. 3:10. Christ crucified is called the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1:24. Wisdom among men is seen in bringing about effectually impossible-like matters: he is a wise man who can do that; who can reconcile things plainly discordant; things plainly cross one to another; it is great wisdom to reconcile such

things: and all this is done by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. There is justice and mercy in God, that do here kiss one another. Justice in God is natively directed to the destroying of a sinner; and the mercy of God is directed to the saving of a sinner; now, how mercy can save without reflecting upon justice, and how justice can be satisfied without consuming the sinner, here lay the difficulty that Christ's blood only could reconcile. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, Rom. 3:24, 25, 26.

4thly, In this interest that Christ's blood hath in our salvation we may perceive, for the raising our faith and wonder, a new way to heaven that is now reared up, a way to heaven that every one who is good is pleased with it. The apostle speaks of this way, Heb. 10:19. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; his rent flesh, that is the meaning of it. I shall speak a little further concerning this new way to heaven; for it will be my main work, in prosecuting this exhortation, to press you to take it. All who are good are pleased with it. 1. The justice of God is pleased with it: that the justice of God should be pleased with a way to heaven for sinners is a marvellous thing; but justice is pleased with this; for hereby it gets a full satisfaction. The justice of God never got such a satisfaction as by the blood of Christ. Blinded sinners think to appease the justice of God, and to atone it by their own little doings; but justice never got a satisfaction but by the shedding of this blood. 2. The law is Satisfied and pleased with this way to heaven. I do not say the law of God tells us the way to heaven, it is the gospel only that reveals this; but when the law sees the way to heaven revealed in the gospel, it hath nothing to say against it. The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, Rom. 3:21.

We do not destroy the law by this way. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid, yea, we establish the law, Rom. 3:31. God's law never got so much honour in this world, and never will get so much honour in the next world, as it did by shedding the blood of Jesus Christ. When the law sheds the blood of a sinner, it gets some glory; but how small is that honour which arises to the law from the destruction of a criminal? Aye, but when God's own Son comes to offer to the law the blood of God, what a dignity is this to the law? That the law hath this, as it were, to record, "I have not only sent multitudes of sinners to hell, but I punished God's own Son in man's nature; he fulfilled all the righteousness that I demanded, and performed all the obedience that I craved." All the punishment that the law inflicted he bore; he was made under the law, and fulfilled the whole law. 3. This new way to heaven, by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, is pleasing to all the BLESSED THREE, to FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT. The Father is pleased with this way of salvation by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; for it was his own contrivance, it was his own act, his own pleasure: it is called the pleasure of JEHOVAH, Isa. 53:10. It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. How did the Lord's pleasure prosper in Christ's hand? If I may so say, the pleasure of the Lord could not have prospered in Christ's hands till the pleasure of the Lord had been in shedding his blood; and thus the pleasure sure of the Lord prospered in his hands. Our Lord himself was pleased with it, it was his delight; he died cheerfully and willingly; this lay at his heart: Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, burnt offering and sin-offering hast thou not required; then said I, lo! I come: in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart, Psal. 40:6, 7, Heb. 10:8, 9. The Holy Ghost is also well pleased with it; for he sanctified him, and witnessed to him at his death, but more especially at his resurrection. 4. We may go further about this; all the angels in heaven are satisfied with this new way of salvation: they are mightily pleased with it; though it is not the way of their salvation, it is a way they are highly pleased with: they pry into it, and they give praise for it, 1 Pet. 1:12. The suffering of Christ, and the glory that shall follow, are things that

the angels desire to look into. To the intent, saith the apostle, Eph. 3:10. that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. And they praise in heaven on this account; Rev. 5:11, 12. And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousands, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. We do not know that the angels get any good by Christ's death; they did not stand in need of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, but they stood in need of confirming grace from their great head; for our Lord Jesus Christ is the head of principalities and powers. Col. 2:10. The angels are part of the triumphant church above, and are under the headship of Jesus Christ, as the word frequently speaks. The angels in heaven are pleased with this new way; for there is joy in heaven, in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth and is brought home to God by Jesus Christ. 5. All the glorified saints in heaven are pleased with this way to heaven, by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ: and of this there is no doubt; for their everlasting praise proceeds on this account. Rev. 5:9. They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation: from thence rises their song of praise. 6. This way of salvation is pleasing to all believers that are on the face of the earth. To be saved, to come to heaven, by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, is pleasing to every believer; nay more, if I may so say, it is their being heartily pleased with this that makes them believers; for believing stands in a heart-satisfaction with the sprinkled blood of Jesus. Aye, but are there none who are displeased with this way of salvation? Yes, there are; and their being displeased with it is the praise of it. All the devils are bitterly displeased with this sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon sinners; for they know they have no share in it: the greatest enmity that the devil hath is against Jesus Christ as a Saviour. All the damned in hell are displeased at this; for they are

past all hopes of benefit thereby. And all unbelievers upon earth are displeased with it; because they do not know it. So that this way of salvation by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, is pleasing to all heaven, and only displeasing to hell, and to poor blind unbelievers here upon earth. So much for this first Use.—Learn to admire at this strange way of salvation, to save us by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ!

Use 2. I would now, in the next place, lead you to the examining and trying yourselves, whether this sprinkling hath come upon you or not; a very important matter this to be managed by every one! "Hath this sprinkling of the blood of Jesus come upon me? Am I sprinkled by it?" It is not enough that Christ's blood was shed, and that you know wherefore, to sprinkle the altar above for satisfaction; to Sprinkle heaven to make an entrance therein for poor sinners; to sprinkle the covenant, and to seal it for a charter and testament of Jesus Christ; but you must labour to know whether this sprinkling hath, come upon you. It is not enough that you sit under the gospel and the preaching of it: truly the preaching of the gospel rightly, is like the bunch of hyssop that Moses put into the bason of the blood of the covenant, and sprinkled it round among the people; and the preaching of the gospel is as it were the scattering of the virtue of the blood of Jesus upon all them that will receive it by faith; but a great many hear, that are not partakers of it, for all that. It is not enough that you come under the sacraments, and use them, though they are the means of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. Baptism is a representation of the washing virtue of this blood; the Lord's supper, especially the cup in it, is a representation of the nourishing virtue of this blood shed for the sins of men; yet people may be under both these, they may be baptised, and receive the Lord's supper frequently, and yet not be sprinkled with the blood of Christ. The apostle speaks of an Old Testament instance, and applies it with respect to New Testament professors, 1 Cor. 10 first five verses. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptised unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea; and

did all eat the spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink. Why doth the apostle call it spiritual meat, and spiritual drink? Was it not true, real, nourishing bread that fell from heaven? and was it not true, wholesome water that flowed from the rock? Surely they were not fed by dreams and imaginations, but they were real creatures of God; and it may be bread better than ever man eat, and water better than ever man drank: for the more eminently the hand of God appeared in forming those creatures, the better it is likely they were. Why then doth the apostle call them spiritual meat, and spiritual drink? Because they were of a spiritual signification: For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. Never a time that an Israelite was hungry but he did eat Christ; never a time that he was thirsty but he drank Christ; that is, spiritually and typically. But notwithstanding this, the apostle adds, With many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. They liked the waters well enough, and were nourished and refreshed by them, but the spiritual signification of them they did not understand; and God was not well pleased with them, and they were overthrown for their rebellion. And just so is it with professors now. We have a great many words and much talking about the seals of the covenant, baptism and the Lord's supper; about the way, time, means, and methods of them; but here is the main business, Where is the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus? hath the virtue of this blood come on you or not? that is the main question: a question I would say these two things about. It is of the greatest importance, and of great difficulty. 1st, It is of the greatest importance to be determined; for our eternal state stands and depends upon it. You will not say any man can be saved that is not elected; so no man can be saved who is not sprinkled with the blood of Jesus; and who is not sanctified by the Spirit: for all these three are of equal necessity about our salvation. 2dly, This is a matter of great difficulty to be resolved, because it is about a great mystery. People commonly mistake about mysteries, and are in the dark concerning them. Jesus Christ himself is a great mystery, and the communication of his virtue to men is a great mystery; and the application of it to the soul is a great mystery. Indeed, Sirs, it is but

in the dark that we know how we are saved; we know that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour, and that his saving power is put forth upon us, or we cannot be saved; but how this is done, who can tell? The poor creature that touched the hem of Christ's garment, found virtue coming forth from him, Mark 5:28, 29 for the cure of her body; and Christ found virtue going from him on her faith; but the poor woman could not give a rational account how this came to pass, that her touching by faith the hem of Christ's garment should bring in this saving, healing power to her body. Many touched Christ as well as she, but none touched him so as she did: she had a special errand to him, and special business with him, and made a special application to him: that touch she gave with her finger to the border of his garment reached secretly and powerfully to the heart and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and drew forth relief immediately. Of these three things that are in my text, the greatest difficulty lies in knowing the two first; for election is never rightly known immediately by itself, but by its effects; and the sprinkling of blood cannot be immediately known by us, but by our application to it, and the fruits of it upon us. But the sanctification of the Spirit is quite another thing; it is something that falls upon ourselves, and upon our nature, regenerating us, and framing us to a newness of life. I shall offer a few things at this time concerning the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; whereby you may know whether you have gotten it or not.

1. All high-prizers of, and praisers for it, have this sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon them. This I will prove; for wheresoever the virtue of Christ's blood is put forth, there it is known, and wheresoever it is known, it is highly esteemed. I do not say, that the man knows he hath got it; but he that hath it feels something that makes him prize it. greatly. We preach Christ crucified, saith the apostle, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, 1 Cor. 1:23. They saw nothing at all in Christ crucified, in a man that was slain and hanged on a tree without the gates of Jerusalem, that the apostles should go up and down the world and preach salvation through him; they saw nothing of glory in this; But, saith the apostle, to them that are called, Christ the wisdom of God

and the power of God. "In that day that I was in the dark, would the apostle say, I was an enemy to Jesus Christ, and I thought as little of him as any of you now do; but after I was called by his grace, the matter was quite otherwise; Christ was then to me the power of God, and the wisdom of God." God never did a wiser thing in this world than in saving men by Christ Jesus; and God never put forth his power more effectually than in making Jesus Christ the great mean of saving a lost world.

2dly, Would you know whether you ever had any thing of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon you, enquire, whether ever you had any thing that this blood is sprinkled upon; What is that? It is upon a guilty conscience. The blood of Christ is only applied, and only applicable to a guilty conscience; to a man condemned by the law, seeing and judging himself as ripe and ready for hell: this is the only man that can be sprinkled by the blood of Jesus. How much more, saith the apostle, Heb. 9:14. shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works, &c.? "You were wearied with dead works, and burdened thereby, and then this sprinkling came upon you." Oh what a trifling creature is a man with a secure conscience! he plays, as it were, with Jesus Christ. He may talk of Jesus Christ, and commend him as Lord and King; but for the blood of Jesus Christ, he sees no need of it, nor has he any use for it. No man can apply to this blood but a man who finds he has a guilty conscience; that hath his conscience as a serpent or vulture gnawing within; this is the man that values the blood of sprinkling: For without the shedding of blood, there could be no remission of sins, Heb. 9:22.

3dly, Would you know whether this blood of sprinkling hath come upon you, and that its virtue has reached you, you may know it this way; Are you come to it, and are you users of it? Christ has many sweet names, engaging names, to poor sinners to make an errand to him. Every name that Christ hath, a poor sinner should make an errand to him under that name. But the chief errand that every poor sinner should have to Christ is in respect to his own sins; now it is this name of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus that makes him

amiable to a poor sinner, and therefore he would fain come near to him that he may get it. To give you a similitude: When Moses sprinkled the blood of the covenant upon the people, Exod. 24:6, 7, 8 you must not think that the blood of the goat or bullock could go any great way in sprinkling the people; there was no necessity that every one of the Israelites should have the mark of the blood on their raiment; but it was their duty to get as near as they could to that external sprinkling, that sanctified to the purifying of the flesh. So in this gospel Christ's blood is held forth; and people should come as near to it as they can, praying and looking that the virtue of it may reach them Ye are come, saith the apostle, Heb. 12:24. to the blood of sprinkling. That is your part and duty; and if this blood of springling comes on you, ye are saved, and that is your mercy. We should labour to get nearer to Jesus, and we should reckon it a great happiness if we might but once touch the hem of his garment; but to touch his heart, to touch his heart's blood that was shed for the remission of the sins of many! blessed be the shedder; blessed be the sender; blessed be the comer! The Lord hath bought his flock with his own blood, and a great many of them are got safe to heaven, and the rest are following and will be quickly there; and we should long for the day when the Redeemer and the redeemed shall be seen together.

SERMON V

Elect according the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. -
1 PETER 1:2

YOU have heard in the opening of these words what respect they have to the preceding. The sprinkling of the blood of Christ is to be understood as relating to the first words of the verse, Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father; and not unto the sanctification of the Spirit. The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus doth necessarily precede the sanctification of the Spirit: upon that account it was, that I entered on the handling of it before the other. You have heard of the blood of Jesus Christ, and of the sprinkling of it, and of the great interest that it hath in our salvation. I began to apply this, and insisted on two uses. 1st, I called you to a spiritual right, the admiring this great work of God, that our salvation comes by the sprinkled blood of Jesus. When sin came into the world, no sinful person could be saved, unless a sinless man had died for him; and a sinless man's dying could never have saved them; but this man must be God, or rather God's own Son must be man, and so shed the blood of God. I know we live in a corrupt day, wherein the grand fundamentals of the gospel are warmly debated, and most wickedly opposed, and this virtuous blood of Christ most wickedly blasphemed; an abomination that God will visit for, in his own time: happy they who are innocent of the guilt! 2dly, I called you to try, whether or not this blood of Christ be sprinkled on you: Be persuaded, that it was of absolute necessity to the salvation of the elect, that the blood of the Son of God should be shed for them; so it is of as great necessity to the salvation of every particular believer, that the virtue of this blood should be upon them.

There are two heads of exhortation that I would now farther speak to.

First, To believers that are sprinkled by this blood of Jesus; who not only were elected to it, but on whom purpose of election hath taken place. Every believer in Jesus Christ hath it, though every believer does not know he is a believer; and therefore he cannot know all the privileges that belong to believers. But every poor sinner that ventures his eternal salvation on this blood shed, the sprinkled virtue of it is upon him, according to the manifold promises given by our

Lord, that whosoever believeth on him hath everlasting life, John 6:47. There are two or three things that I would say to such. To them, 1st, that though they dare not say boldly that they are believers, yet they can call God to witness, that all their hopes towards God for time and eternity, for the remission of their sins now, and the admission of their persons to eternal life hereafter, they are all bottomed and placed on the blood of Jesus Christ: such are believers, whether they think so or not.

1st, It is required of them who are believers, and sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ, that they should give praise and thanks for it. Spiritual mercies are great mercies, and they should be greatly praised for. This is the greatest of all mercies, to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. Christians should bewail their ignorance of their spiritual state on this account; not only because they want that peace which the knowledge of their state would bring them, but also because the Lord calls for that praise, which the knowledge of our state would incline us to give him. Peter, in this epistle, and the apostle Paul, in almost every one of his epistles, begins with thanksgiving on the account of the grace of God bestowed on him, and on the rest of believers to whom he writes. I shall never reckon that Christian in a very spiritual frame, who hath not a deep sense of the debt of mercy, and a strong inclination to pay that debt in praise. I know that generally Christians are of another temper, though that is not a very good sign: if they can but tenderly and feelingly complain; if they can but pray heartily, and beg blessings greedily from the hand of God, then they think they are in a good frame; and indeed I do not deny but there is something of goodness in that frame—But how few are there who have this sense upon their spirits? "How many mercies have I received from the Lord, and how seldom have I praised him for them?" Shall so great a blessing as the virtue of the blood of Christ pass upon the soul, and shall not a man praise the Lord heartily for it? We find the apostle, in the next verse to my text, blessing the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for begetting us again to a lively hope, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, ver. 3. And whosoever are thankful for the virtue of

Christ's resurrection, it is impossible but they must also be thankful for the virtue of his death: for Christ's death, and the virtue of it, are implied in his resurrection. What needed Christ's resurrection, unless he had been dead? and therefore the purchase of our blessings come by the death of Christ, and the application of them by his resurrection. So saith the apostle, Rom. 4:25. He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. This is the first exhortation; Give hearty praise for this blood of sprinkling; bind it as a duty upon our consciences, and set about it; and I can assure you that you will find great advantage by it. Many Christians have tried it, and I can appeal to the experience of several here, who know what this means, when they have been in a vein of complaining, that hardness of heart, and dulness and deadness, have prevailed strangely; but when the poor creatures have been by the hand of God inclined and turned to think of the great bounty of God towards them, and have begun to be exercised in the work of praise, they have presently found their bonds to be loosed, and that the Spirit of life hath entered, and they have found sweet Communion with God therein.

2dly, You that have had the blood of sprinkling passing upon you through faith in Christ Jesus, stand in it before God. Whensoever this thought enters into your mind, "The eye of the all-seeing God is now upon me, and this great judges all things, and determines concerning my present state; what case then should I desire to stand in before him?" Only in this blood of srpinkling; as if the poor believer should say, "Let God never cast his eye upon me, but that he may always see the sprinkled blood of Christ upon me!" There are two things I would say concerning it. This sprinkling of the blood of Jesus is our only guard against justice and ruin; and it is our only ornament to commend us to the acceptance of God. 1. It is our only guard against the justice and law of God. You have heard of the typical blood of the paschal lamb, that was sprinkled upon the posts of the Israelites doors; what a vain thing had it been for an Israelite to stand in his arms at his door, to guard his house against the avenging angel? alas! the destroying angel went to Pharaoh's house,

and despised his guards, and executed the judgments of God according to his commission. The only guard that the poor Israelites had, was to sprinkle the blood of the paschal lamb on the posts of their doors; and if the destroying angel was not kept back by that, they had nothing else to trust to. So, whenever you think of standing before a holy and just God, it is this sprinkling of the blood of Jesus that must be your only guard: for most assuredly the sword of justice will pierce and draw the blood of that soul which hath not this blood sprinkled upon it. 2. This is our only ornament in the sight of God. There are two things that we should still desire in all our thoughts of God: the one is, to be safe from his displeasure; and the other is, to be amiable and pleasing in his sight. A natural man cares for no more from God than what will save him from being ruined by him; but a spiritual man desires not only to be saved from destruction by the Almighty, but he also desires to be in terms of peace with God; that God may look graciously on him, and that he may stand with acceptance in his sight: now nothing else can procure this, nor obtain it, but this sprinkling of the blood of Christ. We are accepted, saith the apostle, in that beloved, Eph. 1:6, 7. But how came ye to be accepted in the beloved? what did it cost that beloved to make you accepted? In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Rich grace, and dear blood, there stands our safety; it was rich grace that sent the person to die, and it was rich grace that accepted the blood for our sake, and for our advantage; and the virtue of this blood is reckoned to us for the forgiveness of our sins.

3dly, Not only stand before God in this sprinkled blood of Christ, but plead with God in every case upon the account of this blood. I say, you must learn to plead with God in every case upon the account of this blood. You think, and you think rightly, that Jesus Christ is a great intercessor in heaven; that he is a powerful pleader, and so he is; but what is the great argument that he pleads upon? What is it that makes all his pleadings successful, and that secures answers of peace to all whom he pleads for? It is from the virtue of this blood of his; he pleads upon his own blood, and we that are poor sinners must

do so too. By his own blood, saith the apostle, Heb. 9:12. he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us; and in the power and virtue of that blood he still appears before God for us. Whatsoever you ask, you must ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: But, if I may so say, what is the main letter in the name of Jesus, that the eye of our faith is to be mainly to be upon in all our pleadings with God? It is the name of this blood, he that shed his blood for all the blessings that we beg of God. There are three things chiefly that discourage believers in their pleadings with God, and they are all three answered from this blood of sprinkling. (1.) When we plead with God, we are apt to think with ourselves that God is great: With God is terrible majesty, Job 37:22. He is so far above us, that we are confounded when we speak to him. Good Abraham our father, that great believer, had a deep sense of this, Gen. 18:27. Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes. Now, what ground of boldness can a poor creature, and a great sinner, have in approaching to God? Only this, We bring the blood of God with us; if I may say so, we bring the blood of one as great as he is, to whom we come. (2.) Believers are discouraged in praying sometimes, from the greatness of the things that they ask; we ask blessings that are vastly great, pardon of sin, peace with God; we ask no less than the Spirit of God, nothing less than an eternal crown of glory. What is it that makes us so bold, to beg so great blessings as these are? Only because we come in the name of that blood which is a just price for the biggest of them. Though we have not one farthing of our own to give towards the least of them, yet by the virtue of this blood of Jesus we produce, as it were, and lay before the Lord, a price big enough for the greatest of them. This blood of Christ is a Sufficient price for all the pardons that are obtained upon earth, and for all the supplies of grace that believers receive now, and for all the crowns of glory that they will be partakers of hereafter; Christ's blood is worth them all (3.) Believers are often discouraged in their pleadings with God, from their own sinfulness, and the sinfulness of their way of pleading; both the supplicants, and their supplications, afford us great matter of fear. When a man knows what himself is, and knows what his

performances are, so poor, so sorry, so pitiful, this thought presently arises in our hearts, Will the great God ever accept such persons as we are? No, never, if we come in our own name; but if we come sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ, that is the only thing regarded in us; all things in us, and all things in our supplications are covered and clothed thereby.

Lastly, You that are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ, take good heed that you do not defile and stain it. Take heed that you do not defile the blood of Christ by loose, careless, and unholy walking. The apostle charges a kind of Christians that were in his day, with this, Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called? If it were only a reproach to yourselves, it would be but a small matter, but they blaspheme the name of your Lord and Master on your account. There are two things that I would fain have Christians take notice of about this. (1.) The smart that is given to a tender conscience from the dishonour that is done to the name of Christ. I could wish that people had a greater sense of this than of their own damnation; it should wound the heart of a tender Christian more, to be the occasion of reproach to the name of Christ, than to be the occasion of endangering his own eternal salvation; even as his glory should be dearer to us than all things else which concern ourselves. (2.) I would fain have Christians know also, the force there is in faith on the blood of sprinkling constraining the soul to the study of holiness: for my part, I shall never expect to see the holiness that is worth a farthing amongst Christians, (not only that it will not be accepted with God, but it will have no beauty before men) till it derive its original from this spring, the believing of the virtue of the sprinkled blood of Christ. Oh what a mighty constraining thing is that to a man to be holy! The love of Christ constraineth us, saith the apostle, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, 2 Cor. 5:14. I know the common topics for holiness that are mainly managed by preachers, and that are mightily relished by many hearers: Such and such things are plainly commanded by God, therefore do them; such things are plainly threatened by God, therefore forbear them; such a practice is encouraged by a promise,

therefore engage in it. These are the common topics of holiness, and a natural man may have some gust and relish of such things; but the grand gospel motive to holiness, none but a believer can have any sense of: "I am sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ, therefore I must be holy; I am delivered by Christ from all sin, therefore I must be holy." How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? saith the apostle, Rom. 6:2. "And how came we to be dead to sin, but by Christ's dying for us in our sins, and thereby delivering us from our sins; and therefore we will cast them off by the help of his grace." It is the promise, Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace, Rom. 6:14 this is an argument of special force, but its force is only known and felt by a lively believer. But I shall pass this at present, because we shall have farther occasion to speak more to it, when we come to treat of the sanctification of the Spirit. So much for this first branch of the exhortation to believers.

2dly, I am now to speak a word of exhortation to unbelievers, to people who never had any business all their life-time about this blood of sprinkling; who read of it in their Bibles, but never felt any thing of it in their exercise, never felt any thing of the power of it.

I would first reason a few things with such sort of persons. 1. Do not you know that you are sinners? There are none of you that will deny that you are sinners; but there are many that say they are sinners, who never knew what it was to be a sinner. They know what it is to sin, but they do not know what it is to be a sinner. Whosoever knows himself to be a sinner, knows himself to be the vilest creature in the world, save the devil, and indeed some way worse than he: for none of us but are guilty of those sins the devil is free of. The devil was never guilty of the sin of unbelief in this world; for a Saviour was never in his offer; and was never despised by him. I know he hates the Saviour, but the Saviour was never in his offer gospel-unbelief is none of the devil's sins; although there is corruption enough in the devil to act any villainy, but yet this is quite out of his reach. 2. Do ye not know what sin deserves? do ye not consider that you have many

thousand times over deserved eternal ruin? For the wages of sin is death, Rom. 6:23. 3. Do ye not know that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of sinners? These three things every one will say they know: That they are sinners; that sin deserves wrath; and that it is Jesus Christ only can save from this wrath. Then proceed to inquire, in the 4th place, How it is that Jesus Christ saves sinners from wrath? There are many that will say, Christ saves us by dying for us. This is a good answer; but do ye understand what there is in this dying for us! He came in his people's room, he came in their stead, he took upon him their persons, their guilty condemned persons, and was dealt with by law and justice accordingly: Our Lord Jesus Christ in saving us from wrath had a very hard task of it. 5. Do ye know what Christ doth in and for them that he saves? What our Lord did when he was here upon earth, was to offer an universal atonement for all his people, a great part of whom were not to live in the world till a long time after he died. Now our Lord Jesus Christ, that he might be a complete Saviour, besides what he did then in redemption, hath a great deal of work to do about every particular believer; and therefore it is not enough to know that Christ saves sinners by dying for them, but you must also know what he doth actually in them whom he saves to whom he applies what he wrought out; he comes near to the soul, and puts forth his virtue upon it, and unites it to himself: And he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, 1 Cor. 6:17. 6. Do ye know what Christ requires of them who partake of this saving power of his? They must believe on him, and come to him, and trust in him, and adventure their souls upon him. So that granting your assent to all these six things: That you are sinners; that sin deserves wrath; that Christ is the only Saviour from this wrath; that he saves the whole body, his church, by his death; that he applies this death to particular persons by the power of his Spirit; and that every one who would have this blessing must make application to him for it by faith; from all these things there remains one question, and let your consciences answer it as in the sight of God, Have you done so? There is the blood of sprinkling here spoken of, Have you betaken yourselves-to it? You have prayed many times, it may be, and come to the ordinances of the gospel many times; but have you ever made

a particular errand to Jesus Christ about this? "Here is a guilty conscience of mine, that shall never be quiet till this blood of Jesus Christ purgeth it by an effectual application."

I would, in the next place, commend this question to your consideration, that you may be careful how to get an answer to it, Whether you have ever made an application to this blood of sprinkling? This question hath three things to commend it to your consideration. 1st, Our standing before God for peace and acceptance to all eternity, depends upon this alone; make but this sure, that the blood of sprinkling hath been upon you, never make any question of your possessing eternal life, 2dly, Your place in Christ's church depends upon this: What is the reasonable condition that is required of any man that offers himself to a well ordered church? It is this, that the person declares truly and plainly that he is a lost sinner, and that all his hope of salvation is from the virtue of the blood of Jesus Christ. Let a man declare this in what words he pleases, that one may reasonably and charitably believe him, and there is no more required of him. But if a person should be so far left of God, as to declare, either by words or deeds, that he hath no kind of trust in the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, there is no right ordered church but would cast him out immediately. What hath the church of Christ to do with any, but with them who fairly profess, that all their hope of eternal life flows from the sprinkling of the blood of Christ? You first give yourselves up to the Lord, and then to each other, to be for the Lord and not for another. 3dly, The solid peace of your conscience depends on your answering this question. I know not what sort of consciences some persons have, that are sometimes quickly disturbed with that which is of no great concernment, and sometimes they are as quickly pacified with that which is also of no great concernment. Imaginary sins sometimes disturb weak consciences; and that which is more common and worse, imaginary relief sometimes pacifies deluded consciences. But this is what I declare unto you, in the name of Christ, that whensoever you come to know what true soul-trouble, what true sickness of conscience, is, you will find that all the ministers in the world cannot send you true

consolation, but what arises from the virtue of this blood of sprinkling: and therefore you may see of what great concernment it is for men to know whether they have come to this blood of sprinkling or not. If you are come to it by faith, it is upon you; and if it be upon you, your state is secure to all eternity.

I would now, in order to stir you up to a right application to this blood of sprinkling, just lay before you these five or six considerations, and then proceed.

1st, Consider, Jesus Christ in and with his blood is proposed and set forth to you in the gospel; remember this, Jesus Christ with his blood is set forth to you in the gospel. God hath set him forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, Rom. 3:25. Pray observe; the law comes and declares righteousness in charging men's sins upon them, and the gospel comes and declares God's righteousness, in a blessed way of absolving men from that charge; and this way is declared to us in the gospel, to be through Christ Jesus. This propitiation is wrought by his blood, and this blood is that which faith must take hold of and rest upon. The apostle Paul tells the Galatians, That Christ Jesus was evidently set forth crucified before their eyes, Gal. 3:1. What a blessed crucifier of Christ was the apostle Paul! he was daily, as it were, preaching over again the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and diffusing, as far as he could, the power and virtue of it upon poor sinners. You would think it a strange thing now, if in the camp of the Israelites, when the brazen serpent was set up by God's appointment, with this proclamation going along with it, "That whosoever in the camp were stung by the fiery serpents, let him but come to his tent-door, and look up to the brazen serpent, and he shall be a whole man immediately;" you would think it a strange thing that a poor Israelite, groaning to death within his tent, should refuse to come forth, and make use of this great appointment for his cure. The case is just the same: our Lord Jesus Christ is as this brazen serpent, and he is lifted up in the gospel; but for all that, a great many people have no

business with him; though he be held forth to men in the gospel, they have no heart-dealing with him.

2dly, Jesus Christ deals with us in the gospel, and shall not we deal with him? Christ speaks to us two ways, he speaks to us in his own blood, and he speaks to us in our blood; in our blood of filth and defilement, Ezek. 16:6 and in his own blood of atonement. When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. Christ also pleads with us in his own blood, this is the great argument that he deals with men by; he loved us, and shed his blood for us, and therefore prays us to be reconciled to him.

3dly, We should consider Christ's patience in dealing with us; this is a great reproach to them that have no heart to deal with him. Christ's patience towards sinners is a wonderful blessing; he waits a long while upon men; none can set bounds to his patience; none can tell how long it will last; none can promise himself a day more of Christ's patience: but yet his patience is a wonderful blessing. Behold I stand at the door and knock, Rev. 3:20. "and I have staid a long while:" And truly I am afraid there are a great many gray-headed, and dim-eyed sinners too, in London, that have had Christ knocking at the door of their hearts all their days, and they have never thought of opening to him; they have never thought of dealing with him for eternal life: And should not these perish? One would almost say, it is pity such persons should not go to hell, who have had Christ beseeching and praying them, all their life long, to take salvation from him, and they have no heart to receive it. I have spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people; I said, Behold me, behold me, to a nation that was not called by my name, Isa. 65:1, 2. "I craved no great matter of them, no more but this, to open their eyes and see the Saviour, and to live by the sight of him."

4thly, Christ deals with us about salvation; and this consideration should make them ashamed that have no dealing with him. Be you

persuaded of this, that whosoever lives under the rightly-preached gospel, at one time or another of their lives; they are brought under some conviction of this: "Surely Jesus Christ is dealing with me about salvation; Why else doth he call, and wait, and knock, and entreat, and command, and threaten, and promise, and use all the means that can be used, but that he is dealing with me about salvation?" And if Christ be thus dealing with us, should not we deal with him? When Christ is trying so many cords of love, should not our hearts once yield a good return, and say, Behold I come, Lord, draw me nearer?

5thly, Consider this, that when Christ in this gospel is pleading in the virtue of his blood, he takes a most exact and careful notice of people's behaviour. When people attend public worship, sometimes they hear, and sometimes they do not; sometimes they wake, and sometimes they sleep, as the mood takes them; and indeed were it only creatures like yourselves that spoke to you, the matter would not be very great; but here is the weighty business, "It is Jesus Christ that in this gospel is dealing with me about eternal salvation; and he takes exact notice how the frame of my heart stands towards him; if I slight and despise him, and neglect him and his great salvation, Heb. 2:3.; if his precious blood be undervalued by me, these things, Christ remarks, and I shall hear of it another time." Sirs, I am persuaded of this, there are many poor creatures who sit quietly under the preaching of the word, by a man like themselves, that yet, in the carelessness of their hearts, and in the estrangedness of their thoughts from Jesus Christ, do commit a greater sin, and that they will make a more dreadful charge in their indictment, than any sin that ever they committed all their days. I send the Spirit, saith our Lord, John 16:9. to convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me. And that is only a sin of not doing something good; it is not, "I will send the Spirit to convince them of sin, because they have broken the law of Moses," but, I will send the Spirit to convince them of sin, because they believe not on me; because they have not their hearts kindly affected with desires after Jesus Christ. It is a sin of omission, and a most dreadful one.

Lastly, As Christ regards what entertainment he meets with from men now, so at the last day he will declare the same in judgment. I came not to judge the world, the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day, John 12:48. This same word whereby you have been offered eternal life, will be a dreadful aggravation of your condemnation at last. Sirs, Christ and his despised blood will make a more dreadful cry of vengeance against the damned, than all the roarings of the devil and their fellow-damned in hell. Hear the voice of Christ's despised blood crying against men, when at the last day the judge shall say, "This man was a despiser of my blood, which was tendered and offered to him all the days of his life, and yet never made an errand to it, and never desired to be sprinkled with it, and therefore shall be to made a sacrifice to justice." Therefore prevent all this, by making an application to the blood of sprinkling; which is nothing less, and nothing more, than for a poor sinner to come as a sinner, to a Saviour dying for sin, and saving him by his dying. Christ saves us by his dying, and the lost sinner must come to him for salvation. Therefore, Sirs, let there be a heart-dealing between Christ and you: you have often been told, that a profession is not worth taking up, and it is not worth the keeping, if the all of it stands in the view of the world; that the family knows, the congregation knows all that belongs to the man's godliness: that godliness is not worth the having. The beginning, the substance, the root of all true Christianity lies in these two things: What Christ by his Spirit deals with thy heart, and what thy heart by the same Spirit deals with Jesus Christ; and all the world can never know either the one or the other of these. The operation of the Spirit of Jesus Christ on the heart of a sinner, and the operation of the sinner's heart towards Jesus Christ; these two are the source and the spring of all true Christianity and godliness: and whatsoever a man hath without these, is worth nothing at all; but whosoever hath these things, truly there will be much besides them, flowing from them, that is worth something. Therefore now I would exhort you to make use of this sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, that is, that you may have a communication of the virtue and all the saving benefits of it, which secures our eternal

state, and commends us to God. I shall offer three or four ways wherein you should do do this.

1st, Deal with this blood of sprinkling by obedience to his commands, this is one thing. That person is in a hopeful way to salvation who is brought to this resolution, "I now see by the gospel that I must intrust Jesus Christ with my soul, or I must provoke him; one of these two must be; and because his command is peremptory, every lost sinner, that sees himself to be so, should intrust his eternal salvation with him by faith."

2dly, Employ Jesus Christ as Saviour, with the virtue of his blood, from mere necessity. I know there are better springs than this, but it is well if any thing will make a man come to Jesus Christ. Fell necessity, desperate necessity, should enforce us. When a poor sinner sees his case so bad that there is no hope for him; but only one heavenly remedy, the blood of Jesus Christ, that alone can put a stop to the quarrel between heaven and him: and therefore, saith the poor soul, I will try it from mere necessity.

3dly, Try to do this out of love; Oh! that all the world would believe on Jesus Christ merely from love to him. Jesus Christ, if I may so say, is a great vessel which will carry all that are in it safe to heaven: therefore let us embark in him, not only because we would not be drowned by the way, but because we love to be in him. There is a love to Jesus Christ that flows from faith, or that makes the following acts of faith more sensible to believers. Therefore,

Lastly, This employing of Christ must be by an adventuring trust: an adventure is that which a man hath some uncertainty about; I do not say, it should be so, but many times it is so. This is our trusting, it is a committing our greatest concern to this only safe hand to keep it. See now, how narrowly this matter is brought: Whensoever any of you have, at any time, any heart-concern about your salvation, remember now, hereafter, and at death, the matter can be only secured by a bold adventuring on the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. "I am such

a sinner, saith the man, so undone, so distressed, so destroyed, so endangered by the law of God because of sin, that if the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ be not able to bear me out, I must sink to eternity under the burden of it." Every one that adventures upon this should do it confidently, though but few can till they have tried the trade of believing for a time. It is a great work to save a sinner; and it is well that it is put into so great a hand; never had a sinner been saved unless Christ had been the Saviour. We have been speaking of employing Christ by faith, and this very faith Christ must be the author of. Oh that Christ might grow in our hearts, that holy one of God! Oh what reason have we to be ashamed of the bad entertainment that we have given to the Son of God! The Lord forgive and help us, and grant that the life that we live in the flesh may be by the faith of the Son of God!

SERMON VI

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. -

1 PETER 1:2

YOU have heard that this description of the parties which the apostle here writes to, is not only a discrimination of the persons, but it hath in it an account of all the great work of God about the salvation of his people. The election of the Father; the sanctification of the Spirit; and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. This sprinkling of the blood of Jesus is by the apostle put in the last place; yet because in the order of nature it hath indeed the second place in the dispensation of

grace about our salvation, therefore I spoke unto it in the second place: and two things I proposed to handle upon it; 1st, The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus itself; 2dly, The respect that electing love and grace hath to it. To the former of these I have spoken at some length; I shall pass by the other at present, until I have spoken to the third thing, viz. the sanctification of the Spirit, and then I shall jointly handle the respect that electing grace hath to both. I come now to this third thing in the order of nature, though it be the second thing in the order of words; the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience: so it is expressed. And here we have three things to discourse of. 1st, The sanctification itself. 2dly, The sanctification of the Spirit; what is to be understood when sanctification is thus expressed to us, The sanctification of the Spirit. 3dly, The end of this sanctification of the Spirit, it is sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience. It is not sanctification of the Spirit that is got by obedience, but it is sanctification of the Spirit that works obedience. Of these in order.

I. Of sanctification itself. There is a sanctification that is the same with justification, mentioned expressly by the apostle to the Hebrews, 10:10. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all. Sanctification is also an Old Testament phrase, whereby special devotedness to the Lord is expressed. Concerning sanctification, there are three things that I would speak to. 1st, What sanctification is. 2dly, Wherein it agrees with justification. 3dly, Wherein it differs from justification. And then I shall make some application of it for your edification.

1st, What sanctification is. It is a great deal better to feel it than to express it. Sanctification is the same with regeneration; the same with the renovation of the whole man; sanctification is the forming and the framing of the new creature; it is the implanting and engraving the image of Christ upon the poor soul. It is what the apostle breathed after, That Christ might be formed in them, Gal. 4:19. That they might bear the image of the heavenly, 1 Cor. 15:49. Sirs, there are but two men only that all the world is like; and so will

it fare with them, as they are like the one, or like the other: the first Adam, and the second Adam. Every man by nature is like the first Adam, and like the devil: for the devil and the first fallen Adam were just like one another. Ye are of your father the devil, saith our Lord, John 8:44. and he was a murderer from the beginning. All the children of the first Adam are the devil's children, there is no difference here. And all the children of the other sort, are like to Jesus Christ, the second Adam; and when his image shall be perfected in them, then they shall be perfectly happy. As we have also borne the image of the earthly, so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly, 1 Cor. 15:49. Pray observe; We bear the image of the earthly by being born in sin and misery; we bear the image of the earthly by living in sin and misery; we bear the image of the earthly by dying in sin and misery; and we bear the image of the earthly in the rottenness of the grave: and we bear the image of the heavenly Adam when we are sanctified by his Spirit. This image increases in us according to our growth in sanctification: and we perfectly bear the image of the heavenly Adam when we are just like the man Christ, both in soul and body, perfectly happy, and perfectly holy; when we have overcome death by his grace, as he overcame it by his own strength. It will never be known how like believers are to Jesus Christ, till they are risen again: when they shall arise from their graves, like so many little suns shining in glory and brightness; Oh! how like will they then be to Jesus Christ! though his personal transcendent glory will be his property and prerogative to all eternity.

2dly, Wherein are justification and sanctification alike? We find them both in the text; the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus is justification; justification is an effect of the sprinkled blood of Jesus. Sanctification is also spoken of here, Wherein are these alike one to the other? I answer, in many things. 1st, They are like one another as they are the same in their author; it is God that justifieth, and it is God that sanctifies. Rom. 8:33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth. I am the Lord that doth sanctify you, is a common word in the Old Testament. Exod. 31:13,

Lev. 20:8. 2dly, They are alike and the same in their rise, being both of free grace; justification is an act of free grace, and sanctification is the same. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. 3:5. They are both of grace. 3dly, They are alike in that they are both towards the same persons. Never a man is justified but he is also sanctified; and never a man is sanctified but he is also justified; all the elect of God, all the redeemed, have both these blessings passing upon them. 4thly, They are alike as to the time, they are the same in time. It is a hard matter for us to talk or think of time, when we are speaking of the works of God: these saving works of his are always done at the same time; a man is not justified before he is sanctified, though it may be conceived so in order of nature, yet at the same time, the same grace works both. Such were some of you, saith the apostle, 1 Cor. 6:11. but ye re washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. 5thly, They are the same as to the operation of them by the same means, that is, by the word of God: we are justified by the word, sentencing us to eternal life by the promise; and we are also sanctified by the power of the same word. Now ye are clean, saith our Lord, through the word that I have spoken unto you, John 15:3. That he might sanctify and cleanse his church, saith the apostle, with the washing of water by the word, Eph. 5:26. Lastly, They are the same as to their equal necessity to eternal life; I do not say, as to their equal order, but as to their equal necessity; that is, as it is determined that no man who is not justified shall be saved, so it is determined that no man who is not sanctified shall be saved: no unjustified man can be saved, and no unsanctified man can be saved. They are of equal necessity in order to the possessing of eternal life.

3dly, Wherein do justification and sanctification differ? This is a matter of great concernment for people's practice and daily exercise; wherein they differ. They agree in many things, as has just now been declared, but they likewise differ vastly. 1st, Justification is an act of God about the state of a man's person; but sanctification is the work

of God about the nature of a man: and these two are very different, as I shall illustrate by a similitude. Justification is an act of God as a judge about a delinquent, absolving him from a sentence of death; but sanctification is an act of God about us, as a physician, in curing us of a mortal disease. There is a criminal that comes to the bar, and is arraigned for high-treason; the same criminal has a mortal disease, that he may die of, though there was no judge on the bench to pass the sentence of death upon him for his crime. It is an act of grace which absolves the man from the sentence of the law, that he shall not suffer death for his treason; that saves the man's life: but notwithstanding this, unless his disease be cured, he may die quickly after, for all the judge's pardon. Therefore, I say, justification is an act of God as a gracious judge, sanctification is a work of God as a merciful physician; David joins them both together, Psal. 103:3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases. It is promised, That iniquity shall not be your ruin, Ezek. 18:30 in the guilt of it; that is justification: and it shall not be your ruin, in the power of it; there lies sanctification. 2dly, Justification is an act of God's grace upon the account of the righteousness of another, but sanctification is a work of God, infusing a righteousness into us; now there is a great difference between these two: for the one is by imputation, the other by infusion. In justification the sentence of God proceeds this way: the righteousness that Christ wrought out by his life and death, and the obedience that he paid to the law of God, is reckoned to the guilty sinner for his absolution; so that when a sinner comes to stand at God's bar, when the question is asked, Hath not this man broken the law of God? Yes, saith God; yes, saith the conscience of the poor sinner, I have broken it innumerable ways: And doth not the law condemn thee to die for thy transgressions? Yes, saith the man; yes, saith the law of God, the law knows nothing more but this; The soul that sinneth must die. Well then, but is there no hope in this case? Yes, and gospel grace reveals this hope; there is one that took sin on him, and died for our sins, and his righteousness is reckoned for the poor sinner's justification; and thus we are absolved. We are absolved in justification by God's reckoning on our account; on our behalf, and for our advantage, what Christ hath done

and suffered for us; but in sanctification the Spirit of God infuses a holiness into the soul. I do not say, he infuses a righteousness; for I would fain have these words, righteousness and holiness, better distinguished than generally they are. Righteousness and holiness are, in this case, to be kept vastly asunder. All righteousness is without us; our holiness is within us, it is our own; the apostle plainly makes that distinction, Phil. 3:9. Not having mine own righteousness: it is our own, not originally, but our own inherently; not our own so as to be of our own working, but our own because it is indwelling in us. But our righteousness is neither our own originally nor inherently; it is neither wrought out by us, nor doth it dwell in us; but it is wrought out by Jesus Christ, and it eternally dwells in him, and is only to be pleaded by faith, by a poor creature. But our holiness, though it be not our own originally, yet it is our own inherently, it dwells in us: this is the distinction that the apostle makes, Phil. 3:9. That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. 3dly, Justification is perfect, but sanctification is imperfect; and here lies a great difference between them. Justification, I say, is perfect, and admits of no degrees; admits of no decays, admits of no intermission, nor of any intercession: but sanctification admits of all these. When I say justification is perfect, I mean, that every justified man is equally and perfectly justified. The poorest believer that is this day in the world, is justified as much as ever the apostle Paul was: and every true believer is as much justified now, as he will be a thousand years hence. Justification is perfect in all them that are partakers of it, and to all eternity; it admits of no degrees; and the plain reason of it is this—the ground of it is the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, and the entitling us to it is by an act of God the gracious Judge, and that act stands for ever; And if God justifies, who is he that shall condemn? Rom. 8:33. But sanctification is an imperfect, incomplete, changeable thing, One believer is more sanctified than another. I am apt to believe that the apostle Paul was more sanctified the first hour of his conversion, than any man this day in the world. Sanctification differs greatly as to the persons that are partakers of it; and it differs

greatly too as to the same man; for a true believer, a truly sanctified man, may be more holy and sanctified at one time than at another. There is a work required of us, To be perfecting holiness in the fear of God, 2 Cor. 7:1 but we are no where required to be perfecting righteousness in the sight of God; for God hath brought in a perfect righteousness, in which we stand; but we are to take care, and to give diligence to perfect holiness in the fear of God. A saint in glory is more sanctified than ever he was; for he is perfectly so: but he is not more justified than he was; nay, a saint in heaven is not more justified than a believer on earth is: only they know it better, and the glory of that light in which they see it, discovers it more brightly and more clearly to them.

I shall add but two words of advice on this head, of the difference between justification and sanctification. Do not divide them. Do not confound them.

1st, Do not divide and separate them: no man can do so, but in dream and notion. Justification and sanctification God hath joined together, and no man can put them asunder. They are everlastingly united together, and every one that is a partaker of either is a partaker of both. 2dly, Do not confound them. I am persuaded that one of the main causes of the disorder that is in the spirits and the conversation of the most part of Christians, lies in their confounding these two great blessings. They do not give them their proper place; they are not rightly exercised about them in their due sphere; therefore I shall offer a word or two of advice for preventing this confounding of them. When you are seeking justification, let there be no mind of sanctification, I mean as to any merit; but when you are seeking sanctification, have a good mind to justification. To make this matter plain to you; when you are seeking justification, you should have no thought of sanctification; the reason is, because justification is an act of pure grace, that we must betake ourselves to God for, as poor condemned sinners. If men will perplex us with qualifications, pray let it run this way, What is it that qualifies a sinner for justification? it is this only, that he must be a condemned

sinner; God's law must condemn him, and the man must come into God's court with this sentence in his hand, "Lord, justify a poor sinner for Christ's sake; the law hath condemned me, and sentenced me to hell, and thither I must go except gospel grace relieves me in Christ Jesus." When I say that in seeking justification you should have no mind of sanctification, my meaning is only this, that when you come to plead at God's bar for justification, do not dream of bringing your sanctification with you: for it is altogether improper and impertinent at this court. Let men varnish their doctrines which way they will, and cover them what pretences they please, they do but murder souls, who pretend to advise them to bring something with them to God for the grace of justification. Bring thy sins with thee, and bring the curse of the law upon thy conscience, and lay these before the Lord, saying, "Lord, here is an undone sinner, have mercy upon me, for Christ's sake:" there should be nothing else heard there but that. But when you come for sanctification, you have good reason to mind justification, for it flows from it. When you would try your justification, in God's name try it by your sanctification, that is allowed you; the reason is, it is but a trying the tree by its fruit. If the question be, Am I a pardoned, forgiven, accepted sinner in the sight of God, through the righteousness of Christ? if that be the question, try it by your sanctification; for all who are justified by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, are also sanctified by the Spirit of God. Now sanctification being the work of God in us, is far more easily discernible than justification, which is an act of God about us. Justification is the sentence of a judge, but sanctification as you have heard, is a gracious work of God on the heart and soul of a poor sinner, and that may be more easily known: therefore try your justification by your sanctification. In short, they who bring sanctification as a title to their justification, they err the breadth of God's whole heavens: and they who pretend to the blessing of justification, and cannot justify it by the practice of sanctification, do but deceive themselves. If any man, saith the apostle, abideth in him, he ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked, 1 John 2:6. I would only add, it is the Spirit of God alone that can make the word of God, and the truths of it, powerful upon us; it

is he alone that can let us into them, and make us know spiritually and savingly the great blessings of justification and sanctification; our acceptance with God through the righteousness of another, and our being adorned by the Spirit of God with a holiness of his own implanting in us. We must not make our holiness our righteousness, nor our righteousness our holiness; our righteousness belongs to another, and only the benefit of it accrues to us; our holiness is the work of the Spirit in us, and Christ is the root of both. He is the person we are justified by or through, and his Spirit is the root of all holiness in us; and both give us the possession of eternal life: justification, by the sentence of the judge, is the ground, and sanctification is that which makes us meet for it in his time and way.

So much for this first general, of sanctification itself, its agreement with, and its difference from justification.

II. The next thing in the words, that I am now to speak to, is, the sanctification of the Spirit; what is to be understood when sanctification is thus expressed: The sanctification of the Spirit There are three things contained in it that I would speak to. 1st, Sanctification of the Spirit respects the author of it, that is the fairest, fullest, and plainest meaning of the word; sanctifying a sinner is the work of the Spirit of God. 2dly, Sanctification of the Spirit relates to the means of it; it is wrought by the Holy Ghost, by means of the gospel, which is often called the Spirit in the word. 3dly, It may be taken as relating to the seat of it; it is called sanctification of the Spirit, in that is seated and lodged in the inmost part of the man, Called the spirit of the mind, Eph. 4:23. Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind.

1st, Sanctification is here called sanctification of the Spirit, to denote the author of it, the Holy Spirit of God. I told you before, that there were three blessed persons in the Godhead, and one God; and each of them has a distinct part in the work of man's salvation, here expressed in the text. Election is ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, and sanctification to the Holy Ghost. The same is also

expressed by the apostle Paul, God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth, 2 Thess. 2:13. A little concerning this, the operation of the Holy Ghost in the work of sanctification.

1st, Since a divine person hath the work in hand, it must be managed by sovereign grace; God works nothing from hire, or motive from the creature, more than he did the work of creation; no more doth he any thing since. When he raised all things from nothing, nothing moved God to make all things, but only his own will and pleasure: all divine operations must necessarily have their rise from sovereign will and grace: and this is ascribed to the Holy Ghost. All these things worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will, 1 Cor. 12:11. There is the sovereignty of the will and the grace of the Holy Ghost in this great work of sanctification.

2dly, As all divine acts are acts of sovereignty, flowing from his own will and pleasure, so they are always acts of an Almighty power. When we say, that it is the sanctification of the Spirit, and that the Holy Ghost works it, it is plain he works it with an Almighty and irresistible power; nothing but an Almighty power can sanctify a dead sinner; the same power that wrought in raising a dead Saviour, is needful for the raising a dead sinner, Eph. 1:19, 20 and hence it is that the power of the Holy Ghost is so much spoken of in the word.

3dly, This work of sanctification, ascribed to the Holy Ghost, shews that it is always done in infinite wisdom. All divine acts are wrought in wisdom; there is a depth in them all. There is wisdom as to the persons, and wisdom as to the way. There is wisdom as to the persons; all the elect of God, all the redeemed, and none but they, are sanctified. As the Redeemer knew who were given to him, and therefore he laid down his life for them; so the Holy Ghost knows who the Son redeems, and he sanctifies them to his praise. It is always done in great and unsearchable wisdom. No man knows this way of the Spirit; Every one that is born of the Spirit is born that way,

John 3:8.; he cannot tell how the work is wrought, and yet it is wrought, because an Almighty arm is at the working of it.

4thly, This work having so great a worker, doubtless hath a great effect. If I may so say, election has not so great an immediate effect; for there are a great many elected, who are a long while before they are called; the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, and the virtue of his redemption, doth not reach its effect so quickly, because there are a great many whom Christ died for that are a long while before they come to him, and receive the power of his grace. But the operation of the Holy Ghost in sanctifying us, hath a sensible and an immediate effect. There is always something in it that may be presently, sensibly, and undeniably known. I do not say it is always so; but there is nothing spoken of in the word, as a more sensible thing than is the work of the Holy Ghost. It is expressed to us by all those words by which the greatest changes that ever were wrought are expressed. It is expressed by creation, 2 Cor. 4:6. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts. Was there ever so great a change in this world as creation? When nothing became all things, that was the greatest change imaginable; a change from nothing into being; this is the greatest change that can possibly enter into the mind of a man. It is expressed by the change from death to life, at the resurrection. And is not that a great change; when the body that hath lain in the rottenness of the grave for so many ages, shall be raised up a glorious temple to the Holy Ghost? It is also expressed by opening the eyes of the blind. You read in the gospel, John 9 of one who was born blind, whose eyes Christ opened: now let any of you enter into a serious consideration of the marvellous change that this man found; doubtless he had heard of the sun, and the moon, and the stars; and some dark notion he might have of them; but he could have no imagination at all of light and colours, he could form no proper idea of them: but now, when our Lord had opened his eyes, and he looked up to heaven and saw the glory of that creature the sun, which he never saw before; when he looked about him, and saw a world filled with fine things that he never saw before, doubtless he found a wonderful change; and it is a great

wonder, if he came to himself in a long time after. So this change that is wrought by the Spirit in regeneration, is just like the opening of the eyes of a man born blind: he had heard tell of Jesus Christ, and the new world of grace, but he never saw it before, till the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ came, and then the eyes of his understanding were opened. May the Lord so enlighten and enliven us by his Spirit! Amen.

SERMON VII

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. -
1 PETER 1:2

THROUGH sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, is the clause I am now upon. I was speaking in my last discourse of this third Work of the third person in the Godhead, in the salvation of a sinner. Election is ascribed to the Father, redemption by blood to the Son, and sanctification unto the Holy Ghost. Of this sanctification of the Spirit, that is the work of the third person in the Godhead about our salvation, I proposed to speak three things. 1st, Of sanctification itself. 2dly, That it is called sanctification of the Spirit, 3dly, That this sanctification is said in the text to be unto obedience. Of the first of these I have spoken all that I intended; both of the nature of sanctification itself, together with its agreement with the blessings of justification, and its difference therefrom. I began also to speak unto the second particular—that sanctification is here said to be of the Spirit. I mentioned three things, as contained in this, though indeed

it is the first of them that is principally meant;—that this sanctification of the Spirit is chiefly to be understood with respect to its author, the Holy Ghost: and what that implied I then spoke to.

2dly, I am now to take notice of this word, The sanctification of the Spirit, as it denotes the means whereby this work is wrought; and the rather is this to be taken notice of, because the word Spirit is frequently ascribed to the gospel; more especially this expression is frequently used by the apostle: in 2 Cor. 3:6. The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life; and again, ver. 8. How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? and again, ver. 17. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and again, in the last verse, We are changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord: This great work of sanctification is managed by the word of God; now, What word is it that God makes use of to sanctify a man? It is by the word of the gospel; for that is specially called the Spirit: and here is a point that lies remote from the knowledge and observation of the greatest part. They think, and it is a very natural thought, that the law is the mean of sanctification; that the law commanding is the mean of it. I would therefore shew, that it is not, but that the gospel is so; Now this thought, that the law is the mean of sanctification, is greatly fortified by these two considerations: 1st, The law is the measure and rule of holiness; that at past question. When the enquiry is, What is holiness? What is pleasing to God? There is no answer can be given but this, "That which is according to his will; the law is the certain sure rule of all holiness." 2dly, The law commands holiness, and that in the most forcible manner, by the greatest promises, and by the greatest threatenings. Fear and hope are the great engines that set all mankind at work; there would be no stirring in this world if it were not for fear and hope. All men's natural, civil, and moral actions, are moved this way; they flee from that which they apprehend to be hurtful, out of fear; and they pursue what they apprehend to be good, out of hope. Now the law is the sure rule of duty, and the law is the forcible commander of it; and therefore it is that men are so apt to think that the law is the mean of

sanctification; every natural man thinks he may be made holy by the law.

I would therefore prove this matter both negatively and positively. 1st, That the law is not the mean of sanctification. 2dly, That the gospel is so. That the law is not the mean of sanctification, I would prove by two things. It was never designed so to be; and it, never effected it. It was never designed to be so by the Law-giver, and it was never found to be so by the law-receiver: and when these two are plainly seen and proved, the negative part will be sufficiently confirmed—that the law is not the mean of sanctification. 1st, It was never made to be so; that is, the great and wise Law-giver never gave his law to be the mean of sanctification: you may think strange of this, but I will give you three instances of it, which will abundantly confirm it. 1st, When the law was first made, and given to, innocent Adam, it was not given as a mean of sanctification at all. When God gave the law to the first Adam, it was never given to make the man holy; for he was made holy before the law was given him; he came holy, pure, and perfect from the hand of God; the law was only given to be the rule of his conversation in that holy state, and the way of his continuance therein. Adam could not make himself holy by the law; sinless Adam could not; he was made holy before the law was given, and was to continue himself holy and happy by his obedience to the law. Oh that this were duly considered! that when God gave the law to the first man, it was not given to make him holy; for he was made holy before. 2dly, The law was given in a great copy of it, at Mount Sinai, to sinful Israel, to a sinful people that had been carried away with the abominations of the Egyptians; and, except their retaining circumcision, the sign of God's covenant with their fathers, we find but little that there was left amongst them: they were greatly corrupted before God gave them the law. What a great work was there about purifying them? Now when God gave the law at Mount Sinai, it was not given to make the people holy; pray take heed to this: it was never given to make an unholy man to be holy. Wherefore then, saith the apostle, serveth the law? it was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come, and was ordained by

angels in the hand of a Mediator, Gal. 3:19. The law was given at Mount Sinai, to convince the people of their sinfulness, that they might have recourse to their gospel, and their gospel was their sacrifices, which were typical of our Lord Jesus Christ. 3dly, The law is written in the word of God, and is daily to be preached by his servants whom he sends, but never that it may make people holy; rather to make them see their vileness, to make them see their uncleanness, and the desperate wickedness that was in them till gospel-grace cures them. This is the first thing—the law was never designed by God to make men holy.

2dly, It never did so, and it never can do so. I know I am now teaching a doctrine that a great many do not understand, and will not like because they do not understand. I will tell you what the law of God can do separately from the gospel; I am sure much hurt it will do to them that betake themselves to it as a mean of sanctification. We find several things concerning the law, separate from the gospel, in the word. 1st, It discovers sin; I say the law discovers sin; Now, saith the apostle, Rom. 3:20 it is evident, that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Why, how comes this to be so evident to you, Paul? it is not evident to a great many people: For by the law, saith he, is the knowledge of sin. Now can ever any man be justified by that which in its native light tends to discover his vileness? These things saith the law, to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and that all the world, may become guilty before God; therefore, by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. The apostle was a man like a great many in our days, for the righteousness of the law, as long as he was a Pharisee, and confident of speeding that way; but when the law came to deal with him in the spirituality of it, he tells us what he felt; I had not known sin, saith he, but by the law, for I had not known lust, unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet, Rom. 7:7. There can be none of you so ignorant to think, but that the apostle Paul, when he was a Jew and a Pharisee, understood very well the tenth commandment, Thou shalt not covet; he read it, remembered it, and understood it perfectly, as a

Pharisee; but when the spirituality of the law of God was discovered to him, shewing him, that the least inordinate rising of his heart towards that which was evil was forbidden therein, then the man was slain, his confidence was broken: he did not know sin till this came. Alas! Sirs, many do nothing but sin, and yet they do not know what sin is; if I may so say, they know nothing but sinning, yet they do not know what sin is. The discovery of sin is made by the brightness and the power of the law of God, when the spirituality of the law is discovered. 2dly, The law aggravates sin, it multiplies it, it increases it; The law entered, that the offence might abound, Rom. 5:20. Pray observe; the apostle is telling us, in the preceding verse, that one man's offence abounded to the condemning the whole world. Had not the offence abounded sufficiently then? Nay, saith the apostle, the law entered that sin might abound: that men might know and understand, how great their provocations were, what a holy God they had offended, what a righteous law they had broken, and thereby come to see the evil of sin to be a great deal bigger than ever they apprehended it to be before. And assure yourselves, Sirs, that unless the law of God be known unto you as the cause, of the abounding of sin, as the cause of its growing bigger and greater in your eyes, you never yet knew the law of God rightly. 3dly, God's law doth irritate and provoke sin; not only doth it make the sin that a man committed to be greater than he apprehended it to be before, but really it makes the man sin the more. The bare law of God—pray take heed to what I say—the bare law of God, without gospel grace applied to the heart of a sinner, to one that is a stranger to gospel grace, it will make his provocations more bitter and more grievous than ever they were before. So the apostle speaks, Rom. 7:11 Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. What occasion could sin take by the commandment? Pray mind; How could sin take occasion by the commandment? the commandment forbid sin, and the commandment threatened sin; what occasion then could sin take by the commandment? Just such an occasion as the building of a wall against a running river would be to its overflowing its banks; if any man does foolishly imagine to stop the course of a river by fencing against it with a wall, it will quickly rise higher and higher,

and bound higher, and overtop that wall, and run more furiously than ever. Just so it is with a great many poor sinners; their consciences convince them of sin, and they are disquieted with the thoughts of it, and this and that and the other they will do, and this and that and the other sin they will forbear; they will set God's commands, and God's threatenings, in the way of their sins, and then they think surely they shall be sanctified: a vain dream! sin is stronger than the law, be you persuaded of it; I mean, sin is stronger this way, than to be bounded and stopped by the law of God: sanctification belongs only to the Spirit. 4thly, Law obedience doth increase the pride and stubbornness of the heart against God, which is the root of all sin. Pray take heed to what I say; I am not now speaking of a man's obeying the law in point of justification; that casts a reflection on the blood of Jesus Christ; but I am speaking of that obedience, which a man strives to pay unto the law, in order to his sanctification; and whosoever labours to obey the law, without a due regard to the sanctifying influences of the grace of God, this man's pride will grow greater hereby, and his rebellion against God be acted the more. A poor sinner is never truly humbled till he knows that he deserves nothing which is good, and till he knows that he can do nothing that is good, and then he is broken indeed: he can deserve nothing that is good, and therefore must be beholden only to the good that, is wrought out for him by another: he can do nothing that is good, and therefore must be beholden to grace to work that in him which he was never able to get. So much for this first thing—that the law is not the mean of sanctification: it is the rule of holy walking, but not the mean of it: for unless the Spirit of Christ works upon the heart, no man can be holy.

2dly, I am to prove that sanctification is by the Spirit, that it is wrought in the heart only by the grace of the gospel. 1st, This only changeth the tree, this only changeth the man. The law deals with a man as it finds him, and leaves him as it finds him; it finds him a sinner, and leaves him a sinner; it finds him condemned, and it leaves him condemned; it finds him corrupted, and it leaves him corrupted; it finds him in his grave, and it leaves him there. The law

finds a man in the grave, bound hand and foot, and commands him to do what it knows he cannot do; but gospel grace changes the man, and changes the tree. This is old doctrine, that a great many of our new preachers, and new Christians, know nothing of. O generation of vipers! how can ye, being evil, speak good things? Matth.12:34. This world will still run upon this, that a bad man may grow good by doing good things: our Lord tells us just the contrary, a man must first be good, before he can do any good thing. Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit Corrupt; for the tree is known by his fruit, Matth. 12:33, Luke 6:43 as our Lord at large and plainly teaches. Gospel grace is the only mean of sanctification; for it alone changes a man, renews and quickens him. This is the commendation of it, in that place. I now named, 2 Cor. 3:6. The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. The Spirit, that is, the gospel, giveth life; namely, when the Holy Ghost concurrereth with it: for there if is spoken with respect to his concurring influence, 2dly, Gospel grace takes away the sting from the law, and so makes it lovely to the soul. The sting of the law is the curse of it, there is nothing else in the law that is displeasing to a man that hath any thing of the grace of God in him; now the curse of the law is a dreadful thing; but gospel grace takes away the sting and the curse, and then it becomes lovely and amiable to the believer. The law is a holy rule of practice, that is true; but the law that commandeth holy practice on the penalty of eternal death, that is removed to the believer, and thereupon holy practice begins to be amiable. 3dly, The law by gospel grace is written upon the heart, and so the practice of it becomes lovely and amiable, according to God's covenant; Heb. 8:10. I will put my law into their minds, and write it upon their hearts: as if the Lord should have said, "I formerly wrote my law on tables of stone, I proclaimed it in fire and thunder upon earth, but that did not do the business; now in these latter days I will write my law in their hearts:" and for God to write the law in the heart, is nothing but for God to make the law lovely to the heart, that the heart may be framed to a holy liking and loving of the law of God. 4thly, Gospel grace only, renders God lovely to the soul; now to have God to be lovely to us, is the spring of all holiness. You know how our Lord sums up the whole

law, in this, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment, Mark 12:31. Love, saith the apostle, is the fulfilling of the law, Rom. 13:10. Pray take heed to this point; I am speaking of gospel grace as sanctifying a man, because it is that only which represents God as lovely to the soul. And truly, till the love of God be planted in the heart, it is impossible that a man can be holy: for whatsoever obedience is paid to God and his will, if not from love, is but provocation. Now the love of God cannot be planted in the heart, but by a discovery of the loveliness of God; and it is impossible that a man can love God, until he knows God to be love. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, saith the apostle, because God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, 1 John 4:9, 10. Here is the way to make an end of sin; Christ being the propitiation for our sins, is the ground of justification; and a discovery of God's sending Christ to be a propitiation for our sins, is the motive of our sanctification. No man obeys God out of love, but that man who knows and believes the love that God hath towards him. We have known and believed the love that God hath to us: God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him, 1 John 4:16. What I have said is to point out these two things: 1st, All that are savingly won to Christ Jesus, they are won by arguments of love. Sirs, whatsoever use the Lord makes of the law, (and a great deal of good use he makes of it) the Lord never converted a man by the law, nor ever will. Many are awakened by the law, and terrified by the law, but the law of God can do nothing else; it can never make a man a believer; it may awaken a secure sinner, and make the smoke of hell to arise in his throat, but it can never make a man a believer on Christ Jesus; it is impossible to make him such, till the amiableness of the Saviour be discovered to him in the glass of the gospel. 2dly, As Christians are first made Christians by the arguments, of love, so all their obedience and holiness flows from the same spring. All that obedience and holiness which is right and acceptable in the sight of God, is from the same arguments of love.

Christ craves it on this account, and they pay it on this account; and if their obedience and holiness be not thus paid, it is never accepted. What the apostle saith in another case, about giving alms, God loveth a cheerful giver, I may say, the Lord loveth a cheerful doer: all holy obedience is to be performed by the strength of arguments drawn from love. Therefore now, whilst I am on this head, let me lead you a little to the searching of your own spirits, that you may see what spirit you are under, and what spirit you are led by. There are a great many arguments to duty in the gospel, and a great many in the law; and according as they have force and power upon you, so are you to judge of your spiritual frame.

I would speak a little more distinctly about the law's arguments to holiness, what they are, and what they do: the arguments that the law gives for obedience to God, they principally arise from these three heads. 1st, The greatness and majesty of a commanding God: the glory of God shined forth at the giving of the law, and whensoever the Lord sets home the same law upon the conscience of a man, there is also a discovery of the glory of the Law-giver. 2dly, The equity and righteousness of his will is another argument: if this be the will of God, it must be just righteous, and equal; and this is a strong argument for obedience. 3dly, The danger of sinning, and the wrath that is due to every transgressor; this is another of the law's arguments: but what can all these do, let them be exerted to their utmost force? The glory of God as the speaker, the equity of what he speaks, and the danger of disobeying him; all that these arguments can do upon a sinner stands in these three things, that a great many people's religion all their days lies in them; a hating sin as hurtful to us; a loving holiness as profitable to us, and some weak, pitiful essays to shun the one and to do the other: and thus a great many are hammered by the law all their days, and they do just nothing at all. They sometimes see the glory of God, and their consciences subscribe to the equity of his will, and they are afraid of wrath to come; but knowing nothing but law-light, and law-relief, (and truly that is nothing at all) they do just nothing at all to any purpose. But the arguments of the gospel to holiness, are quite of another nature.

1st, They are arguments to holiness from privileges: pray consider this; the grand arguments of the New Testament still run this way; arguing with men to the practice of holiness from their privileges; from the great things God hath done for them, and from the great things that he hath promised to them. The apostle gives us a large account of this in the xiith chapter of the Hebrews, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Well, and what arguments hath he for this? "For ye are not come to Mount Sinai," to that terrible word of the law, of which he speaks there at great length, but ye are come, saith he, to Mount Sion, to the blood of sprinkling, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant. 2dly, Gospel arguments have this in them, they are ordained for this end, and they reach it; both the master and the work is love, and therefore the work is done, and the master obeyed. Every natural man, that is under the law, thinks with himself that the way to please God is to do his will; but the believer under the gospel doth God's will, because he knows that God is pleased with him; he doth those things that are pleasing in the sight of God, from the faith of his person's being accepted with God. Sin shall not have dominion over you, saith the apostle, Rom. 6:14. Why so? for ye are not under the law, but under grace. There are two things that I would have you think on with respect to this, in trying your spirits about this; how you relish Christ's arguments, and whether you are led by law arguments, or by gospel ones. 1st, What is it you would be at, in order to your progress in sanctification, and all holy obedience towards God? There is one thing I would take notice of, and I do it the rather because I believe it is some people's snare; some persons imagine with themselves, and their imaginations sometimes come the length of their prayers, and they are foolish and wicked ones; "Oh that God would discover the greatness of his glory, and the greatness of his wrath to me!" that he would open hell to them, and let them see it and fear; and then they think they should be a great deal more holy than they are. There is an evil spirit working in the design of this: we may not only give Christ's answer to his disciples to it, Ye ask ye know not what, Mark 10:38.; but we may say, the very asking it is from an evil spirit. Is it not far more

desirable, and should you not know that it would be far more profitable to you, if the Lord would reveal more of his love and kindness to you? that would quickly carry on the work of sanctification with greater ease and speed than all those other things that you would so fain be at. 2dly, What things are there in the ministry of the word that relish best with your spirits? Clear discoveries of the anger of God against sin, and the desert of sin at the hand of God, these are useful things, and there is a measure of knowledge and sense of them that no man should be against: But are these all that you relish in the word of God? Have you never found any desires after greater manifestations of the love of God, that you may know Jesus Christ better? Sirs, though there be a wonderful variety in the Lord's way of dealing with his people, so that no one man's experience is to be made a measure or a rule for every one, yet I dare be bold to say, that in this matter the greatest part of Christians that are now alive in the world, will put their seal to this; they who have had experience of both; who have had their hearts pressed with the terror of God, and with the arguments of the Law, and also have had their hearts melted with the love of Christ and with the arguments of the gospel, I am very confident that all of them will be able to witness to this, that these latter did promote sanctification and conformity to the image of Christ a deal more than the former. How many poor believers have there been, that have for a long time struggled with their stubborn corruption, that have hedged it in by the law, and the curses of it, with all manner of watchfulness, and yet but little efficacy hath been found in all; but when in a time of love the Lord hath drawn near to their souls, and hath sent in a warm beam of love, how greatly have they triumphed over that which they found to be a great deal too strong for them before!—So much for this second head, about sanctification of the Spirit, as it denotes the means of sanctification. Never wonder, Sirs, that there is so little holiness in the world, and so little holiness among professors; the reason is, they do not know whence it comes: the gospel, as the great mean of sanctification, they do not know, and because they do not use this mean, they go away without the blessing.

3dly, This phrase of the sanctification of the Spirit may be taken as it points forth the seat of this sanctification—as it points forth where true sanctification is lodged; in the spirit, in the heart, in the inward man; Be ye renewed, saith the apostle, in the spirit of your mind, Eph. 4:23. The mind is the common expression of the understanding part of the soul, which is a more refined faculty than that which we call the heart; whereby we fear, love, desire, or hate. Here the apostle calls it the spirit of the mind; had he only called it the spirit of the body, we know that the soul is the spirit of the body; "but, the apostle would say, it lies deeper than this, it is in the spirit of your minds, in the very soul of your souls; it is the renovation of the Holy Ghost, and lies very deep in the soul; not only in the heart and mind, but in the spirit of the mind." But I pass this; and finish the second general head, Why it is called the sanctification of the Spirit:—to denote the author of it, and the means by which it is wrought, and the seat of it in the soul. I am now come to

The 3d and last thing about this sanctification, and that is the end of it, to obedience; it is the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience. Obedience is here plainly said to be the end of this sanctification of Spirit, or the fruit of it; pray take heed to this; for here is another way that men pervert the ordinances of God: my text tells you, that all holy obedience paid by men to God, is the fruit of the sanctification of the Spirit; but the ungodly, unbelieving world take the matter quite otherwise, and understand it thus, that obedience is the way to come by this sanctification of the Spirit; whereas the word tells us plainly, that this sanctification of the Spirit is the way whereby we come to obedience: it is the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience. Never was there any piece of acceptable obedience paid to God, unless it flowed from the sanctification of the Spirit. A little unto this, and I shall apply the whole. 1st, Of this obedience more generally: And then, 2dly, I shall speak more particularly about it.

1st, For obedience more generally, take this brief and plain account of it. When God had made man upright, and created him perfectly holy in that happy state, he demanded obedience of him, and had

that obedience paid cheerfully till sin came in; and upon man's sinning, the world broke out altogether in rebellion against God. The first Adam, upon his sinning, turned a rebel against God, and tainted all his children with his guilt and an inclination to this wickedness; and therefore it is said, We are children of disobedience, Eph. 2:2. And children of disobedience are a strange sort of children; children that have disobedience to be their father, that are born of disobedience, that have their original from disobedience. When it is said, we are children of disobedience, the meaning is, that we are the offspring of disobedient parents, and that they conveyed to us a disobedient nature. The first Adam sinned, and by one man's disobedience, many, (nay all) were made sinners, Rom. 5:19. And this is the state that the world lives in, and that most of them die in. God and they are at variance.; what he is for, they are against, and what he is against, they are for; and a little time is spent, the short time of man's life in this world is spent in this quarrel; men sin against God, and God witnesseth against them for their sinning: and God hath a great many ways of witnessing against them. He witnesseth against this disobedience in them that have no more but the light of nature: see what the apostle saith to the barbarous Lycaonians, that counted Paul a God, and Barnabas another God; Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. You will think now that this was but a poor witness; the apostle reckons God's common providence in ordering the seasons of the year, and in making the earth fruitful and able to yield bread to mankind, as a witness for God, that people should know their duty to their great maker. God gives a farther witness by his word, to them that have it, against these rebels. He adds a farther witness by his Spirit striving with them. And farther yet he adds another witness, by his providences, in striving with them. How many poor sinners are there who live this way? God and they are at enmity, they hate God, and God hates them, and strives against them by his word, and sometimes by checks in their consciences, and many times by checks in his providences; and all to bring them over to obedience to his will; but they continue rebels still till death

destroys them. They strive with God till God gets the mastery, as he always will, over them who strive with him; for woe be to them who strive with their Maker: and this is the issue of the controversy one way. But there are a few that saving grace comes in upon, and lays hold of, and changes their hearts, and brings them over to be loyal and obedient subjects and servants to God, and to Jesus Christ: and thus it is that there is any difference made between the herd of the perishing world and those few that are saved.

Secondly, and more particularly, The obedience that the sanctification of the Spirit is directed to, may be comprehended under these three heads: 1st, There is the obedience that is given to a promising God, and this respects privileges; for all promises are of privileges. Now the obedience that is to be paid to a promising God is plainly the obedience of faith, which the apostle speaks of, Rom. 16:26. God hath made known the gospel to all nations, for the obedience of faith. Whensoever God promises, there is a debt laid upon men by his promising, to believe that he is true who speaks; and by virtue of the greatness of the truth of the speaker, there should be a great expectation of the good things that are promised. And herein lies the life of faith that Christians are called to. What think you is the life of faith? it is nothing at all but this, a life of looking for all those good things that God hath spoken. It is a life of expecting the great blessings which God hath promised; this is the obedience that is due to a promising God, the obedience of faith. 2dly, This obedience relates to the commands of God, to a God craving duty, worship, and service from us. These are called for, and every Christian is inclined to yield them. Be not conformed to the world, saith the apostle, Rom. 12:2. but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. And they are strangers to the sanctification of the Spirit, who do not find this obedience working in them: for wheresoever this sanctification is, this obedience will be in greater or lesser measures; according to the measure of the one, such will be the measure of the other. 3dly, There is also obedience due to an afflicting, trying God: and these are the three grand appearances

of God to us; a God promising good to us; a God commanding service from us; and a God inflicting trials on us, as he sees good: and this is the obedience which all believers owe to God, that when he smites them, and tries them, when he delays blessings, and threatens bad things to them, it is their duty to bear his hand quietly, and to glorify him by a quiet submission to his will. And whosoever they are that have in some measure reached to these three, they have that obedience which God calls for, and they have that sanctification of the Spirit, which is the cause and spring thereof.

APPLICATION. I would now make some application of this truth; and that I would speak to you about, shall be a word of trial. You have heard of the sanctification of the Spirit to obedience; pray try yourselves whether this be in you or not. You have heard it spoken of as a great part of our salvation. There are only two arguments by which I would enforce this searching upon you: 1st, This sanctification of the Spirit is equally needful to salvation with any of the former. It is absurd to think, that a man shall be saved who is not elected according to the foreknowledge of God the Father; that would be as much as to think that a man might come to heaven without God's knowledge, and that would be a strange thing indeed. It is an absurd thing to think, that a man shall be saved who is not sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. What! shall a man be saved that gets no good at all of the Saviour? that would be a strange thing: even so it is equally true in this case; no man can be saved who is not sanctified by the Holy Ghost. The apostle names salvation as if it was from this thing only, Tit. 3:5. He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. So that an enquiry after sanctification is of as great concern as your eternal salvation. 2dly, As it is needful as the former, so it is more evident than any of the former. Election is a purpose in the heart of God, that is utterly unknowable but by its fruit: the redemption of Jesus Christ is an act passing between the Father and the Son, and is not to be known by us, but by the effects of it: but sanctification is a work passing on us, and therefore may be far more easily known than the former; nay, it may be so far the more easily known, that it is the great mark to

know the former by. when you would enquire after your interest in the redemption of Jesus, it is sanctification that is the fruit of it. When you would inquire about your interest in justification, it is sanctification that is a fruit and a plain mark of it. I would name a mark or two of this.

1st, Would you know whether you have partaken of the sanctification of the Spirit, try it this way: Hath the word of Christ in the gospel had any dealings with your hearts to change and renew you? This is the question; hath the Spirit, by the gospel, been dealing with your hearts to change and renew you? The sanctification of the Spirit is a work in and on a man; redemption is a work of Christ about a man; election is a purpose of God concerning a man; but sanctification is a work of the Spirit of God in a man. Now, hath the Spirit been at work upon you this Way? There are many who have a feeling of some workings of the Spirit in a way of conviction, in some fears of hell, and in some desires after heaven; but hath the Spirit of Christ, by the power of the gospel, been at work to change your hearts, to make them new, to turn you quite about, so that you savour all things far otherwise than you did before? Do you think it, my brethren, to be possible that a man can live in a profession of godliness, and be really under the sanctification of the Spirit, and know nothing about it? I do not believe it, say it who will. I know many are under the sanctification of the Spirit, that yet have not confidence to own it, and to say that it is a true and thorough work; but that there is something felt wherever the Spirit of God works on the heart, is undeniable.

2dly, The great mark is that which you have in the text, unto obedience: Are you all obedience? A sanctified man is all obedience. I do not mean that he obeys in all things as he would, but he would obey in all things. He was a sanctified man, and sanctified by the Spirit to obedience, who said, With my mind I serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin, Rom. 7:25. He had rebelling corruption remaining within him, and he had grace within him striving against it. There are many people who find it to be so with

them; they have light and darkness, corruption and grace within them, "How shall I know if mine be of the right sort?" There is one thing I would tell you, If, when you come far short of what you would beat, you are ashamed of it, and afraid of it, and are best pleased at heart when your obedience is greatest, and are most sorry when your disobedience is greatest, and when sin prevails, this is a mark that never fails: for an honest-hearted Christian, when sin is lowest, his heart is highest in joy. When grace is lowest, the man is lowest in his frame; he is rejoiced when he can get his enemies under his feet, and is ashamed when he is under theirs. When sin prevails, the man is abased, when grace prevails over sin, the man rejoices therein. The very name of this text may serve as a mark to help you in trying yourselves; it is sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience. There are three miserable sorts of persons, the Lord grant there may be none of them found amongst you! and then you will be a happy company indeed; and every one of these are worse than another.

1st, A great many hearers of the gospel live all their days contented strangers to the sanctification of the Spirit; they do not know what it is, and they do not care to know. These are miserable persons indeed, who can hear, learn, talk, think, and get increase of light, and knowledge, and gifts, but the sanctification of the Spirit is that which they can be without in their religion. The Lord save you from their religion who are contented strangers to the sanctification of the Spirit to obedience! they are a miserable people indeed, especially if they live under the preaching of the gospel. But there is a worse sort than these.

2dly, Who not only are strangers to it themselves, but are also mockers of it in others. They have no acquaintance with, no experience of the sanctification of the Spirit, and if any body do but pretend to it, he only makes himself a laughing-stock to them. So saith the apostle, Gal. 4:29. As then he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Pray now, what great persecution was this? The apostle is there speaking of Ishmael and Isaac; Ishmael mocked Isaac; Ishmael was thirteen

years old when Isaac was born, and he mocked Isaac, the heir of the promise; saith the apostle, Even so is it now; every man that is born after the flesh, and hath not the Spirit of Jesus dwelling in him, will always mock them that are born after the Spirit; them who place their righteousness in Christ only, and their sanctification in the efficacy of his Spirit upon them. Even so is it now, saith the apostle, in his time; and that was above sixteen hundred years ago; and we may say, "Even so it is now;" and if the world should last sixteen hundred years longer, it would be still the same. They who are born after the flesh, will mock them who are born after the Spirit; and so it will be to the end of the world. This is a strange thing; I have many times thought it to be a strange thing, that there should be such wickedness in the world, as to mock at godliness; but I would fain have people forbear to mock at godliness till they feel it, and when they feel it, let them mock at it, I will not say in God's name, but in the devil's name. It is utterly impossible, that true godliness can season the heart of a man, but there will be an awful regard to it, in the man's respect to all the appearances of it in others; but they who do not know what it is, will mock at them who have it.

3dly, Can there be any worse than these, who have not the sanctification of the Spirit in them, and that mock at it in others? Yes, there is a worse sort than these, (though indeed they commonly belong all to one person) and these are such as resist the sanctification of the Spirit in themselves. When the Holy Ghost comes near to them by his word, and by his motions upon the heart, they rise up in rebellion against the same. Stephen knew his hearers very well, and spake sharply and dreadfully to them, Acts 7:51. Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. The blessed man was then full of the Holy Ghost, and he was pleading Christ's cause before that wicked company, and they themselves saw some singular appearance of God in him; it is said, they that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel, Acts 6:15. Stephen knew that the Holy Ghost was in him, animating him, and working in him, and drawing forth these words

from him; and he knew by their behaviour that they resisted the Holy Ghost, and he charges them with it. Take heed to yourselves, Sirs, the greatest sins are quietly and quickly done; that knot which may tie you to everlasting destruction, may be knit by an evil thought under this gospel. If the Spirit of God comes near to you at any time, and persuades you that there must be a work of sanctification passing upon you, and you rebel against the same, you do resist the Holy Ghost, and will be found amongst the worst of sinners. Be you persuaded of this,—whether you will believe it or not,—the gospel brings all the hearers of it, whether they will or not, to the brink of eternal salvation, or to the brink of eternal damnation: and so it will fare with you to eternity, according to your present entertainment of Christ's calls. People do not know how near they may be to heaven, or how near they may be to hell. When Christ is at the door, give him but a hearty welcome, and salvation is secured; give him but a silent, trifling refusal, and God knows but it may be the utter undoing of thy soul. The greatest mercies are secured, on our part, by a very small, silent act of the mind; and the greatest judgment is also inflicted and incurred by a very small act of the mind. It seems to be no very great matter, when a poor sinner is reading, thinking, and hearing of Jesus Christ in the gospel; it seems to be no great matter, when their hearts begin to grow warm within them, and this Saviour and his salvation appears to be lovely to him, and the poor creature resolves to venture his all on the Son of God; there seems to be no great matter in this; it is quietly and silently done: and yet this may be the subscribing of the everlasting marriage-covenant between Christ and the soul. So, on the other side, a poor sinner under the gospel, is calm in making slight of all that he hears, he only stands remote and aloof from all; you would think there is no great matter here: only they do not mind, only they do not think; Is there any great fault here? Alas! the poor creature is hereby ripening his condemnation more than you can imagine. Sirs, take heed to yourselves; a poor creature may run faster to hell in an hour spent in hearing a gospel-sermon, than in a whole week's profane walking. A person may make a greater leap to the pit by a silent rejecting of the offer of the gospel, than by all his law-

transgressions.—So much for the third thing in the text, the sanctification of the Spirit to obedience.

It would follow now to speak of the respect that electing grace hath, in this text, to the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus: for though they are all absolutely necessary in order to salvation, yet there is a becoming order. Election leads the van, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus follows next; and, in the third place, the sanctification of the Spirit; and then, in God's good time, everlasting glory. But I cannot enter on any of these things at present, only a word or two in general. It is, it should be, and it will be the everlasting wonder of our hearts, that God should take so much pains to save sinners; that he thought of them from eternity; that he sent his Son to redeem them by his blood, and that he sends his Spirit to sanctify them by his grace; and that he keeps his hand about them with so much tenderness and care, till he has brought them into his kingdom and glory. If we had faith, we would wonder at it now, but we shall wonder better at it when we come to heaven. When at any time we are awakened and enlightened to see what vile creatures we are, how incredible is it that God should take any pains about us! Why should not God frown such wretches as we are into eternal ruin? It is an easy thing with God to send a sinner to hell; for we all deserve it; but God waits upon us, and strives and labours with us, as if we were worth the having: but, alas! we are worth nothing, only as grace makes as the field from whence the praise and glory of grace shall spring up to eternity. When we come to heaven, if the inhabitants there knew what we had been upon earth, would they not wonder that ever we should come there? But they are all saved by the same grace, all the redeemed offspring of fallen Adam are saved the same way. Will not the angels wonder, that sinners of mankind are saved, and their brethren passed by? that so many of Adam's lost seed should be brought to that upper house above, and the fallen angels are left to eternal ruin? We have nothing to say to this, but Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. The Lord will give no man a reason of his doings; but they are all done in wisdom, and the wisdom of them will appear in his due time.

SERMON VIII

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. -

1 PETER 1:2

WHEN I first entered on the preface to this epistle, contained in these verses, I took it up in three things; 1st, A description of the writer of it, Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ. 2dly, A description of the parties that he writes to, and they are described two ways; as to their outward condition before the world, strangers, and scattered abroad through several countries. Again, they are described as to their state before God, Elect according to his foreknowledge, through sanctification of the Spirit, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. To this I have spoken all that I intend, saving one thing I promised to speak to, and would now remember, and then proceed to the last clause of the verse, Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. I have spoken a little respecting election according to the foreknowledge of God the Father; and also to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, and to the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience. That which now remains for me to speak to, is the respect, interest, and influence, that the first blessing hath on all the rest. This is plainly hinted in the text, that election is unto sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; all the grand blessings of justification by the virtue of Christ's blood, and sanctification by the power of his Spirit, these all flow from election. This now I would say something to; that election is the grand leading benefit to all the rest which flow from it: For whom he did foreknow, he also did

predestinate, and them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified, Rom. 8:29, 30. Effectual calling, justification, and eternal glory, all flow from predestination. I would, therefore, in discoursing on this point, take a sober and wary view of the fountain itself, and then come down to the streams that flow from this fountain; to electing grace, and to what it produces and brings forth.

1st, Then, as to this fountain grace of election, we find concerning it in the word, that is eternal; all other graces we partake of in time; pardon of sin is a time-blessing; sanctification of the Spirit is a time-blessing; glory in heaven is a time-blessing; that is, there was a time when it began, though there be no time when it shall end. It is called Eternal life, Matth. 25:46.; it is eternal life in the duration of it, but it is not eternal life in the rise of it: for we are but of yesterday, and had our natural lives but a little while since; and eternal life, in the strictest sense, we do not possess till our natural life in this world is at an end. Saith the apostle, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, Eph. 1:3, 4. Electing grace is eternal, it had no beginning; and therefore it must have the precedency, and must have its influence upon all time-grace.

2dly, Election-grace is the purest grace, the most pure unmixed grace; there is no pretence of mixture here. A believer in Christ Jesus doth receive grace and peace multiplied to him, and I know that this grace is all free; but, if I may so say, it is not so purely free as electing grace is. That grace which was shown to a number of Adam's offspring in the purpose of God from eternity, if I may so express it, eternally, long before they began to be; certainly that must be pure grace. If we receive mercy from the Lord on our praying, or on our performances, though they deserve nothing at all, yet we are apt to put a bad sense on it, and are apt to think, "This blessing I had because I sought it earnestly;" but in election-grace there can be no

pretence for this: for that was long before we were; long before the foundation of the world, as the apostle expresses it, Eph. 1:4.

3dly, The grace of election is most God-like; take heed to this, the grace of election is, I say, most God-like; it becomes him, and his glory shines most eminently in it. He acts like a God in electing, and so like a God, that there is no pretence of likeness to it amongst any of the actions of creatures; and therefore it is resolved finally into this by the apostle, when he speaks so much of it; Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? Rom. 9:20, 21. God acted like himself, when from eternity he foresaw all the work of his hands, and set apart some to honour, and some to dishonour: there was sovereignty in it; and the more sovereignty in God's acts, the more he acts like himself.

4thly, Election grace is a pregnant one, a large grace, a big-bellied grace, if I may so express it; all things else flow from it, all the grace that we partake of in this world, and in the next, comes from the womb of election: our pardoned state, our renewed pardons day by day, they all flow from the grace of election; election begins, and all the rest follow.

But before I come to speak how they follow, I would take notice of two things that seem contrary to this election. Election is a decree and purpose of God in his own heart, about the eternal salvation of a company of Adam's offspring; this is revealed to us in the word, to be the thought and purpose of God before the world began, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord—according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, Eph. 3:11, 2 Tim. 1:9. Therefore, before I come to speak of the streams flowing from election, I would speak a little to those two grand impediments that seemed to lie in its way.

1st, The first thing that God did, seems to be a grand impediment laid in the way of election. God's creating man, and making the first man and woman perfectly holy, and entering into a covenant with them, on these terms, that upon their own perfect obedience, (for which they were well qualified) they and all their posterity should be perfectly happy. Now who would have thought here, but that all mankind should have been thus happy? there appears nothing like election here. God makes man perfectly holy, and perfectly happy, and enables him so to continue; and he makes a covenant with him securing that happy state, only upon the condition of his perfect obedience: Now, would any man imagine, that when God made these transactions at first with his creatures, that there was any thing like election here; that a company only of this man's posterity should be saved, and a great company of them lost? Election seemed to be clouded by the first creation; nothing like it appeared, and yet it remained firm in the purpose of God; for God never meant to save any one man by the first Adam's standing; no, nor to save the man himself that way. I say, God never meant to save any man in the world by his own perfect obedience. He demanded perfect obedience from the first Adam, and qualified and fitted him for it, and he was able to yield it; but God knew that no man would yield it. And this seems to be one grand objection to election, and obstruction of it,—God creating man in a happy state, with ability to continue in it.

2dly, Another thing, that looks as dark the other way upon election, is. God's permitting all mankind to fall. Creating man was God's work, and permitting man to sin was God's act: for sin could no more have entered into the world but by God's permission, than a creature could have entered into the world but by God's creation. The entrance of sin into the world was permitted by God; Will any be so bold, and so daring as to say, God could not have hindered Adam's sinning if he would? he would be a bold person, indeed, that would say so. God permitted sin to enter into the world, and he permits it to continue in the world; the providence of God about sin is the greatest glory that he gets in the world, though there are but few who have eyes to perceive it. Now the creating all mankind at first, in their

head and root, perfectly holy and happy, seemed to have put a stop to election one way: some would think, "Surely all Adam's posterity shall be saved;" that all his offspring should have been a happy company of saved persons. But when sin came in, all things seemed quite lost; then the natural conclusion ran the other way, "Surely all the world will now be damned: for they are all made sinners." By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin, Rom. 5:12. Therefore the devil might think (as doubtless he did think) I have now undone all mankind; (for I do not think the devil knew any thing of election at that time:) but this was the time wherein electing grace began to appear. Election-grace lay in the heart of God; he never designed to save man by his own obedience, nor did he design that all mankind should be lost by their own disobedience. Now began election to appear.

1st, It appeared in the first promise, that great promise which hath a great deal of gospel in it, the first gospel that we have in the Bible, and therefore we should the more prize it. I will put enmity between thee and the woman; between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel, Gen. 3:15. Sirs, the first birth of a divine purpose is a promise. A purpose is a thought in God's heart, what he means to do; and a promise is a word from God's mouth, assuring what he will do; and his promises are all commensurate to his purposes. The first appearance of election-grace is a promise, a promise of distinction; a promise that pointed forth the provision grace made for fallen sinners, and the blessed issue that it should have.

2dly, Election-grace appeared in the dispensation of grace towards men; for not only doth election appear in what God promiseth, but in what God doth. We find he dispenseth grace to some, and withholds it from others; and always with distinction. It is but a small account we have in the book of Genesis, and that but of a few persons; but there is still a distinction according the election of grace. The first two men that were born into the world, and it is like enough they were born into the world both at a birth; Cain, the first-born, and

Abel his brother; and there, if I may so say, we find the line of election running upon one hand, and passing by upon the other; the elder brother is passed by, and left to be a murderer, and the younger brother is taken, and honoured to be a martyr of God, he is accepted of God, honoured to be a witness for him, and persecuted to death. Election appeared most singularly in Noah; this man was chosen and set apart, though the whole world was drowned; one man and his family was set apart, electing grace passed upon him, and he found grace in the sight of the Lord, and that was grace indeed; the whole world was drowned, and one man and his house only found grace: and not all that house neither. When, after the flood, the world was drowned again in profaneness and idolatry, a little more than four hundred years after the flood, electing grace fell upon Abraham; God chose him and called him: he is called God's chosen in several places of the Old Testament. Abraham had two sons, and there we find the grace of election running one way, and passing by the other way. Isaac had two sons, and there we find the same distinction is made; Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated; the children not being born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, Rom. 9:11, 12, 13. This seems a strange thing, Sirs; Rebecca was near twenty years, she and her husband, crying to God for the blessing of posterity: for the promise lay, as it were, in her loins, and that made her the more earnest; and when she had the blessing of conception, and the children struggled together within her, she said, If it be so, why am I thus? "Whence comes this trouble?" and she went to inquire of the Lord; and the Lord said unto her, two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger, Gen. 25:22, 23. This is expounded by the apostle, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated. And indeed it was a very dark-like dispensation, when the good woman had been so long earnest for the blessing of the womb, and had conceived two children, the Lord tells her, one is an elect person, and the other is not; they lay in the same womb, they were begotten by the same father; they were conceived by the same mother, as the answer to the same

supplication to God; yet "One have I loved, and the other have I hated!" This was an awful hint of a dispensation according to the election of grace. It was, saith the apostle, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, Rom. 9:11. And thus it went through all the Old Testament, till it came to the people of Israel, the nation of the Jews; and they, as a nation and a church, were chosen of God, and the rest of the world passed by; and thus it goes on to this day.

3dly, Another great fruit of election was, the sending of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the fulness of time, into the world. Election-grace sent Christ: This our Lord himself tells us, concerning his own agony, Father, save me from this hour; nevertheless, for this cause came I unto this hour, John 12:27. "I knew that the design of God, in order to the saving of the lost world, was, that I should engage in this hard and bitter work, and I came into the world for this cause;" For this cause, saith he, came I unto this hour.

4thly, From election-grace flows the sending forth of the gospel, after our Lord's ascension, through the whole world. The election of God of old for a long while, lay among the Jews, and a few proselytes that were brought into the church; but when our Lord was risen again, and ascended into heaven, the gospel was sent through the whole world, and election-grace takes place every where. None knew where election-grace lay; it is a vein known only to God; we do not know where it lies; but wherever it lies, God will send forth his labourers to dig for it. When our Lord went to heaven, there were many veins of election scattered through whole nations. If I may so say, the devil was never so busy in sinning, and God and Jesus Christ were never so busy by his grace as they were at that time. The nations had many of the elect among them: indeed, if there be but one penny lost, the candle shall be lighted to search for it; if there be but one sheep lost, the great shepherd will search for it from mountain to mountain, and will bring it home upon his shoulders. But at that time election-grace ran through many parts of the world, and a great many were gathered in. It was our Lord's own words: Lift up your eyes, and look

on the fields., for they are ripe already for the harvest, John 4:35. That was a happy time indeed! It may be, though it is very hard to be sure of it, and none should pretend to be sure of it, but I am apt to think that within thirty years after our Lord ascended to heaven, there were more converted to the faith of Christ than there hath been for some hundreds of years after, at another time. Election-grace was working then, and the vein of it was known to God. It is hopeful, blessed work to preach the gospel where election grace is going forth; where the line of election is laid in the purpose of God, preaching the word will have great effect.

5thly, and lastly. As to the fruit of this electing grace, there is the giving of faith to believe the gospel; the working of faith to believe the gospel, to believe in Christ. The gospel is sent to the elect, in the love of God, and upon them whom he hath a mind to call, in his due time he pours out his Spirit, and works faith in them. To you it is given, saith the apostle, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake, Phil. 1:29. They who had believed through grace, saith the apostle, Acts 18:27. Grace works believing in the word; the grace of election wrought upon their hearts in working faith in them: As many as were ordained to eternal life believed, Acts 13:48. Now when this grace of election is come this length, revealed in his promise, and in his covenant, and in the singular dispensations of it, as he sees good; when he hath sent his Son to ripen it, and to purchase all the fruits of this electing grace; when he hath sent his gospel to reveal all this to us, and at last sent his Spirit to work faith in us; and when all this is done, then the poor creature comes under the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit; which are the words of my text. There are two or three things farther that I would add about this.

1st, This is one of the most awful, and the greatest depth of God towards man; and is not to be searched into too curiously, nor is it to be known particularly, but by its fruits. I say, this election-grace of God is one of the greatest depths of God towards man about his salvation, and is not knowable of itself immediately, but by its fruits.

Can we know what is in the heart of God? can creatures of yesterday know the eternal counsels of God? Unless he declares them, who can know them? and therefore this of election is only to be known by the effects of it. The devil gets great advantage by this over many poor sinners; when they hear of election, as an eternal, immutable purpose in the heart of God, about the salvation of men, the devil tries them this way, Dost thou know that thou art elected? No, saith the man; Then, saith the devil, thou mayest be eternally lost. But the thing itself is utterly unknowable but by the fruits of it. And therefore try it this way, "Election-grace appears in its fruits; am I then under the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus? have I the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience? if I have, then election-grace hath passed on me from eternity:" and this is the only way to know it.

2dly, Election-grace passes over, and passes through a world of mighty impediments; and this is the glory of it, and should be regarded by us. Election-grace passes over, and passes through many great impediments; if I may so say, election never regards what state the elected are in, but will overcome all difficulties. Who would have thought that the once poor wretch Saul was an elect vessel? that mad persecutor of Jesus Christ, when he was keeping the clothes of them who stoned Stephen, as one that would make himself an officer, and encourage rage them in their wicked work of murdering a servant of Jesus Christ; when he was breathing forth slaughter against the disciples of Christ, and thought it not enough to persecute them in Judea, but would even have persecuted them through the whole world? Being exceedingly mad against them, saith he himself, I persecuted them even unto strange cities, Acts 26:11. He hated Jesus Christ so much, that he would have gone from one end of the world to another, to have persecuted him and his followers: but yet he was an elect man; the grace of election ran through all this, and over all this. It pleased God, that separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, Gal. 1:15. The power of election overcame all. There are many of the elect children of God, that have been left to fall far nearer into hell, than many thousands who have fallen eternally into it. Many of the elect of God have been

oftentimes even on the brink of the pit, but the secret cords of electing grace have taken hold of them, that they have not fallen in. Saith our Lord, Matth. 25:24. They shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. The devil shall never have this to boast of, that he ever prevailed against any one of God's elect. He may prevail against many rotten professors, but for an elect person, a true believer on Jesus Christ, a member of Christ's body, the devil shall never be able to twit Christ with this, "Here is one of thine, that I am now master of." Electing grace goes through a world of impediments, and that is the glory of it. Oh how great is the depth both of the knowledge and wisdom of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Known unto God are all his works, even from the beginning; we are surprised, we are amazed, we are stumbled by a great many things that come to pass, but there is nothing new in the world to God; all things are as he hath appointed them, as he hath foreseen them, and as he hath determined them. He hath raised up the stage of this world, and hath suffered sin to enter, and to make such havoc thereon, that the glory of his grace, in saving the remnant according to the election of grace might stand, might shine out, and appear in its glory. The elect of God now lie hid, and, as it were, buried in a state of nature, till grace brings them out; and they are, as it were, buried in a state of grace too, through manifold infirmities, even till they are brought home to glory; and then they shall know what the election of grace is, when it hath ripened its whole work upon all the vessels of mercy that were fore-ordained to glory. We should admire, we should adore, and tremble before this awful sovereign Lord God, that doth with his own as seemeth good unto him. We should, as our Lord did, give thanks, and say, We thank thee, O Father! Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight, Matth. 11:25, 26. We must refer all to this sovereign will and pleasure of God, and leave with him all our own concerns, and all the concerns of his church and people, and conclude that all shall be well ordered, because ordered according to the counsel of his will. I would further say, that this election-grace is knowable, and the knowledge of it is of

wonderful advantage: it is of great use to know that we are elect; and it may be known by the fruits of it, and it is a great blessing to know it. We are commanded to give diligence to make our calling and election sure, 2 Pet. 1:10.; and many of the saints have attained to this knowledge, both as to themselves and others of the people of God. A little Application let me make of this,—That the grace of election is the spring of all that grace which God shews to the children of men.

SERMON IX

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

-1 PETER 1:2

I WAS speaking of election as the leading fountain, as a pregnant grace, as the first grace of God, and all that comes after it flows from it. This I took notice of, both with some glances on the spring, and with some remarks upon the streams that flow from it. I had not time then to enter on any Application; but would now add a few words of Use to what I then said, and so proceed to the last clause of the Verse, Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied; which is the third thing that I observed to you, in this preface of the apostle to this epistle. An apostolical benediction; Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. The Doctrine I am now to apply is this, That the grace of election is the spring of all that grace which God shows to the children of men. The text fairly leads us to this, Elect according to the foreknowledge, &c. If you go to the first rise in resolving this question, you see a great many in the world who have no acquaintance with Jesus Christ; they have no experience of the virtue

of his blood: it never came upon them, and they never cared for it. But there are others who are sprinkled thereby, and who prize it above all things: Whence comes this difference? The one are elected to it, and the other not. So it is also as to the sanctification of the Spirit, some are sanctified by it, and a great many are not. The first rise of this difference is, they who are sanctified are elected to it, the others are not.

Use 1. The first thing in the Application of it is this, Behold here the grace of God! behold it! look rightly upon it. If a man takes up the grace of God from the fountain, through the streams, unto the issue of it, what a marvellous thing is the grace of God! It had no beginning in the rise of it, but was from eternity, boiling up in the heart of God; and it runs from the heart of God through the heart-blood of Jesus Christ, and through that it streams and flows down to us in grace and glory. What a marvellous sight is this! Alas! people do not know what the grace of God is; some know nothing at all of it; a great many know but little of it, and they look but little to it; but when grace is taken in its full extent, from its rise, through its channel, to its issue, what a marvellous thing is the grace of God! the free grace of God towards condemned sinners, that it should run this way to their eternal salvation! There are three things concerning the grace of God, that no man who looks rightly upon it but must perceive them. 1st, The absolute freedom of it, that there was nothing to move God to show grace, but only the grace that was in his own heart. 2dly, The riches of it. When we look upon the grace that a poor sinner needs, how exceeding rich must it be? What is the reason why the faith of poor sinners is so hampered and chained, that they find it so hard to believe the grace of God, when they see a great deal of sin in themselves? It is because they do not know the riches of God's grace. Grace and sin are enemies one to another, but grace is always stronger than sin, wheresoever God applies it. Where sin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound, saith the apostle, Rom. 5:20.

That poor creature is in a fair way to heaven, nay, he is in a sure way to heaven, and will surely come thither, concerning whom God saith, "This sinful creature is striving to shew what sin can do, and I will strive to shew what my grace can do; his sin can destroy him, but my grace can and shall save him: it shall much more abound." 3dly, There is the wisdom of grace; not only is it rich and free in its communications, but it is very wise in its management. Wisdom in dispensing grace appears in this, that the wise dispenser designs both the ends and the means too. The election of grace is not barely the choosing of a man to eternal life, but it is the chusing him thereto in and by the proper appointed means to reach that end. So saith the apostle, We are bound to give thanks always unto God; and well might he say so, that could add, who hath chosen us unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, 2 Thess. 2:13. But there is something besides in this wisdom, that passeth our understanding, and which we are to believe, but shall never know it fully till the last day. The apostle had been speaking of the same deep theme that I am upon, about election; see what use he makes of it, Rom. 11:33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! There was no mortal man in this world ever could tell a reason why grace makes such a difference; here is a poor sinner, and he is passed by; he is under the means of grace, and nothing touches him, nothing fixes on him; he hears from day to day, and feels nothing; but here is another upon whom the word has its effect; he feels it, and is changed thereby: no man can give a reason for this, no other reason but this; Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. That is the reason which Christ gives. However, I make no doubt, but that all the purposes of God about chusing and passing by the children of men, that this world are now so unable to receive, and to believe, will appear, in the day of Christ's coming, and the manifestation of all things, to have proceeded from the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God; though the reason be utterly unsearchable to us, yet there is something still in the eye of God. That is the first Use—Behold the grace of God!

Use 2. From hence behold the happiness of the partakers of this grace! Whatsoever condition they are in, though they be strangers scattered through all the regions of the earth, yet are they elected according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, and sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, and sanctified by his Spirit. They are a happy people; for the description here given of them in the text is an honourable one: not barely distinguishing them, but highly commending them; they are happy on this account. The apostle James hath a word concerning this, not far from this purpose; James 2:5. Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him? The apostle is there speaking by way of reproof for that vain frame which was amongst Christians in their assemblies, that when a man with a gold ring, and goodly apparel, came in, they shewed him respect; but the poor they did not respect. "Now," would the apostle say, "how came ye to be so mistaken? Do not you know God's usual way? that they who are poor in this world, are often rich in faith: and very frequently they who are rich in this world are poor in faith?" Whensoever a poor creature falls under this great blessing of the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, as a fruit of electing-grace, they are highly dignified and truly happy.

Use 3. They are doubly happy who know this as to themselves. A great many people will assent readily to this truth, That they who are chosen of God to eternal salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, that these are a happy people; but they are specially happy who do know this as to themselves. That this is their great blessing, that they are thus chosen, that they are thus sanctified, that they are thus sprinkled, is a deep dispensation of God! that he gives so much, and yet gives so little knowledge of it! What if I should say, it is not fit for us to know all that we receive? it may be it would do us hurt to know all the love and tenderness that is in the heart of God towards us; we know that discoveries thereof bring snares along with them; but this is our misery, that the sight of our mercy should be a snare to us: yet surely,

where mercy is seen, where it is well known, and well guided, it is a double mercy.

Use 4. How much more yet are they blessed who possess all that electing grace designed for them! They are happy who fall under this love of election and the fruits of it; they are yet more happy who know it; but they are most of all happy who are possessed of all that election designed for them; and this is the state of glory above. And therefore our Lord gives the crown of glory, at last, upon these terms: Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world, Matth. 25:34. The foundations of the world were laid long ere you came into it, and you were a long while in the world before ye knew any thing of Jesus Christ, and the grace of God; "but now," saith our Lord, "ye are come to possess all that eternal love that I de signed for you" The two greatest grounds upon which we certainly conclude, that the glory to be revealed is exceeding great, are, the eternal purpose of love in the heart of God, and the infinite price of the blood of the Son of God. It must be a great glory that God had so many thoughts about, and it must be a great glory that the Son of God paid so great a price for. There is nothing proves so plainly the love that God had in his heart for his people, and the infinite value of the blood of Christ, as a perceiving of that glory that we partake of by this purpose, and by this purchase. A poor believer finds it a hard matter to venture on Jesus Christ for eternal salvation, for pardon of sin and peace with God, and for all the privileges that we possess in this life; but, if I may so say, if we could see pardon of sin, peace with God, and all the other privileges that we possess in this life; and if, at the same time, we could see the crown of glory, we should find it a far easier matter to believe for them, than to believe for that: for doubtless the last prize of our calling will be greatly beyond all other blessings we partake of by the way. And thus I have finished the second thing that I took up in the apostle's preface to this epistle; his description of the parties to whom he writes, both from their outward condition before the world, as strangers scattered through several kingdoms; and also as to their

condition before God, as elect according to his foreknowledge, sanctified by the Spirit, and sprinkled by the blood of Jesus.

III. I would now, thirdly, briefly run through and speak to the third thing in these two verses, and that is the apostle's wish or prayer, Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. A wish that is expressed very frequently in the word of God; you will find it in all Paul's epistles, only with this variation, that in his epistles to Timothy, and in that to Titus, he adds mercy to grace and peace. Peter wrote but two epistles, and he hath this salutation in both of them; Grace be unto you, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

1st, Let us consider this with respect to the persons it is wished to, and prayed for; and they are called in the preceding part of the verse, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus: grace be unto you. "You have grace already, and peace already; therefore grace and peace be multiplied unto you." Sirs, there is no praying for the multiplying of grace and peace to them who never had any; but the apostle saith concerning them, that they were partakers of grace and peace; "and now," saith he, "be they multiplied unto you."

2dly, Let us consider these words with respect to the person wishing it to them, and who is the writer of this epistle; Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ: and an apostle's saying, Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied, when writing by the influence of the Holy Ghost, is equal to a promise. This is what I would a little take notice of. Promises are of two sorts, formal ones, and virtual ones. Formal promises are those that are so in the form of them, as it is in the covenant, Jer. 31:33. I will put my law in their inward parts, I will write it in their hearts, I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. Ezek. 36:26, 27. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; I will put my Spirit within you, and

cause you to walk in my statutes. These are formal promises; when God speaks thus expressly, he is the speaker, and he is the promiser, and the doer; of these the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 7:1. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. And the same apostle Peter, speaks of these in his second epistle, chap. 1:4. There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by them we might be partakers of the divine nature. But there are another sort of promises, that we call virtual ones; that is, though they are not in the form of a promise, yet they are really and materially one, and may be used by the faith of a believer as such. I shall instance in Some of these. 1st, All the blessings of saints, as saints, recorded in the word, are promises to following saints for the same blessings. Pray observe; I speak not of mercies suited to special or extraordinary occasions, but of the blessings of God to believers in their course of walking with God, which are recorded in the word: these are grounds for the faith of every believer to expect the like. Saith the Psalmist, Psal. 32:5. I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity I have not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Well, and is not there an end? here is a distressed man seeking pardon, praying for it, and blessed with it: see what he adds, in the very next words; For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found. What! may every godly man venture to put in after David? may such as we are venture to put in for the same blessing that David got? Yes, we may, warrantably on the same grounds. David Was distressed with sin, and relieved with pardon; and every poor sinner in the same case may plead and speed as he did. They that fear the Lord, saith he, will be glad when they see me, because I have hoped in thy word, Psal. 119:74. 2dly, All the prayers of the saints recorded in the word, as to their own present case, they are prayers that may feed our faith, and may be used again by us. Psal. 34:6. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and delivered him from all his troubles: and therefore any poor man may cry unto the Lord. And this is one great good that we get by the Psalms of David; a great part of the Scripture,

both in the Old and New Testament too, contains the prayers of the saints. I acknowledge, they make a very bad use of them who compose a common prayer out of them; but every believer may make a prayer from them: whatsoever any distressed believer hath asked of God, any child of God may ask the same even to this day. 3dly, All the prayers of Jesus Christ for his church and people, are something more than real promises. I do not say that they are formal promises, but they are something more than real promises. Christ's prayers I say are so: a great instance we have of them in the xviith chapter of John throughout. Whatsoever Christ begged of his Father, for the relief and blessing of his children, every believer may pray it over again confidently. We may pray over Christ's prayer a great deal more confidently than we can the prayers of the saints; we may put our Amen to Christ's prayers a great deal more confidently than we can to Paul's: for our Lord was always heard, and his praying for us was a part of his saving us; he was a praying Saviour as well as a dying Saviour. 4thly, To bring the matter to the text, All apostolical prayers, directed by the Holy Ghost in their writings, are equivalent to a promise. I do not deny but the apostles, extraordinary men as they were, might sometimes miscarry in their praying; we find they sometimes miscarried in their practice. We find that Peter was blamed, and that justly, by Paul, for his dissimulation, Gal. 2.; but whatsoever weaknesses they might have as men, in some parts of their work, yet, when they were made use of by the Holy Ghost as his penmen, in writing the Scriptures, they were under his infallible conduct; and therefore the prayers of the apostles, in their epistles, were equal to a promise. What the apostles, by the direction of the Holy Ghost, did pray for and wish to Christians in their days, every Christian in our day may lay claim to.

3dly, I would now consider these words in themselves, Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. There are three things that may be taken notice of in this blessing wished to them:—the blessing prayed for, Grace and peace;—the connection of them, they are joined together, grace and peace;—and the increase and multiplication of them; let them be multiplied: "not only grace be unto you, and peace

be unto you, but let them be multiplied unto you." This is a wish of the Holy Ghost's, by the pen of the apostle, and is, as I told you, often in the word; in all Paul's epistles, and in both of Peter's. This is what can only be perceived and experienced by a spiritual man; if the apostle's expression had been, "gold and silver be multiplied unto you; riches and health be increased to you; prosperity in this world be multiplied to you;" every Atheist would have understood him: but when he speaks of grace and peace being multiplied, it is a speaking of things that no ungodly man understands what they mean: they are spiritual things themselves, and the increase of them is spiritual too.

I. I shall speak of the things wished, Grace and peace; a little to each of these separately. 1st, What grace is. Grace unto you, saith the apostle. Grace meets with two acceptations; as it is in the heart of God, and as it is from the hand of God in the heart of a believer. Grace, as it is in the heart of God, is called the grace of God, and is frequently spoken of in the word; but this cannot be increased nor multiplied, because it is infinite. There is no elect child of God that may lawfully desire God to love him better than he doth, or Christ to love him better than he doth; no, none of these things is lawful; the measure of his love passes bounds, and therefore there can be no addition thereto. But take grace as it is the gift of God to a creature, and then it is capable of multiplication in the fruits, and in the manifestation of it; for that is what the apostle here means. Grace unto you be multiplied; not the love of God to you, but the fruit and manifestation of that love, be multiplied unto you. The other word here is peace, and peace is far more counterfeit than grace, and hath different acceptations. 1st, There is the world's peace; that all natural men are under. The world is never angry with an unrenewed man for his unrenewedness. If ye were of the world, saith our Lord, John 15:19. the world would love his own; "the world and you would never quarrel, if you were not distinguished from it by grace" 2dly, There is the devil's peace; and every natural man hath that too. The devil and such are at peace, there is no quarrel, no odds between them. When the strong man armed keeps his palace, his goods are at peace, saith our Lord, Luke 11:21. And all sinners are the devil's goods till Christ

rescues them. Oh what a great house hath the devil! a great house and plentifully furnished! All sinners are the devil's goods; he possesses them, he rules them, he guides them as people do their own goods in their own houses, and use them to one end or another, even as they please. 3dly, There is the sinner's peace in himself, and that is the worst of all; people are quiet within. How many poor sinners are there who never knew what it was to be in trouble for any thing within! Crosses without, and disappointments in worldly things, they understand what it is to be in trouble about these; but what it is to have inward trouble they never felt. This is a sad and an amazing thing; a great many poor sinners are perpetually quiet within: there is no reason for it, but there are causes of it. There is no reason for it at all; Is there any reason for a man to be at peace with himself that is at war with God? Is there any reason for a man's being at peace with himself, when God proclaims war in his law against him? The causes of this indeed are, many people are blind, and they see nothing; they are stupid, and they feel nothing; and they are dead, and can do nothing: all these three names are given to a man in his natural state, How then can it be expected that he should feel trouble? They are blind, hardened, stupid, and seared, so that they feel nothing. They are dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. 2:1.; and therefore it is that they have peace and quietness within; but this is none of God's peace: the apostle does not pray that any of these may be multiplied: no; it is a great blessing to have all these false peaces broken. The apostle here means Christ's peace: and it stands principally in two things; peace with God, as to safety from all hurt from him; and peace of conscience, as to quiet within. 1st, There is peace with God; and this every elect child of God, that is a believer, hath; I do not say, that he always feels it, but he hath it. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 5:1. Whosoever they be, man or woman, young or old, though they are cursed and condemned by the law of God, as much as ever it can, how great soever their transgressions are, how great soever the threatenings of God against them are, yet from the day that they lay their hands on this altar of God, Christ Jesus, everlasting peace between God and them is proclaimed. It may be

they do not presently hear it; but whosoever have laid their hand upon this altar of God, they shall never perish by the weapons of his indignation. Poor Joab laid his hands on the typical altar of God, and see how it fared with him; when he was found to be one in the conspiracy of Adonijah, he fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold of the horns of the altar; and when it was told king Solomon, he sent Benaiah unto him, and commanded him to come forth; Nay, but, saith the man, I will die here. "Well," saith Solomon, "do as he hath said; he is a traitor and a wicked man, and if he will not come out, slay him there:" and Benaiah went up, and fell upon him, and slew him, 1 Kings 2:28–35. Blessed be God, his justice will never say so concerning a poor sinner, that saith, "I will die cleaving to the horns of God's altar; if that cannot shelter me, and be my sanctuary, here I will die." No man shall be slain that makes this adventure: peace is proclaimed, and the weapons of indignation are put up immediately. 2dly, There is peace of conscience, and that is peace within; peace with God is peace above; and these two are sometimes separated: however, peace of conscience is every believer's just right, and if he hath not the sense of it, it is his own fault. And this peace of conscience respects two things, a man's state, and his way. The peace which respects a man's state, is that peace which the reflecting on his believing gives him, called by the apostle, The answer of a good conscience towards God, 1 Pet. 3:21. What can a man's conscience speak for him before God? Nothing at all of good can it speak, from any thing it can do, from any thing it can feel, or from any thing it can act; only here is good news, it hath heard of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification; and this is all that a believer's conscience hath to answer before God. Again, peace of conscience respects a man's way, the way wherein he walks. A man that is at peace with God, may yet walk in a crooked way, but God will find him out; and though it does not make a breach in a man's state of peace with God, yet it may bring on a testimony of God's fatherly anger. Peace of conscience not only respects a man's state, but also his walk; the apostle seems to have a respect to this, 2 Cor. 1:12. Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly

sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. As if the apostle would have said, "Every time that I think of the way wherein I walk, I find a testimony in my conscience that I desire to please God." So much for this first, grace and peace in themselves.

II. The second thing to be spoken to is, their connection, Grace and peace; this is greatly to be noted, this phrase being used above twenty times in the New Testament. Grace and peace. Grace is the foundation, and peace is the building upon this foundation. There are two great faults about this matter; bad people's fault and good people's fault. 1st, There is the sinners fault; they would fain have peace without grace; they have no concern about the special love and favour of God, yet they would fain be saved from hurt by him. 2dly, There is the believer's fault; they have grace, and do not build peace upon it. Every one that is a partaker of the grace of God, hath a solid foundation for peace laid in him, and he should build upon it. Grace is misimproved, or peace is mistaken, which is the cause why so many partake of grace, that do so little possess peace; either people do not improve the grace of God for all those ends for which it is given, or they mistake the peace that God gives. People generally think, that the peace here wished for to them is inconsistent with tribulation and affliction in this world; but the matter is quite otherwise.

Lastly, We are here to consider the multiplying of it. Grace and peace be multiplied. 1. Grace and peace is multiplied when the soul is filled with it. I will read one scripture to you concerning it, and there is not its fellow in all the Bible with respect to this point; and it is an apostolic prayer also, Eph. 3:16, 17, 18, 19. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth

knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Will you not think him to be a happy person indeed who hath this prayer fulfilled on him? He who hath Christ dwelling in his heart by faith, and his heart rooted in love, and the love of Christ shed abroad in his heart in all the dimensions of it, wondered at and felt by the soul; and at last to be filled with all the fulness of God. Then is grace multiplied indeed; then is a soul filled with grace, especially when these two things concur; when every power of the soul is filled with its suitable grace, and every grace in the soul filled with its suitable object. 1st, When every power of the soul is filled with its suitable grace; spiritual knowledge and understanding is the suitable grace for our minds; the grace of divine love is a suitable grace for the affection of love in our souls; Oh.! what a blessed thing is it to have every power of the soul filled with its suitable grace! and then also, 2dly, To have every grace filled with its proper object. The object of all grace is our Lord Jesus Christ, but there are various representations of Jesus Christ, by which grace acts distinctly on him. Faith acts on Jesus Christ as an all-sufficient, able, trusty Saviour; love acts on him as altogether lovely; repentance acts upon him as one smitten for our sins, and as bearing the burden of our iniquities. Grace is multiplied when Christians have it suited to all their occasions; when the grace that is called for is in exercise, and they have it not to seek, but it is ready, lying by them, as it were. The apostle calls us to come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in the time of need, Heb. 4:16. It is a great word the apostle uses concerning this; 2 Cor. 9:8. God is able to make all grace to abound towards you, that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. But I shall insist on these things no longer; only a word or two of Application.

1st, You may perceive that this is a prayer which you stand in great need of. Do not you need to have grace and peace multiplied to you? They never knew what the grace and peace of God was, who do not desire the multiplication of them. They are strangers to grace, who do not desire the increase of it; and they do not know the peace of

God, who do not desire more of it. Grace and peace are never perfect in this life; and the greatest desires after them are raised by the greatest tastes of them. Have you not then need of this prayer?

2dly, You have good ground to pray over this prayer in the text; "So say thy servants in thy word, Lord, Grace and peace be multiplied; Lord, fulfil this word!" The Lord help you to cry, and answer you when you cry! for these blessings you extremely need. Notwithstanding all the pains that we should take with ourselves about salvation, all is nothing to the pains which God takes with those whom he hath a mind to save. Where sovereign grace hath engaged itself, what mighty things are performed for the saving of the sinner! How many strong bolts and bars doth electing grace break through, that it may save the elected? Many are suffered to run on in their own ways to the pit, and have none to stop them; but when any of Christ's sheep are running on to ruin, the great Shepherd will stop and catch them, and bring them home upon his own shoulders: Oh what a blessed way is that we come to heaven in! upon the shoulders of our great Shepherd! We had been lost long ere now had it not been for his care. We have nothing in us which can further our salvation, and nothing in us that can hinder it, blessed be God! if Christ hath a mind to save us: for grace will always have the mastery of sin, and the dominion over it, wherever it is applied. As sin hath reigned unto death, so grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord; and if that begins, it will carry on the work, and perfect what concerns us; and in a little time more, our way and our work will be done, and grace and peace shall be multiplied to us, till we come to that good land where grace and peace grow. They are indeed planted here, but they belong not to this world, this world is not the soil for them; they are plants of heaven, and they grow best there. O how will all the possessors of it bless that grace, when they come there, which they never knew before but by report! and that peace which cannot be fully known till we get thither! And there our grace will be without any mixture, and our peace without a mixture of any thing contrary to it; and then indeed grace and peace shall be multiplied to us. Lord, hasten that time!

SERMON X

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead: to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved on heaven for you. - 1 PETER 1:3, 4

YOU already know what is contained in the first and second verses of this epistle, directed by the apostle to the believing strangers scattered through several countries, who were elected by God the Father, sanctified by the Spirit, and sprinkled by the blood of Christ.

It now follows to speak of the apostle's entrance on this epistle; it begins with praise: and here the apostle Peter is like the apostle Paul, who generally begins his epistles this way; with praise unto God for his grace and mercy to them to whom he writes. In the beginning of the epistle there are three things to be remarked, which I would speak to in their order. 1st, The person his praise is directed to, The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. A singular name of God, a name fitted to the faith of a believer; a name whereby God is known, and which we must learn to know him by, The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2dly, The next thing in the words is the form and way of the apostle's praising; "Blessed be he," saith he; Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3dly, The third and last thing in these words is, the matter of his praise; which branches forth itself into four things.

1st, There is the blessing itself, begetting us again to a lively hope: this is a strange kind of begetting, the raising a poor dead sinner to a lively hope, who, if I may so say, had nothing before but deadly fear; here is a lively hope brought in. 2dly, We have in these words the spring and rise of this gracious work; it is according to his abundant mercy: so we read it: but if the English would bear it, it is according to his much mercy, according to his great mercy; so the Greek runs. All the saving operations of God for, and upon the heirs of glory, they all arise from great mercy; mercy is the great high spring of all. 3dly, Here is the grand means of this great work of God in begetting us again to a lively hope; What way is this brought about? By the resurrection of Christ from the dead. All the hopes of believers rise from something done by Christ, and done upon him; our hope does not rise so much from any thing done by us, or done upon upon us; it is by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Lastly, We have the great end of this work of God in begetting us again to a lively hope, the great end that it is directed to, and will issue in, and this we have in the 4th verse: it is to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them. It is little known now what the work of grace on a believer drives at, and what it will issue in. A poor dead sinner is wrought upon by the Spirit of God in the gospel, and nobody can imagine what this will turn to; saith the apostle, it is to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Before God hath done with him, it will be known it is for the possession of a vast boundless glory; a blessed estate is provided for them above.

I. It is the first of these that I would now enter upon; the name of the party the apostle gives thanks to, The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, calls God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of glory, chap. 1:17. A little farther, in the same epistle, he saith, chap. 3:14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In these two places, the apostle speaks distinctly: in one of them, he calls God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ; in the other place he calls him, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: but, in the text, they

are both joined together; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So doth the apostle Paul also, i.e. his epistle to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 1:9. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and again, in his epistle to the Colossians, We give thanks to God, and to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Col. 1:3. It is plain by this description, that the apostle means the first person in the Godhead, God the Father; and he describes him by this, that he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are two things necessary in the opening up this to you, and laying it before you for your edification; 1st, I would shew you how this is to be understood; 2dly, How it is to be used.

1st, How this is to be understood, that God the Father is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are two names here, and I would speak to each distinctly: 1st, How is God the Father, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ? The meaning of it centers all in this, that God the Father is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ upon this account, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the first in the covenant with God. Sirs, no creature can have a relation to God, as his God, but by covenant. The relation of God as a Creator relates to his framing all things. God is the creator of the sun, moon, and stars, and of all the works of his hands; but he is not the God thereof. The relation of a God always springs from covenant, and therefore the word doth not speak of it; and blessed be the Author of the word, that it is never spoken of! God is never said to be Adam's God; he was certainly so, for all that. The grace of God, in being a God to a creature, is owing only to the second Adam. It is only said, that Adam heard the voice of the Lord God in the garden; in the second and third chapters of Genesis, that give an account of Adam before the fall; we do not find it said that ever God was Adam's God: he was Adam's creator, and Adam was really in covenant with God, and really had God to be his God, till he sinned; yet he stood so little a while in his state of innocency, that the Spirit of God never thought it worth mentioning to call Adam by this, that God was his God. Now, the relation of God's being a God to a creature, resulting from

covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ, as man, is the head of this covenant; and therefore it is that God the Father is called the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. There was never so near and close relation between God and a creature, as there was between him and the man Christ. Jesus Christ hath the first room in the covenant. Never had there been a poor sinner advanced to this privilege, to have God to be his God, unless there had first been a great man, Christ Jesus, who had God to be his God. Therefore thus our Lord directs his disciples, I ascend unto a my Father and your Father, to my God and your God, John 20:17. And there is great need that Christians should have this well fixed and established on their hearts:—that relation which God had to Christ, is the foundation of all that relation we have to God.

2dly, How is God the Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? I answer, God's being the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ respects principally these three things: 1st, The inconceivable communication of the divine nature to the person of the Son. This is the highest and the greatest that we can arrive at; and we cannot arrive at it but by faith. He is called, Heb. 1:3. the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. He is called frequently, the only begotten of the Father, John 1:14.; 3:16. That from eternity the divine person of the Son was begotten by the divine person of the Father. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is then an expression of his divine nature. 2dly, The extraordinary way of the bestowing the human nature upon Christ, entitles him to this name, of being the Son of the Father, and the Father's being a Father to our Lord Jesus Christ. There are not a few amongst us, whom God hath left unto a reprobate mind, and forsaken to their utter destruction, who think that Jesus Christ is a mere man; I no more expect the salvation of such a man, than I do the salvation of the devils. A man who believeth that Jesus Christ is no more than a mere man, is as far from salvation as the very devils themselves are. But yet, notwithstanding, the way of the communication of the human nature to Christ intitles him to a sonship to God: Therefore, saith the angel to the virgin Mary, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall over shadow thee: therefore also, that holy

thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God, Luke 1:35. There was never a holy thing born of a woman but only this child Jesus Christ. Indeed at first God made two holy things, the first Adam and his wife; but there was never a holy thing born of a woman but Jesus Christ; that holy thing that is born of thee shall be called the Son of God. 3dly, Jesus Christ comes under this name, that God the Father is his Father, because of the special engagements of love that the Father bears towards him, and proves towards him. Never was there such a love as that the Father bore to the Son. All the love that we partake of is but a bit, a short reflection from this love. Therefore, saith our Lord, I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them, John 17:26. So much for the explaining of these names of God—that he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus. I am now to shew you how we are to use this name of God; what uses it serves for.

1st, It serves to direct us in right thoughts of God; pray take heed to this; it serves, I say, to direct us in the right thoughts of God. There is a thought and a sense of God engraven in every man by nature; for nature's light and reason points forth to us, that there is a God. How came all things to be? Because there is a God. Why is there a world? but because there is a God that made it. Whence comes there to be a beginning of the creation? but because there was a Creator without beginning. Now this name of God directs us to right thoughts of him. The Old Testament saints laboured under a great disadvantage; they did not know this name of God; they knew as much of God as God thought fit to reveal of himself, and they knew as much of God as might be food to their faith; that God was a gracious God, and a God in covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and the patriarchs; but this great name of God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, they did not know. We find Jacob, when he is pleading and wrestling with the angel, What is thy name? saith he; as if the good man should have said, "I know thou art God, but what is thy name? how shall I know thee again? what light wilt thou send forth, by which I may know thee more clearly and better?" Wherefore is it that

thou dost ask after my name? saith the Lord; "it is secret; the time is not yet come for the revealing of it; and thou must believe in the dark." The poor Jews, and the poor Gentiles and Heathens, they did not know God by this name, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and such are in a miserable case. But to bring this matter a little nearer; there are a great many Christians, (if you will call them so, and we must call them so, because they will call themselves so, and would take it ill to be called by another name) that yet do not know God by this name, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. All their thoughts, and all their exercises, are about God as in himself, about God as revealed in his word, about God as revealed in his works, and clothed with so many glorious attributes, that the word speaks of; a God of infinite power and infinite wisdom, and infinite justice and truth. But, sirs, we have not the right God for all this. It is true, these are some dark glances at the true God; for the true God is certainly infinite in power, wisdom, justice, and truth: Ay, but who is this God? It was well observed by a blessed servant of Jesus Christ now in heaven, that the greatest part of people take up their religion in the knowledge of what God is; but they do not mind who this God is; they are concerned about the nature of the true God, but they do not know the person of this true God, who this God is; it is only the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was a great word of blessed Luther, though few have ears to hear it well, and to understand it well; "an absolute God," saith he, "is the idol of this "world." The grand idol of this world is an absolute God: a God not clothed with his grace and glory, shining in the face of Jesus Christ, is but an idol; a God that is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is but a dream of pagans. Blessed be God for the discoveries, that the light of his word makes to us, that the name of the true God is, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2dly, This truth, this name of God, gives us great directions in our thoughts of Jesus Christ; all our thoughts of Jesus Christ must be determined and fixed, by the Father's relation to him, and his relation to the Father. When the apostle John is writing his short letter to a godly lady, the elder, saith he, to the elect lady; our precise

Quakers, who will not give names of civil honour to persons of quality, should be ashamed in the reading that epistle, the elder to the elect lady: such was her quality in the world, and the apostle acknowledgeth it. The elder to the elect lady: grace unto you from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father: "the Son of the Father;" remember that in all your thoughts of Jesus Christ, this must be continually in your mind, his relation to his Father. As we must not conceive of an absolute God, without his relation to Jesus Christ—for otherwise we cannot know him savingly—so we must not conceive of Jesus Christ without his relation to the Father; God the Father is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3dly, This may direct us to the knowledge of the original spring of our salvation; this is the scope of the apostle in these words; Whence comes our salvation first? From the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We do owe Jesus Christ himself, and all his great undertakings, and the eternal life that he hath brought in by that undertaking, we owe it all to the grace and love of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4thly, This name of God may instruct us about believing on Jesus Christ; I say, this may instruct us about faith in Jesus Christ. It is a strange thing, Sirs, that this matter of faith in Jesus Christ, for all that is spoken of it in the Bible, and for all that is daily spoken of it in the preaching of the word, yet still it remains a riddle to all unbelievers, and it will do so to the end of the world; and there is no help for it. It is a vain thing for a minister to dream that he is able by words to make an unbeliever know what believing is; they may as well think to make a blind man, born so, know what seeing is. However, to speak a little of it from this name of God, that he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: What is believing? You have heard many times concerning faith; I will tell you one thing more concerning it, from my text: faith in Jesus Christ is a poor sinner's claiming kindred with God by Jesus Christ. The poor sinner hears in the gospel of one called Jesus Christ, who hath God for his

God and Father; the poor sinner hath God neither for his God nor his Father; God is an enemy to him, a stranger to him, and against him; but he hears of this blessed one Jesus Christ, that hath God to be his God and Father, and he comes in and claims kindred with God by Jesus Christ; for all our kindred with God is by faith in Jesus Christ. The poor sinner saith in himself, "I am a stranger to God, and God is an enemy to me: I cannot claim a relation to God by my first father Adam; his sin hath broken that relation, and he thereby fell under the wrath and rebuke of God; but there is a new man come into the world, Christ Jesus, who hath God for his God and Father, and all that are in him have God for their God and Father too." Remember, Sirs, and know from this name of Jesus Christ, what the precise nature of faith is; faith in Jesus Christ, is a poor sinner's coming in for kindred with God, and kindness from him, by Jesus Christ. The great reason of all our confidence in resting upon Christ by faith, is, that this Lord Jesus, whom we believe in, is a mighty one with God; God is his God and Father: God was never a God and Father to any, but he becomes a God and Father to all that are in him. If we lay hold but on the skirts of this Jesus Christ, we are immediately thereby made partakers of an interest in God as our God and Father.

5thly, This truth directs you about the worship of God. Wheresoever there is any notion of the being of God, there is immediately a conviction following of a debt of duty and worship to him; and according to the light that men have in the knowledge of God, such is the nature of that worship which they pay to him. When we come to know the true name of the true God, we come to know what is the true worship that we should pay to him. His name is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the worship that is paid unto him, not under this name, is mistaken and false worship. First, They that do not worship God under this name, they do not worship the true God. What! do not they worship the God that made the heavens and the earth? But this is not the true God for all that. I know indeed there is no idol that can make heaven and earth, and I know that all the attributes of God are proper to him only, and can be given to no idols; but they do not worship the true God for all this. This is life

eternal, saith our Lord, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, John 17:3. Unless men worship God as sending Christ, and worship him as in Christ Jesus, they do not worship the true God. We are in him that is true, saith the apostle, 1 John 5:20.: and this is the true God, and eternal life: little children, keep yourselves from idols, in the very next words: as if the apostle should have said, "All those gods are but idols, that are not known and worshipped as God is revealed in the face of Christ." 2dly, It is false worship, that is not paid to God under this name: for they who worship God out of Christ, do not worship him in the right place. The worship of God under the Old Testament, when all things went by types and shadows, was only to be in one place, whither all their worship was directed; to the temple, and to the mercy-seat especially: for that was the holiest of all in that ministration. But there is no place now where God is to be worshipped but in Christ Jesus. My meaning is, that there is no place now, that will make our worship to be more acceptable in than another. We may now worship God every where, there is no difference in places; it is a piece of Popish superstition to dream that consecrated churches are better places for worship than others: halls, houses, fields, are all alike as to this. I will therefore, saith the apostle, that men pray EVERY WHERE, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. "In every place, be where they will." But, if I may so say, there is one place that consecrates the worship, and if so be the worship is not performed there, it is stark naught; and that is the true tabernacle that God pitched, and not man, as the apostle's phrase is, Heb. 8:2 namely, in the temple and tabernacle of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thither all our worshipping of God is to be directed; and therefore a great many people's prayers will be cast back into their faces with abhorrence by God, on this very account: "You have prayed, and worshipped me, and sought me; but your prayers were not put up in the right place; you forgot the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only place to which all our worship to God is to be directed." 3dly, All such worship is naught, because it is not put up by a Mediator. You see in the text here, that the name of the Mediator is contained in the name of God; Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the

name of the Mediator, by which only you can prevail, is contained in the name of the God that you can only worship: therefore, saith our Lord, to the poor woman of Samaria, Ye worship ye know not what; "You do not know the Father, because you do not know the Son;" but we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews: "the Mediator is to come of them; and therefore all your worshipping is but worshipping an unknown God."

6thly, and lastly, This name, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, may be of great use to us in directing our walk and conversation, and behaviour towards God. Is God the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? then this may tell us how to guide all the providences of God towards us; write but this name upon all providences, and how easy and sweet will they be? these are the doings of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: so are all your mercies; all your mercies come from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, saith the apostle, Eph. 1:3. who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Mercies are never rightly known, when their author is not rightly known. They are but confused thoughts that the most part of people have concerning the providences they meet with, as concerning the God that they worship. They meet with merciful dispensations, and they are pleased with them, but they are not profited by them; the reason is, because they do not know who sent them. It is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that hath shewn me this mercy. Oh, what a great endearment of mercy, to know the name of the sender of it! So it is also with respect to afflictions and trials; what a great blessing is it to know this! see how our Lord useth it himself, The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? John 18:11. If it was a cup that men only gave me to drink, I might quarrel with it, and I should have just cause for it; if it was a cup the devil gave me to drink, I would reject it; but it is a cup that my Father hath given me to drink, and therefore I must drink it; and I will drink it, and drink it cheerfully. The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? As if our Lord should have said, "Can you make any doubt of the

reasonableness of my cheerful submission to what my Father doth?" And as our Lord practised this himself, so it is what we are directed to by the apostle at large, in the twelfth chapter of the Hebrews, from the 6th to the 11th verse, where the whole topic of the apostle runs this way. Patience under tribulation, of what sort soever it be, is argued from this consideration, that he is a Father who doth it. No great wonder if there is struggling and kicking against the yoke of the Lord, when people do not know the heart and mind and love of him that sent it. What son is he that the Father chasteneth not? if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons, Heb. 12:7.; and you should deal with him as a Father, in bearing it patiently. So much for this first thing in the words—the person the apostle directs his praise to, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The next thing that follow to be spoken to, is the form and manner of the apostle's praising, Blessed be he, a word frequent in the New Testament. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON XI

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead: to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. - 1 PETER 1:3, 4

THE apostle's entrance on this epistle is with thanksgiving, as is the usual manner of the holy men of God that write unto the churches. This I have taken up in three things. 1st, The party that is blessed, to whom thanks is given, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2dly, The form and way of the thanksgiving, blessed be he. 3dly, The matter and the ground of this praise, he hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an incorruptible inheritance; and this I divided into four things. 1st, The matter of the blessing, simply in itself, begetting us again to a lively hope. 2dly, The spring of it, according to his abundant mercy. All dispensations of grace to the children of men spring from the abundant mercy of God. 3dly, There is the ground and means of conveying this blessing; it is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Lastly, The grand issue and design of this great work; it is to an incorruptible undefiled inheritance reserved in heaven.

I have already finished the first of these; the name of the person to whom the apostle's praise is directed, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: how God the Father is the God, and how he is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I have also spoken to: I have also shewn how this truth is to be guided and improved by us in six particulars, that I would but just name, and then proceed, 1st, This may direct us in the knowledge of God: none know the true God, but they who know him under this name, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2dly, This may direct and instruct us in the knowledge of Christ himself: for as we cannot know the Father but by the Son, so we are not to know the Son, by as he is in the Father: as the uncreated, invisible, and incomprehensible glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ, so the glory of Jesus Christ is never seen but when the glory of God is seen shining in his face. 3dly, This directs us about the original high spring of our salvation. Jesus Christ is every where called the Saviour: for nothing could be done about our salvation, till Christ undertook it; but it was the Father that appointed him to be the Saviour, and our salvation in the first rise of it arose from an act of grace in the Father's heart about us. 4thly, This may direct us what faith in Jesus Christ is; what believing on Jesus Christ is, and what its nature: believing on Jesus Christ is, a poor sinner, a stranger, an enemy to God, pleading for peace, for kindred, for friendship and blessings from God, through Jesus Christ. If God was not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

no sinner could lay any claim to kindness from him. 5thly, This may direct you in the worship of God. It is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you must serve and pray to every day; if you forget this, you forget the God you call upon; and they who forget the God they pray to, it is little matter whether they forget the prayers that they make or not: it is all to one purpose whether their prayers be forgotten or remembered, For this cause I bow my knees, saith the apostle: Who is this, if one should say, that thou art so much in praying to, and so often upon thy knees in speaking to? saith the apostle, For this cause I bow my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; as if he had said, "I should never have a heart to call upon God, but that I know him by this name—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Lastly, This name of God is of great use to direct us in improving all the providences of God, whether they be mercies or crosses. They who do not see God's name written upon his dealings, can never make a good use of them. The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, saith the prophet, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name, Mic. 6:9. Unless people see God's name in his dealings, they cannot possibly profit under them.

II. That which now follows in the second place to be spoken to, is the form and way of the apostle's blessing this God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be he. It is not only "blessed is he," though that be true, but "blessed be he." Concerning this praising of the Lord, I would first speak more generally of the duty of praise and thanksgiving in itself, and then speak of it more particularly, as relating to the apostle's aim and scope in this text.

1st, Concerning this duty in itself; we find these things plainly about it: 1st, That praise and thanksgiving is well deserved by the Lord; his excellency in himself, and his bounty and mercy towards us, call for it. There is nothing more a debt, and more a duty, than praise and thanksgiving is;—God is deserving of our praises. 2dly, Blessing of the Lord is frequently called for in the word, very often in the book of Psalms. Bless ye the Lord; bless him all ye kindreds of the earth; bless him all ye nations, Psal. 66:8, 68:26—This is often called for;

probably if it were well examined, there are more charges in the word for praises than for prayer. 3dly, We find that the saints were much taken up in this duty of blessing and praising God; most part of the Psalms are taken up this way. We can hardly find any account of any dealings with God, but praise made up part thereof. Nay, not only the saints, but their Lord and Master, was greatly given to this work of praise; we find him frequently at it, Luke 10:21. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth. When he was giving the wine at his table, he gave thanks, Matth. 26:27—This duty of praising was frequently practised by the saints. Nay farther, 4thly, we find the saints frequently exciting themselves to this duty of blessing the Lord: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name; bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, Psal. 103:1, 2. Pray now, what doth a man do when he blesses God? When God blesseth us he does somewhat, and a great somewhat too; but when we bless God, we do just nothing, or that which is next to nothing at all. When we bless God, we can give nothing, for nothing can be given to him. Rom. 11:34. Who hath given to the Lord, and it shall be recompensed to him again? But is our blessing of God then nothing? No, there is somewhat in it, for all that; though our blessing him is not like his blessing us: his blessing of us, is wishing well, and doing well to us, it is his mending our state by his blessing: our blessing him, is wishing well to him; it is not doing him any good by mending his state, for that is perfect.—We find the saints in scripture stirring up themselves to bless and praise the Lord, though they know they can do but little at it.

Lastly, We find, concerning this praising, that heaven is prepared for it. Heaven is not only a state of glory, that will lay the partakers thereof under an everlasting debt to give praise; but it is a place where praise is to be given. There are a great many things to be done by us whilst we are here upon earth; we must pray, and we must believe, and we must suffer, and we must have patience in tribulation, and we must rejoice in hope, and we must serve the Lord in all humility, and fear, and watchfulness; but none of these things are in heaven; there is only one work that is appointed for heaven,

and heaven is appointed for it, and that is praising. We are to be to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. The name of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be glorified in us, and we in him, 2 Thess. 1:12. Heaven itself, and all the blessing that lead to it, are all appointed, bestowed, and dispensed purposely for the end of praise in general. It is deserved by the Lord, required by him, paid to him by his people, who frequently stir up themselves to the work; and we find that heaven is, appointed for it.

2dly, What then is this blessing and praising God, so much spoken of in the word, practiced by the saints, and commanded by God? It stands in these three things: 1st, Owing his perfect blessedness in himself, in all the appearances of it to his creatures. When we bless him, we only own what is in him; but we do not add any thing to him. It is only the inconceivable blessedness and perfection of God, that shine to us in his word and works, which we see and own when we bless him. If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thy hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man, as Elihu speaks to Job, chap. 35:6, 7, 8. All the service and obedience that is paid by his creatures add nothing to him; and all the sins and provocations that are amongst men detract nothing from him. His infinite perfect blessedness is incapable either of addition or diminution.—Our blessing of him is only acknowledging his blessedness. 2dly, It stands in wishing well to him; in wishing the exalting and glorifying that fulness that is in him. How excellently have we this expressed to us in Nehemiah! chap. 9:5.: upon that solemn day of their fasting (and they spent the day very well) they read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part of the day they confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers; another part of the day they spent in worshipping the Lord their God; and another part of the day in praising him: but that which I refer to is their praising; they that were appointed for the work were set in their places, and the Call was given unto them, Stand up, and bless the

Lord your God for ever and ever: Blessed be thy glorious name, that is exalted above all blessing and praise. As if these blessed men should have said, "We know it to be our duty to bless the Lord; but all our blessings fall short of what he is worthy of: he is far above all our blessings and praises, and they can never reach to an equal retribution or acknowledgment of the greatness and goodness of God." 3dly, Our blessing of God stands in our commending him with praise and with thanksgiving. This word in my text is a form of praise; and praise and thanksgiving are two sundry things. Praise relates to the person that engages us; thanksgiving relates to a person with respect to benefits that we receive from them. It is possible a man may praise God when he does not give thanks. We may praise God for what he is in himself; but thanksgiving is upon the account of his bounty extended to us. His people are appointed for this, to shew forth his praises, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. 2:9.

3dly, I shall speak farther concerning this great duty of giving praise and of giving thanks unto the Lord, as including one and the same thing. There are a great many duties that people commonly know, and commonly try, and as commonly spoil in the trying; and one great cause of their marring these works is, because they do not well know what their work is. I would therefore plainly and briefly show what this duty of praising and thanksgiving is: for this implies strongly, that there is cause for it. Mercy shewn and put forth, and bounty received, is the ground of praise and thanksgiving. There are three things about this, that if you would mind the work aright, you must think of, 1st, A meditation of your mercies; 2dly, Impression on the heart by it; 3dly, An expression of this. I name these things distinctly, not that they are really separable in themselves, but only for the better directing you to order your thoughts aright in this matter.

1st, The first thing in praising is, that the mercy we would praise for must fill the mind; there must be a serious thoughtfulness about it. Forgetting God's benefits is the moth of thankfulness, and mars it.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, saith the Psalmist, 103:2. And he acknowledges the unthankfulness of his predecessors; Our fathers remembered not the multitude of thy mercies, Psal. 106:7. "They understood them not, they remembered them not." Sirs, memory is a natural power that some people have a greater excellency in than others; this is known in all sorts of people, from their childhood to their old age. You would think it strange now that there should be any great sin in forgetfulness; but this is charged upon Israel, Deut. 32:18. Of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten the God that formed thee. Is it a sin to have a bad memory? No, no more a sin than to have bad eyes or bad ears; for they are all natural infirmities; but yet there is a kind of forgetfulness that is a great sin. God's mercies and his goodness to us should be laid up in our memories, and treasured therein. God's mercies should have a great room in our memories. People will never do any great matters in godliness, till they learn to meditate thereon. The Psalmist, speaking of his praising the Lord, saith, My meditation of him shall be sweet. It is impossible that we can remember all God's mercies; but it is a very sinful thing to forget his special mercies; they should be treasured up in our memories as the most precious jewels that we can lodge there. Our memory is a kind of room, in which we must lay up what we would keep safe; and a marvellous house our memory is. Now meditation is nothing else, if I may so say, but a man's going from one chamber to another in this house, and to compare together, and to examine all God's loving kindness towards us. When the Psalmist charges it on himself not to forget all his benefits, the man is far from meaning that he could remember them all; but he was desirous to charge himself with them as well as he could, and laboured to remember them as well as he could. This is the first thing that we should mind in praising the Lord; for unless the mind be well employed, fixedly and seriously employed, in thinking upon the Lord's mercies, we shall never pay the debt of thankfulness and praise honestly and heartily.

2dly, After this thinking and meditation follow impression. Meditation is the work of the understanding; impression is the

feeling of the heart. As long as meditation only floats in the brain, it is no more but a notion; but when meditation hath its due effect, and reaches and stamps the heart, that is the impression of mercy: the want of this is that which people are quite spoiled for in the matter of praise. They know the cause of thankfulness to God, they remember the mercies that he hath shewn unto them; but they do not apply it by such a powerful meditation that may work their hearts to some sense of it. This impression of mercy is a most necessary thing in order to praise; and it is raised from some of these; 1st, By a serious viewing of the mercy all round, looking upon it every way, how great it is, how seasonable, how useful, how profitable to us. There was a good woman, and a happy woman, Elizabeth, see how she expresseth her thanksgiving, Luke 1:25. She hid herself five months after she had conceived, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me. The case was this, she had been a long time without children, and the Lord by an angel intimated that she should conceive with child, and that this child should be the harbinger and the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ; and when this was accomplished, it is said by the Holy Ghost, that she hid herself five months, and said, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me; as if the good woman should have said, "What great kindness is here! I am with child, and this child is the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ:" and an extraordinary one he was. 2dly, Impression is raised by the greatness of the giver. The majesty of God, who bestows the mercy, makes the smallest of his mercies to be great. A man who hath a low esteem of mercy, hath always a low esteem of the God that shews it. 3dly, This impression is raised from a deep sense of our own unworthiness; and therefore David's praise rises this way, 2 Sam. 7:18. Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? All proud folks think little of great mercies; but a humble man will think much of a small mercy. I am less than the least of all thy mercies, saith Jacob, Gen. 32:10. He had a great deal of mercy, but he counted that the smallest of his mercies were bigger than he. 4thly, This sense and impression of mercy is raised from the debt that is laid on the receiver; a great giver, and an unworthy receiver, and a great debt laid upon the receiver by the giver for his giving. What shall I render unto the

Lord, saith the Psalmist, 116:12. for all his benefits? They can never have a right sense of mercy, who do not know what mercy calls for. If it stood only in this, "that it is the bounty of God that gives, and we are happy in receiving," this would make our hearts light, vain, and frothy; but when this is added thereto, "all these givings of God, and all these receivings from him, are but so many debts and burdens laid upon thee," this will make a man lie low indeed. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me? This is the second head—an impression raised upon the heart.

3dly and lastly, This impression will work in outward expressions. Meditation is the Work of the mind; impression is the feeling of the heart; and expression lies in all the out-workings of praise that may be: where the former are not, this cannot be; but where the former are, this will be, whether men will or not. If the mercy be known, and be felt, the expression of praise for it will be unavoidable, one way or other. I shall name a few of these ways; 1st, The first expression of praise for mercy is in admiring and adoring the grace of the giver. This is the native expression of mercy, and of thankfulness for it, to be filled with a holy adoring and admiring the grace of the giver: this lies so near to the nature of praise, that it is inseparable from it. Thanksgiving, in the very first working of it, lies in an admiring the giver of the mercy. Thanksgiving is only an hearty expression of the goodness of him who hath given the mercy. Thanksgiving and mercy giving relate one to another: thanks are given by us, because mercy is given by God. 2dly, Beside this expression of praise by the adoration of the heart, praise will break forth in words and in deeds, according as a man is able to shew it. There will be a stirring up of himself, and all that is within him, to bless his holy name, Psal. 103:1, 2. There is a striving to praise, in which a great part of the nature of praise doth consist. There is a stirring up ourselves to praise the Lord; this is what is required by the Lord, and frequently practised by his people: they do what they can, and they would do more than they can. So David, in that place already named, 2 Sam. 7:20 he looks upon his mercy every way: And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great

while to come: and is this the manner of man, O Lord God? and what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant. What can David say more! Strange words indeed! Will not any body, think you, wonder that the great Psalmist of Israel is so soon run a-ground? but David could not have praised better, he could not have praised more, than in that way of praising. What can David say more? "I have said what I thought, and I have said what I can, and God knows I cannot say what I would, and thou, Lord, knowest thy servant; for thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, thou hast done all these great things." As if he had said, "I know that my praise can never measure thy heart; according to thine own heart thou hast done these great thing." I say, praise will not only express itself in inward admirations, but also in outward thanksgiving, all manner of ways, and that both in word and deeds. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God, Psal. 50:23. Sirs, if I may so say, if our praise falls low, let our conversation rise higher; if our tongue cannot speak much, let our life speak more to his praise. A well-ordered conversation is a well-tuned song to the praise of the God of our mercies. 3dly, We find this expression of praising, that when the believer hath done all that he can do at it himself, he will call in every one to help him. I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be continually in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord. The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together, Psal. 34:1, 2, 3. Pray observe, the man resolves to bless God at all times, and to have his praise continually in his lips; what help then needed he in this work? Saith he, in the next words, O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I will tell you freely, a believer, that hath a right sense of mercy on his heart, is just like a man that is carrying a great treasure home with him, he is loth to lose a penny of it, loth to lose any of it; but it is a great deal too heavy for him; and therefore he says, "Oh for help! will any one help me to carry it safe home, that I may not lose any of this great treasure of mercy, but send forth the due praises to the giver of it?" What means the Psalmist so poetically, if I may so say, to call upon the whole

creation to praise God, as in Psalm 148. Praise him, sun, moon, and stars, fire, hail, wind, snow, mountains, hills, trees, cattle, fowls, &c. He names almost every thing in the world, and gives an exhortation to them to praise the Lord. Why is the man so taken up? Why, the blessed man saw God's excellency, and perceived his bounty towards him, and knew his debt to God, and strove what he could to praise him, and was convinced he could do but little towards it; and therefore calls in every thing to help him to praise the Lord. Sirs, this is pretty well known, that when a believer is greatly distressed, he is mightily concerned to have help in prayer. With what earnestness doth many a poor believer beg the help of other believer's prayers! It is a good work, and it is a duty for them to ask it, and it is a duty required of them who are asked to pay it. But if ever you had a right sense of the loving-kindness of God, you will find as great need, and as great inclination, to beg the help of other people's praises, as ever you were to beg the help of other people's prayers. Never was there an affliction, never was there a sin, so sensible to the heart and conscience of a distressed believer, as the great loving-kindness of the Lord sometimes is: it is a heavy burthen, but a sweet one.

4thly, Another expression of praise is, our sealing to the praises that others give unto God; in setting our Amen to all the praises that are given him; so that the poor believer is in this happy state, that though he cannot praise as he would, yet he knows there are better praisers of than he is, and if he cannot sing with them, he can add his Amen to them: though he cannot write after their copy, yet he can, in a manner, take the pen in his hand and set down Amen: Amen to all the praises that have been given to God from the beginning of the world to the end of it; in time and to eternity. And in this a great part of our praising lies. Alas! what can we do with a few words of praise from such narrow, straitened hearts as ours are? how small is the return that we are able to make for all the loving-kindness of God to us? "Well," saith the believer, "I know it is but little that I can do, but yet there are some who can praise better; the Lord hath been praised from the beginning of the world, and he will be praised to the end of it; he is and will be praised by the blessed assembly above of saints

and angels; and though I am not in their company, yet I belong to them, and I will put my Amen to their praises every day." Sirs, the life of prayer stands in Amen; I do not mean in the word only, words are but form; the life of prayer stands in Amen, in that assent of faith which seals the petitions which we put up; that is the life of prayer: even so the life of praise stands in our Amen, which is the assent of faith to the praises we put up.

5thly, Another expression of praise is resolving on perpetual praise. Sirs, I would not have you think that you pay for the mercy you receive by the praise that you give: mercy is never paid for by praise; for grace to praise is new mercy, and our debt grows bigger by praising. But the believer expresses his thankfulness by resolving to praise for ever; and therefore the Psalmist expresses himself thus; I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being, Psal. 104:33. Aye, but thy life will be quickly at an end, David: "But I shall have a being for ever, and the work of praise is resolved upon for ever. I will sing praises unto my God, while I have my being." Sirs, take heed to your spirits in this; whosoever they be, who think they quit scores with God for mercy, by an hour or two, or a day of thanksgiving, such persons neither know God, nor mercy, nor themselves. Our praising is but our duty, and when we have done all we can, there is a great deal more owing; and we must never expect to pay God for his mercy, even unto the utmost days of eternity. We must resolve to praise him for ever: for his mercy endureth for ever, and everlasting mercy should oblige to eternal praise.

Lastly, The last expression of praise which I shall name, is praying praise to God; not only resolving to praise him for ever, but to pray him to exalt himself; to pray him to take the work of thanksgiving into his own hand, and, if I may so Say, to give himself thanks. So doth the Psalmist; Be thou exalted, O Lord, in thine own strength, so will we sing and praise thy power, Psal. 21:13. A strange prayer! Be thou exalted, O Lord, in thine own strength, so will we sing and praise thy power. "Do thou put forth thy power, and advance thy

glory, then shall we praise thee better than we do; so will we sing and praise thy power."

4thly, I shall add a few things farther relating to this duty of praising the Lord for his mercy. 1st, The worst and the meanest of men have a great deal of God's goodness and mercy shewn to them. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, Psal. 145:9. There is a wonderful deal of patience and goodness, and long-suffering, that is put forth and extended to the most wicked, ungodly sinners, Rom. 2:3, 4. 2dly, All the expressions of God's goodness, love, and mercy, to men, lay them under a debt of praise to God; this is plain and easy, and the very naming of it may suffice—that all the expressions of God's goodness to men lay them under a debt of praise to God. 3dly, Special mercies call for special praises: as there are great things in God's law, and lesser, so there are great things in God's bounty, and lesser; so there should be greater praising, and lesser. He is a happy man who can weigh mercies! though every one is bigger than we deserve, yet there are some which are bigger than others in themselves: and the more special the mercy is, the more praise is due to God. Lastly, Though every mercy requires praise, and special mercy requires special praise, yet none can praise God truly, but a partaker of saving mercy: it is for saving mercy that the apostle's praise in the text is directed. Where is that praise performed which God will take? Only by believers. I know this is a theme that will hardly go down: other persons beside believers receive mercy, other persons beside believers owe praise, and other persons beside believers pay praise in their way; but there is no praise accepted by the Lord but that which is paid by believers. I would prove this in a few things, and then come, in the last place, to make some application. 1st, None but believers have their persons accepted; and no man's service is accepted but his whose person is first accepted. Unless a man stands safe, and in peace with God through Jesus Christ, there is nothing which he can do that will be accepted with the Lord. Abel was first accepted by the Lord, the Lord had first respect to him, and then to his offering; Cain's offering was rejected, because the Lord had no respect to his person: and this is

the constant way of God; every one is accepted of the Lord in his performances, as he is in his person, and the acceptance of our performances, is only through Jesus Christ; and the acceptance of our performances is only because our persons are accepted in the Beloved. 2dly, None but believers know either God or themselves; and you may well conceive how unacceptable their praise must be, who neither know who the giver of mercy is, nor who the receiver is: and this belongs to the natural condemned state of all unbelievers—they neither know God nor themselves. 3dly, It is the believer only who is framed for praise; and can you think that any person can be fit for this work unless God makes them so? These people, saith the Lord, have I formed for myself, that they should shew forth my praise, Isa. 43:21. See what a great preamble the apostle makes to this matter of praise; 1 Pet. 2:9. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him that hath called you into his marvellous light. What! cannot they shew forth the Lord's praise till all this be upon them? No; all these privileges of your state are in order to the enabling you to the work of praise. Lastly, None but a believer can give praise unto the Lord, because none but such can make use of the Psalmist's argument; O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever, Psal. 107:4. No unbeliever can say, "I praise the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever;" he may say, "I praise the Lord, for he hath done good to me;" but can you say, that he is good to you? The Lord doth good to a great many whom he is not good to; God indeed is always good in himself; but how can a man call God good to him, who does not know whether he be reconciled to him or not? Common mercies are from the goodness of God; aye, but that goodness of God which sends common mercies, hath many times a great deal of wrath in it, and vengeance at the bottom. Common mercies are always given in love to believers; but they are rained as snares upon the ungodly. That ease and prosperity, and plenty of all things in this world, which a believer partakes of, he gives God hearty thanks for, and he has good reason so to do; but if an unbeliever partakes of these, and remains still an unbeliever, they are but aggravations of his guilt, and heighteners of

wrath against him. Neither can the unbeliever use that other argument; For his mercy endureth for ever. All the mercy of God towards an unbeliever, is mercy that endureth but for a time. It is only the believer who can say, I give thanks unto the Lord: for his mercy endureth for ever; "he is good already to me, and he will continue that goodness to eternity." So that from all these things it is plain, that none but a believer can give hearty praise: no unbeliever can use the believer's arguments; and whosoever cannot use the arguments, will never be found exercised about the duty.

APPLICATION. I shall, in the fifth and last place, make, some application from what hath been said concerning this duty of blessing and praising God in general; and then I shall come to speak of it as it relates to the scope of the apostle in the text. And all the application that I shall make, shall be respecting two directions about this in the word, Psal. 34:1. I will bless the Lord at all times: and the other is that word of the apostle's, 1 Thess. 5:18. Give thanks in every thing. Some of these things I would name, and proceed.

1st, Praise and bless the Lord for all the mercies you have partaken of, busy yourselves about their number: give thanks for all the mercies that you partake of. Can I tell, can you tell the number of them? No; I know neither of us can. None can number their sins, and none can number God's mercies. Give praise to the Lord for all his kindness to you; for all his kindness to your bodies, for all his kindness to your souls; for all his kindness to your families; and for all his kindness to your friends. Oh! what great work is here! How many, or rather how few of your mercies have you made conscience to bless God for? Unholy and unthankful are joined together by the Spirit of God, (2 Tim. 3:2) and they are commonly joined together in the spirits of men. Unthankful and unholy! Why do not people mind this duty of praising and thanksgiving more? Sometimes people will boast of their mercies, and raise their plumes upon the account of the favourable providences of God towards them, and grow proud of their outward mercies; this is a great abuse of them: but pray give thanks to the Lord for all his goodness to you. Whatsoever you have

is mercy, and whatsoever mercy you have it is of his giving; and whatsoever he gives lays a debt upon you, and praising is your debt as far as you are able.

2dly, Praise the Lord in all your crosses. That is hard to do, you will say: but it is your duty, be it ever so hard. I will bless the Lord at all times, saith David, Psal. 34:1. his praise shall be continually in my mouth. Why, David, dost thou know what times may come upon thee? Thou mayest be driven from thy crown and kingdom, and be banished thy country, and forced to flee into the wilderness; "But, saith he, I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be continually in my mouth." If Paul and Silas be driven from preaching Christ to suffering for him; if they be whipt and bound, and put in the stocks, yet they would sing praises unto God there;—bless the Lord for all your crosses. I never expect to see much good of that cross which the believer cannot make a song of praise for. You will never thrive in your souls, till you can take a cross in your arms, and bless the sender of it, and say, "This is less than I deserve; it was sent in love, and it will issue in my profit and advantage." We should learn in every thing to give thanks. Sirs, this duty of praising and blessing God, is a great and a hard duty; a duty very easily forgot; a duty very hard to perform aright. He was a mighty man at this work, Job I mean, who had learned to bless God in every thing. You are never right at this work of praise, unless you can praise in every condition. This was Job's practice, chap. 1:21. The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. He could bless his name in giving, and bless his name in taking away; he had the same thoughts of the name of God, whatsoever changes there were in his dispensations towards him. We understand a little how to bless the name of God, when he gives; this is the common carnal frame of a great many Christians; if God gives, they know how to give thanks, though but poorly, God knows; but if God takes away, they know not how to thank him for taking, for smiting, for correcting, for afflicting. Oh! how few are there, if I may so say, such skilful musicians, as to make a song of praise on a sharp rod? how few are there who can sing in the stocks? who can praise God in the furnace?

and bless his name whatever condition they are in? It hath been well said, and it holds true in several things, That those who cannot be contented in every condition, will never be able to bless God, as they should do, in any. If God comes down to our humours, we can bless him; but if he takes his own wise way of dealing with us, how backward are we in this work of praise! This is the second thing,— Learn to bless God for crosses.

3dly, Praise the Lord, and give thanks unto him, for all his appearances in the world; for his public appearances: God sometimes comes forth to public view; to the observation and sense of men: I do not say every one sees God, but every one should see him when he makes these appearances of his. The Psalmist hath an exhortation, Psal. 46:10. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

4thly, Give praise to the Lord for the gospel you enjoy; salvation is in it; Christ is in this gospel; Christ is offered to you in it; salvation is brought near to you in it: and so it will go with you all to eternity according as this mercy is valued. People may have different sentiments about a great many of the dispensations of God; but there is no allowing of a difficulty, or a contrary sentiment, about the dispensation of the gospel. There are several appearances of God in his providence, that people may be divided and mistaken about, and there is no great matter in the one opinion or in the other. Providence is so dark a book, that it is not every one who hath an eye clear enough always to read it right, and to make sense of it; but the blessing of the gospel is of that nature, that a man's eternal state depends upon his sense of it. Is the enjoying of the gospel a small thing in your eyes? a thing you have never given hearty thanks to the Lord for? I can assure you, in the Lord's name, you have not gotten any good by it, if you never gave hearty thanks to the Lord for it: for all who get good by it, are certainly thankful for it. The greatest good is in it, and the greatest praise is due for it.

Fifthly, and lastly, All who are partakers of the blessings of the gospel should in an especial manner praise and bless the Lord for it; therefore, when the Psalmist had said, O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever, Psal. 107:2.; in the very next words he adds, Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. "Let others say what they will, let the redeemed of the Lord say he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever." "But," you will say, "the blessing of the gospel is so great, and of that nature, that they who are partakers of it need no exhortation to praise for it." But this duty of praise is so great, and the sin of believers so great in neglecting it, that it is very excusable in me to stir them up to it. This blessing of the gospel is manifold; if there be any turning of the heart towards the Lord, any faith in Jesus Christ, any experience of the goodness of God in the gospel, we should praise him for this. I will give you a motive or two to stir you up to this: 1st, The blessing of the gospel is the most free of all mercies: all the goodness of God is undeserved; but there is something that is more especially free in the dispensation of his grace: his granting you help in difficulties is an undeserved mercy, his giving you your daily bread is an undeserved mercy; we no more deserve a bit of bread than we do eternal life; but though both be free, yet we may be allowed to say, there is more of the freedom of grace in the one than in the other: for the greater the blessing is, the more freedom there is in bestowing it. Saving grace is most freely bestowed, and therefore should be most heartily acknowledged; for our praise to God should arise according to the freeness there is in the dispensation of it. 2dly, The blessing of the gospel in saving grace, is a blessing that flows from God's heart; a blessing that he gives in love. Common mercies, if I may so distinguish, they are only given from the hand of God; by his bountiful hand in a way of common providence; but the special mercy of God is always given in love. The Lord may make a poor man rich, and love him never a whit better than he did before; the Lord may raise a sick man to health, and the poor creature may lie under the anger of God in his health as well as in his sickness: but if the blessing of the gospel comes on you, God hath done it in love and great mercy. 3dly, This should be praised for, because it is the most profitable to us: it hath the greatest

blessing in it to us. Our praise should arise according to our profit; the greater good we get by the Lord's bounty, the greater praise do we owe to him that shewed it. Now, the success of the gospel upon us, is that which does us most good; for it mends our hearts, and secures our eternal state. Lastly, The blessing of the gospel should be praised for, because it ushers us into the channel of eternal mercy. Then shall we be able to praise him indeed; for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever. By the blessing of the gospel we arrive where God's mercy flows for ever. The main thing that people should be concerned about, is to be once brought into that road, into that channel in which God's everlasting mercy everlastingly flows. The stream of God's common mercy flows but for a little while; in a little time it will be cut off and dry up, and the poor creature left like a fish upon the dry ground; but when a person once gets the blessing of the gospel, he is then brought into the channel of the everlasting mercy of God. Such an one can say, not only his mercy endureth for ever, but, "his mercy towards me endureth for ever." There lies the accent of all: for what matter is it if the mercy of God doth flow for ever, if I be not in the road wherein it it will flow upon me. The mercy of God will flow for ever, but they in hell shall not taste one drop of it; because they are out of the road of it. But this is the happiness of them who are partakers of the blessing of the gospel, that they are hereby brought into that road in which the mercy of God will endure for ever towards them.

I would add two or three words of advice about this duty of blessing and praising the Lord.

Direction first. Mind this work of praising the Lord, as a work by itself: take heed to this. Thanksgiving and praise is an ordinance of the Lord by itself; it is a duty by itself, and you should mind it by itself. Praising the Lord should indeed season all we do. When we pray, the apostle tells us, Phil. 4:6 we should in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgivings, let our requests be made known unto God. There are three words which the apostle useth for prayer; prayer, supplication, and making our requests known unto

God: and in all these three, saith the apostle, mix thanksgiving. Remember now, praise is a distinct ordinance, as well as prayer; hearing, reading, praying, meditating, singing, receiving the Lord's supper, church-fellowship, all these are distinct ordinances, though many of them are still to be mixed together; but mind this work of praise as a thing by itself. Is it any great wonder that people are so unskilful in the work of praise? it is because they do not mind it by itself. There are many who know what it is to retire by themselves to pray; I hope so of you all, if not, I do not know what you do here: for I desire to speak to none but them who retire alone to pray. But pray now answer me, as in God's sight, Did you ever know what it was to retire to praise? For a poor creature to shut his chamber-door, and to retire alone, and say, "God knows that all my business with him at this time is to praise his name; his mercy presses me, and I would fain praise him." I deny not but we should mix praising with prayer, but I would have Christians try praising by itself; it is an ordinance of God, a distinct appointment, a duty by itself laid upon us; Why therefore may we not try it by itself? And I do assure you, if ever you try it, you will find it hard work: it is like a poor creature setting his shoulder under the great and weighty burden of the loving-kindness of God. What is praise? true praise is nothing else (you may think it a strange description) true praise is nothing but the believer's chearfully groaning under a weighty, oppressing load of mercy. You will never praise rightly till mercy oppresses you, and you become like people sinking under the weight, and groaning under the burden of it. See how David praises, 2 Sam. 7:20. Who am I, O Lord? And what can David say more? for thou, Lord, knowest thy servant.

Direction 2d. Let all your praise ascend unto God by Jesus Christ. Take heed to this; let all your praise be sent up by Jesus Christ: this is the apostle's direction, Heb. 13:15. By him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto his name. When we pray, we know that the blessings we ask are so great, that we can expect them no otherwise than as they are the purchase of Christ. We know our performances are so small, that we cannot dream of their acceptance with God, unless our great High-

priest present them: but take good heed to yourselves, lest you grow proud in praising; and remember that you have as great need of Christ's intercession, to render your praising acceptable, as to render your prayers acceptable. We are to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, I Pet. 2:5. When the apostle was in that great frame for praising, Eph. 3:20, 21. Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church, by Jesus Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end, Amen. It is as if he had said, "I do not forget that our great High-priest must present our praises as well as our prayers."

Direction 3d. Lastly, Concerning this work of praise, I would give you one advice more, and that is, Learn to be well acquainted with the book of Psalms, and the praising part of the word of God. The book of Psalms is a book of songs; and in the Old and New Testament too, there are a great many songs uttered by the holy men of God, and written by them, and ordered by the Holy Ghost to be in our Bibles, as God's mind and will to us; and if ever you would mind the work of praise well, you must be acquainted with the praising part of the word. The apostle Paul hath an exhortation, commonly known, but not well understood, Col. 3:16, 17. Let the word of Christ dwell richly in you in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord; and whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Pray observe these two verses; the apostle names no more of the word, but the singing part of it. There is a great deal in the word of God beside psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; and there is another use to be made of the word than singing; it is also to be read: but the apostle confines his exhortation to the duty of praise, directs us in it, and proposes this as one great mean, Let the word of Christ dwell richly in you: and what part of the word of Christ is it that he means? The praising part of it; admonishing one another, saith he, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. Sirs, it is a great help to the duty of prayer, that we have so many of the prayers of the saints

recorded in the word; though it is a rotten use that is made of the praying part of the word, when here a scrap, and there a scrap, is gathered together to a book of common prayer; an abomination that God will visit for, though man forget; which hath sent thousands of souls to hell in this nation, rocking them asleep in security. This is a great abuse of that part of the word. There are many poor believers that, in reading David's Psalms, have been made to say, "Surely this man speaks as if he was in my soul's stead." The same spirit was in believing David, as is in the poorest believer this day in London; no great wonder then that they fully perceive and understand the words of one another. Thus, as we find a great help in praying, from the praying part of the word; so we find a great deal of help for praising, by being well acquainted with the praising part of the word. I must say, and I believe very few are able to contradict me in this, that the greatest part of believers in all ages, of all the books in the Old Testament, have been most edified by the book of Psalms. I do not speak this with any kind of reflection on any other part of the sacred writ; the prophets are excellent; the prophet Isaiah is a most evangelical prophet; but for the spiritual pulse of a Christian, the book of Psalms is the greatest index thereof of any book in all the word of God. All the saints have felt it, and I dare say you have felt it, if ever you have been exercised unto godliness to any purpose.

Thus we have heard of this great duty of praising the Lord; the Lord help us to act it! to give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name! Oh what a mighty command is that! Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, Psal. 29:2 and 96:8. Who can tell what is the Lord's due? and who can give him what is his due? No creature can do it; for he is exalted above all blessing and praise: but we should bless him as we can, and hope that in his due time we shall bless him better than ever we can do whilst we are here. He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; we have not as yet received them all; but we wait for them all in the Lord's good time. We have a good many of them already; and we should praise and bless the Lord for what we have got; and we should praise him for what we hope for: and we should praise the Lord for what he hath

offered to us, though we have not been so wise as to accept of the offer. But yet the Lord's grace in offering deserves our praise, even when we are ashamed of the bad entertainment we have given to the offer. How happy might we have been! how blessed a life might we have led, if we had given way to all that goodness and mercy which has been flowing in upon us! But many a striving hath there been between God and us; gracious on his, and wicked on our part.

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