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## **SERMON I**

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?—ACTS 2:37.

THIS scripture telleth us what was the fruit and effect of the first sermon that was preached after the pouring out of the Spirit. Peter preached that sermon, and brought in thousands of souls to Christ: Acts 2:41, 'Then they that gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.' Never did Peter show himself such a fisher of men as now. Three thousand souls were gained at that one draught, or one casting of the net of the gospel; and those not very pliable ductile men neither, and easy to be caught, but sturdy sinners, such as had imbrued their hands in the blood of their Saviour, and were now in a mocking, scoffing humour. But thus it is to venture in the confidence

of the power of Christ's Spirit. It was a mighty thing that an angel should slay a hundred and eighty-five thousand in one night in Sennacherib's host; but it is easier to kill so many men than to convert and save one soul. One angel, by his mere natural strength, could kill so many armed men, but all the angels in heaven, if they should join all their forces together, could not convert one soul to God. Here was more done. Well, then, this being the first instance of the power of the word accompanied with the Spirit, we ought to regard it the more. When we hear of some physic that hath notably wrought on others, and cured them of their diseases, every sick man would try that physic, or inquire after it. Here we see how the word worketh for the cure of sick souls; therefore let us consider a little the way of its operation. There is some account of that in the text, how it began to work, 'Now when they heard this, they were pricked at their hearts,' &c.

In which words observe three things—

1. The means and instrumental cause by which their trouble and perplexity was wrought, 'When they heard this.'
2. The commotion or affection wrought in them, *compuncti sunt corde*, 'They were pricked at the heart.'
3. The course they took for ease and relief, or the carriage of these converts after this piercing and brokenness of heart, 'And they said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?'

First, The means, 'When they heard this.' There are these things that offer themselves to our consideration—(1.) It was the word of God produced this effect; (2.) The word judiciously and powerfully managed; (3.) Closely applied; (4.) In this close application they were charged with a grievous sin; (5.) This grievous sin was wrong done to Christ. All these things conduced to the piercing of their hearts.

First, It was the word of God, which is of great power and force. Its piercing property discovereth its author: Heb. 4:12, 13, 'For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart: neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.' He speaketh not of the hypostatical and substantial word; for he had before spoken of the word heard, and to be mingled with faith in the hearing. Λογος, for Christ, is peculiar to John; only it is observable that the same things may be applied to Christ, the great prophet of the church, and the word by which he governeth the church, as if he resolved to discover all his power and glory by this instrument. Now of this word it is said that it is ζῶν καὶ ἐνεργῆς, 'quick and powerful.' It is not a dead letter, neither to them that believe, nor the wicked; it quickeneth the one, and maketh the conscience of the other feel its force. Either it openeth the heart, or hardeneth it. And again, 'That it is sharper than any two-edged sword.' No weapon like this to wound the souls of men, 'piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow.' It can search every bone, muscle, and vein; 'and all things are naked and open,' cut down by the chine-bone before God. So doth the word rip up the conscience of the sinner, and make him throw aside all his disguises and pretences; so that he hath no reasons to allege, no excuses to make, no arguments to plead, but wholly lieth under the convictions of it: Isa. 55:10, 11, 'As the rain cometh down from heaven and watereth the earth, and returneth not again, so shall my word be.' The word is not preached in vain; it worketh whereto it is sent, to convert or harden. When we have rain and snow in their season, we expect a fruitful year; so God's word shall have its effect. It is very notable here in the text that the virtue, of the Holy Ghost did not show itself in the gift of tongues, as it did in and by the word. When they spake with divers tongues, as the Spirit gave utterance, though it were a wonderful effect, yet the Jews were still hardened, and thought that this unusual jabbering was nothing, but that it came from the fumes of wine; that the apostles

had taken a cup too much, rather than the effect of the operation of the Holy Ghost. But 'when they heard this,' when the word came, and was urged, and applied to their consciences, then they were pricked at the heart, and relented.

Uses. Now this is—

1. An argument to confirm us in the divine authority of the word, because it worketh such terrors and agonies in men's hearts. What but the word of God can cite men's consciences before his tribunal, who alone giveth laws to the conscience, and appalleth the stoutest sinners? Paul, a prisoner at the bar, maketh the judge tremble. It is true, natural conscience can accuse and terrify, but it is for sins evident by natural light: Rom. 2:15, 'Which show the work of the law written upon their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or excusing one another;' Heb. 2:15, 'Who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage.' But not for gospel sins, and not believing in Christ; that is the property of the word, accompanied by the Spirit: John 16:9, 'He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not in me.' And to convince them in such a heart-breaking manner as that nothing will satisfy them but the favour of God in Christ, that is divine. They that have not felt this power of the word fear it: John 3:20, 'For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.' They see the majesty of God in his word ransacking the conscience.

2. It encourageth us to preach the word with power and authority, as knowing whose ministers we are, and whose word it is. Yea, though we have a refractory people, who are ready to deride and mock at what we say to them in the name of the Lord, yet we ought not to be daunted, but set our faces as an adamant stone. The prophet Jeremiah was discouraged, and ready to give over, when he heard 'the defaming of many, and the word of the Lord was made a reproach to him,' Jer. 20:8–11, 'But the Lord is with me, as a mighty and terrible one.' That fetched up his spirits, and got up his courage

again. We distrust the power of our Master, and his mighty Spirit, that hath ever gone along with his word, and made it able to break the stoutest and stiffest hearts. Two things may encourage us—

[1.] The blood of Christ, which is of virtue sufficient to work off men from their inveterate customs: 1 Peter 1:18, 'For ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversations received by tradition from your fathers.' There is merit enough on his part to make the word effectual, and the power of his Spirit, which can bear down all prejudices. As here, where it was first poured out, when some of the persecutors of Christ were in a scoffing, mocking frame, they were indicted and arraigned by Peter, and condemned in their own consciences, yea, were changed and converted by it. And such a power doth still accompany the word: 1 Cor. 14:24, 25, 'But if they all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, and judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.' An infidel coming in by chance, God taketh him by the heart; therefore why should we be dismayed and discouraged in the Lord's work? 2 Cor. 10:4, 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds.'

[2.] Encouragement to those that are sensible of hardness to wait on the word of God. It is a powerful instrument in the hand of God when used as his ordinance, and his blessing is waited for, to melt and soften us, and make us pliable to every holy purpose. God appealeth to our experience: Jer. 23:29, 'Is not my word like fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?' A fire to melt, and a hammer to break! Oh, what can stand before the power of it? Use it in good conscience, as one of the means of grace, and you shall find it will awaken you; nay, wound and heal you, and prove the power of God to your salvation. Some consideration or other will be given out to set your hearts a-work in heavenly things with greater life and power. All the miracles which God showed, either before or



at the death of Christ, did not work so as this one sermon of Peter's. Certainly either the word will do it, or nothing will do it.

Secondly, It was the word of God, soundly taught, and handled with wisdom, and in a convincing way; for Peter taketh the scriptures, and solidly proveth to them that Jesus, whom they crucified, was the Christ. That is his conclusion in the 36th verse, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' He maketh it evident in a powerful way of conviction: 'Now when they heard this they were pricked in their heart.' Note, a powerful searching ministry, that bringeth men to a sight and sense of their sins, is best to fit men for conversion to God. There is a playing with scripture in oratorian flourishes, and a sound inculcation of it. When men strive to make those that hear them the better for what they say, that is the ministry that will prick the heart; the others scarce tear the skin. It was said of Pericles, that his speech was piercing, in animis auditorum aculeos reliquit: he left a sting in the minds of his hearers, not by the charms of rhetoric, but by a serious, pungent discourse. That is the best preaching which woundeth the heart; it is most for the glory of God, and for the good of souls. Speaking pleasing things to tickle the ear better becometh the stage than the pulpit. It is said, Eccles. 12:11, 'That the words of the wise are as goads and nails, fastened by the master of the assemblies;' words that have a notable acumen in them; some spiritual sharpness to affect the heart and quicken our dull affections. He meaneth sound and spiritual doctrine, such as doth not flatter men in their sins, but awaken and rouse them up. *Si prædicatoris non pungit sermo, sed oblectat, sapiens non est*—He is not a wise preacher who doth not mind his end, whose speech is fuller of flashes of wit than of savoury wholesome truths, that rather thinketh to please the ear than to awaken the conscience. He doth not act like a master of the assemblies. *Illius doctoris vocem libenter audio, non qui sibi plausum, sed qui mihi planctum movet*, saith Bernard. They are the best preachers, and most affectionate to you, that wound your souls; though they rub an old sore till it ache, it is the better. The work of a minister is not to gain applause to himself,

but souls to God. That maketh you go away, and say, not, How well hath he preached! but, How ill have I lived!—that ends with self-loathing rather than commendation of his parts. He must not lenocinia quærere, sed remedia, saith Salvian: seek out, not jingling words, but choice remedies for your souls.

Use. All this is spoken that you may not grow weary of a sound and searching ministry. Many think they trouble the world, and drive men to despair. Indeed God's witnesses do torment the dwellers upon earth, Rev. 11:10; they trouble their carnal rest, and will not let men sleep in their sins; but is it not better you should be troubled in your sleep of sin than awake in flames? Is it not a good despair that driveth you to God, and maketh way for a hope that will never leave you ashamed? And if we go to heaven by the gates of hell, can you be angry for leading you aright? I speak the rather, because the world cannot endure masculine, sound preaching. Ahab hated Micaiah: 1 Kings 22:8, 'He doth not prophesy good of me, but evil.' Men are displeased with them that deal faithfully with their souls: Isa. 30:10, 'They say unto the seers, See not; and the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.' They would have the prophets sleek their tongues, and come with loose, garish strains; a sound practical sermon is loathed. They are cut at heart when they hear it, Acts 7:54; they were unwilling to be searched at the bottom. It is one of the great sins of the age. Men preach in jest, and the people love to have it so; and speak of heaven and hell as things made to play withal, rather than propound them to their serious belief.

Thirdly, It was closely applied. The apostle doth not hover in generals, shoot at rovers; he holdeth the point of the sword at their breasts, and dischargeth in their faces: 'This Jesus, whom ye have crucified, is both Lord and Christ. When they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts.' Applicative and close preaching is the best way to wound the heart, or to bring men to a sight and sense of their miserable condition. 'Thou art the man,' saith Nathan to David, 2 Sam. 12:6, 7; Acts 7:51, 52, 'Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in

heart and ear, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before the coming of the just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.' A clap of thunder at a distance doth not startle me so much as when it is in my zenith: 'The man is convinced of all, and judged of all, when the secrets of his own heart are discovered,' 1 Cor. 14:25. We make little account of those things we have not a real interest in; therefore this is a warrant to fly in the face of sinners, and charge them home, You are the men. Souls that are rocked asleep in a sinful course will else throw off all. An indictment without a name signifieth nothing. It prevents that captious cavil, The minister meant me, will they say, when their corruptions are met with; not by an humble application of the word to their consciences, but by way of cavil and calumny, judging it some sinister intention or reproachful reflection upon them: Jer. 6:10, 'The word of the Lord is to them a reproach, they have no delight in it.' They make reproof railing. If thy heart misgive thee that thou art guilty, he did mean thee, and should mean thee. The minister did no more than he ought, no more than he ought in point of conscience; and it is just that every man should bear his own blame. But that he intended to shame thee before men, that is the false surmise of a galled conscience, when it beginneth to be stricken in its comforts. Apply it so as to humble thee, not to hate thy reprover.

Fourthly, It was a close application of a grievous sin. That was it touched them so nearly, that they had crucified the Messiah, whom they had so long expected, and whom by their profession they were bound to receive: 'Now when they heard this.' Usually in awakening a sinner there is some remarkable and special sin that God sets home upon the conscience; as here, that they had crucified him who was appointed to be Christ and Lord. Christ convinceth the woman of Samaria of adultery: John 4:18, 'He whom thou now hast is not thy husband.' Nothing that Christ had said before could work upon her conscience till he took this course with her. There is some special sin we are guilty of, which, when it is touched in the word, maketh guilt

fly in the face of a sinner most insensible; as a blunt iron, that toucheth many points at once, maketh a bruise, but a needle, that toucheth but one point, entereth to the quick. Loose discourses about sin in general do not affect the heart so much as the sound discovery of sin; and when that one sin is discovered, it bringeth others into the view of conscience. As a man that is asleep is not awakened but by some great sound, but when once he is awake, he easily heareth lesser sounds; so there is some gross or secret sin God sets home upon the conscience, some special sin that bringeth all the rest to remembrance; usually the most shameful sin that ever we committed. Now it is our duty to lay these convictions to heart, and to consider our estate before God, when we find the word falling with light and power on any one sin of ours.

Fifthly, This grievous sin was wrong done to Christ Jesus, 'Whom ye have crucified.' Now they find the nails pricking in their hearts as so many sharp daggers; and having formerly pierced Christ, are now pierced themselves: 'Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts.' Note from hence, that sin will then affect the heart most when the wrong done to Christ thereby is seriously thought of. It was prophesied of these Jews, Zech. 12:10, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born;' John 8:28, 'When ye have lift up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he.' Christ had foretold this conviction; after it was done they should be convinced of it, and their consciences let loose upon them, that they might see what a woful sin they had committed. And did the Jews only wrong Christ? All of us have wronged him in his laws and servants; and it is not only Jews, but christians may look upon him whom they have pierced. Some are said, Heb. 6:6, 'To crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame.' The blood of Christ may not only be upon them that shed it, but on those that slight it. We do him the greatest contumely; the Jews knew him not. Christ prayeth, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' We know him, or else do ill in professing his name, and rejecting his benefits.

Secondly, I come to the trouble and anxiety of heart caused by the word, κατενύγησαν τῇ καρδίᾳ, 'They were pricked in their hearts.' Mark, it was not a slight stroke, the razing of the skin, but a compunction or pricking, a deep remorse and trouble. This was not of the eye, as Esau sought the blessing with tears when he had lost it, Heb. 12:17, but in the heart. Not a lighter touch or sudden pang, but a deep wound. The words are passive, not pricked themselves, but 'were pricked.' Could they have told how to prevent it, it had never been; but God breaketh in upon their consciences by his word, and then they are sore troubled. We read of some that, when they were charged with the same crime, they were 'cut at heart;' Acts 7:54, 'Ye have been betrayors and murderers of the just One. And when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth.' This is the more kindly work of the two. The word, when it is used as a means of conversion, then men are pricked at heart; but when they misuse it, as a means of embittering their spirits, then they are cut at heart. This perplexity and trouble we may consider as the fruit and issue of sin, or as the beginning of grace.

1. If you consider it as a fruit of sin, that sin will be bitterness and terror to the soul in the issue, however it seem to content us, and please the flesh for a while. It carrieth a sting with it in the tail, that will show itself one time or other: Jer. 2:19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee; know therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.' Thou shalt know it by the gripes of thine own heart. Though conscience be seared and senseless for a time, yet after a little while it will awake. For the present men do with difficulty smother checks of conscience, and repel the reproofs of the word, but after a while your trouble will come upon you like an armed man, which you cannot resist: 'The pleasures of sin are but for a season,' Heb. 11:25. But all this while you are but providing for your own sorrow: Job 20:12–14, 'Though wickedness be sweet in the mouth, though he hide it under his tongue, though he spare it, and forsake it

not, but keep it still within his mouth, yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him.'

Use 1. Oh, take we heed then how we play with sin, or the occasions that lead thereunto. The contentment is soon over, like a draught of sweet poison, and then men feel the gall of asps within themselves, either in terrors of conscience in this life: Prov. 18:14, 'A wounded conscience who can bear?' or in the torments of hell hereafter: Luke 16:24, 'Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame:' Rom. 2:9, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.' Nay, though a kindly remorse should intervene: Mat. 26:75, 'Peter went out and wept bitterly.' It will cost you heart-grief and sorrow. Therefore be not deceived; do not sow to the flesh; forbidden fruit will cost dear. You think it pleasant to satisfy your lusts: 'Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant; but he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell,' Prov. 9:17, 18. The sting of conscience and eternal torments will follow this. You are merry now, but this temper will not always last. If God put you into the stocks of conscience, or cast you into the prison of hell, then you will pay dear for all this frolicking.

2. As a preparation and step towards grace.

Doct. That the work of regeneration beginneth in a lively and smart sense of our sin and misery.

Because this is the main point, I shall show you—(1.) What is this pricking of heart; (2.) That this is the way God taketh to bring men to themselves; (3.) Why, or for what reasons.

I. What is this pricking at heart? There is a preparatory trouble that goeth before a saving change. It is *gradus ad rem*, a step to this change, though not *gradus in re*, a part of this change; as drying of the wood is not kindling of the wood. After this pricking at the heart, Peter biddeth them repent. This trouble lieth most in the passions

and affections; yet it presupposeth some work upon the understanding. Among the passions it lieth most in the fear of being damned for ever; but it doth not exclude the work of other affections, as shame and sorrow; for nature hath a quick and more tender sense of danger than any other thing; as a man overgrown with sores is sensible of the filthiness and nastiness of his condition, but first and most of the pain. Well, then, let us consider it more distinctly.

1. There is in our understanding an apprehension of our miserable and undone condition, by reason of our many and great sins. A sight of sin is necessary, or a sound conviction of our sinful estate: Jer. 31:19, 'Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth;' 1 Cor. 14:25, 'He is convinced of all, and judged of all, and falleth on his face, and worshippeth God.' Not a slight confused knowledge that we are all sinners in the general, nor empty notions by which sin may be made loathsome to us in a speculative way, but a setting it home upon the heart: 1 Kings 8:47, 'Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captives, and repent, and make supplications unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and done perversely, we have committed wickedness;' Luke 15:17, 18, 'And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish for hunger? I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee;' Jer. 8:6, 'No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?' There must be also a sight and sense of the wrath of God that hangeth over our heads, and the danger we are in of being condemned and lost for ever; as a man asleep on a bridge, and ready to fall into the water: Rom. 7:9, 'I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' Men snort securely over the pit's brink till awakened.

2. After this conviction follows compunction, which is made up of fear, shame, and sorrow. Guilt breeds fears and terrors, and the folly and filthiness of sin, shame, and our misery, by reason of both, sorrows and groans, and sad lamentations. Fear is one great part of it, or sense of the wrath of God due for sins: Ps. 90:11, 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger? According to thy fear, so is thy wrath.' While others slight the wrath of God, pass their time merrily, not caring what estate they are in, these are deeply affected with the sense of God's displeasure. There is also shame, or a sense of being found faulty, or their folly in doing what they have done. When the soul is filled with confusion because of its own ways: Rom. 6:21, 'What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.' Then sorrow and deep lamentations because of their sad condition. That affection is expressed by the prophet, Lam. 5:16, 'Woe unto us, that we have sinned;' Ps. 38:8, 'I am feeble, and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.' Now in all these things there lieth compunction or brokenness of heart, which serveth, not as a bridle to keep us from God, but as a spur to drive us to him.

II. That God taketh this course to bring home sinners to himself. God terrified Adam (Gen. 3:10, 'I was afraid') to make him sensible of his defection, before he comforted him. So the Israelites, when he would enter into covenant with them, he first terrified them by giving the law with thunderings. When he would convert Paul, Acts 9:6, 'He, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Acts 16:39, 40, the jailor came in trembling before Paul and Silas, and said, 'What must I do to be saved?' In the Old Testament, Ps. 51:17, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise;' and in the New, Rom. 8:15, 'For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.' The holiness of God's nature seemeth with a kind of comely necessity to call for such a dispensation, that the sinner should be sensible of his displeasure by reason of sin, before he tasteth of grace; that he should not per saltum leap into comfort and the assurance of God's love all of a sudden. And herein God is contrary to the devil, the



world, and sin, which make promise of much pleasure, gain, and honour at the first, and men find something that giveth contentment to their sensual desires and corrupt lusts, but it ends in bitterness and sorrow at last. But here a little bitterness at first, that maketh way for endless comforts. Not that all that are pricked in heart and troubled for sin shall be converted and saved; the work may die with some in the very pangs, or their trouble may be slight, and soon worn off; but all that are converted are thus troubled, and filled with perplexity about their eternal estate, though the degrees be different. As there is no birth without the pain of travail going before, though some have easier labour than others, as the Hebrew women; so here.

### III. Why?

1. To make us serious. A true sense of sin and misery maketh a soul active and inquisitive about a remedy; as a man sensible of his wounds will not rest till he hath found a plaster. The prodigal when bitten with hunger came to himself, and then thought of returning to his father. We never make it our chief care to save our souls till we come to this. A wounded conscience will inquire after balm in Gilead. As men's trouble is, so do they lay out for help and relief. If sickness be the trouble, they seek for health; if poverty, for riches; if disgrace and contempt, for favour and reputation; if outward affliction, for outward deliverance; if terrors of conscience, for the removal of the guilt of sin; all their thoughts are about that. Here in the text, 'What shall we do?' They now find they have souls to lose, and souls to save. Till you find yourselves lost in the midst of your greatest earthly happiness and abundance, you will go on in a secure course of voluptuousness, worldliness, and profaneness; but when you are once in straits of conscience, your greatest care will be to save your souls. Many live without all care or fear, doubt or distrust, of their spiritual estate; they pass their time merrily, and hope well, but have no certainty, live at all adventures with God. But when God toucheth the heart of a sinner, then he beginneth to question himself about his estate and course of life. What is it, and what hath he been a-doing all his life hitherto? What provision hath he made for eternity?

Whether he hath pleased the flesh, or pleased the Lord? and what will be the end of this when he cometh to die? None but the holy humble soul will seriously ask this question, 'What shall I do to be saved?' Men are not humbled. The wheel of the law never went over them, to the breaking of their hearts; and this is the cause of all idleness and slothfulness in religion. These are the questions an humbled heart is conversant about.

2. To wean us from sin. Corruption is the soul's darling, born and bred with us; and the league between us and it is not easily dissolved. Till we feel the vileness of sin we shall never be brought to hate it. While we taste the sweet of it only, we spare it, and hide it under our tongue: Job 20:12, 'Though wickedness be sweet in the mouth, and he hide it under his tongue.' But when once we feel, we are cautious of thrusting our hands into the fire of sin again: Josh. 22:17, 'Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us?' Children will no more play with snappish dogs when bitten by them. The old compunctions are never forgotten: Prov. 1:31, 'Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.' We are too bold, and too apt to play about the cockatrice's hole; but when these sins have been as swords in your hearts, and you have felt the torment of an accusing conscience, this maketh you more cautious.

3. That Christ may be more heartily welcome to us, and that we may the better entertain his comforts and grace. Christ is sweet to hungry consciences. Our passover must be eaten with sour herbs; so it is the sense of our sin and misery that giveth these comforts a bitter relish: Isa. 57:15, 'To revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of contrite ones;' ver. 18, 'And restore comfort unto him and to his mourners.' Unutterable groans make way for unspeakable joys. It was not meet that Christ should be received with contempt or coldness, and made light of, and therefore exercised with piercing and heart-breaking sorrows. The bondage of Egypt maketh us long for Canaan.

4. That we may more readily yield to God's terms: Acts 9:6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Terrified Paul giveth God a blank to write his pleasure concerning him. A soul truly sensible of sin is ready to submit to any terms which God will impose upon him, and not stand hucking with God, as Pharaoh did. In our ease we would never hearken to the crucifying of the flesh, or deny ourselves, taking up our cross. Heaven must fall into our laps, or we will have none of it. Like Naaman the Syrian, we would pass away a troublesome condition; but when our souls are perplexed, we will be glad to accept of mercy upon any terms, take things at God's price: Anything, Lord; a perfect resignation to the will of God. In pangs of conscience any course will please that shall be prescribed for our comfort and relief.

5. That we may be more chary of grace afterwards. Things that cost dear are the better kept. There need all means to fix the heart. Now this is a good means, to consider how hardly we came by it. It cost us many a bitter groan, and shall we part with it easily? How soon would we forfeit our pardon, and embezzle our stock of grace, and sin away our comforts, did we not remember how hardly we came by them! As a riotous heir, that never knew what it was to get an estate, spends it freely.

## SERMON II

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?—ACTS 2:37.

USE 1. If it be so that this is the method of God in conversion, let us not hinder nor smother so good a work; for so far as this is cherished, we are in our way home to God. Let us not hinder it by omitting hearing, meditation, application. First, Hearing. It is a sign men have a mind to remain in the hardness of their hearts when they will not come to the means that might soften them: Zech. 7:11, 12, 'But they

refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear; yea, they made their hearts as an adamant, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his Spirit by the former prophets. Therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.' The way to harden the heart is to refuse the means. The word would keep alive some notions and thoughts of God that would not let us sleep in sin. Secondly, Meditation and consideration, without which all availeth nothing, unless we debate points between God and ourselves in secret. All actions require time and space for their operations. A sudden glance without musing bringeth nothing to perfection; as a hen that soon leaveth her nest. All arguments must be holden in the view of conscience, applied close to the soul: Ps. 119:59, 'I considered my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies.' A man may take fire in his hand, and presently throw it away without being burnt or hurt. The greatest matters in the world will not work upon him that will not think of them: Deut. 32:46, 'Set your hearts to all the words which I testify among you this day.' Things will never go to the quick till the heart be set on them: Hosea 7:2, 'And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness; now their doings have beset them about, they are before my face.' There the business stops. Men will not take it into their thoughts. There is a time when you shall consider, and not be able to look off: Ps. 50:21, 'These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.' You will not think of it now, but then you cannot choose but think of it; you will have nothing to occupy your thoughts but your sins, and the sad effects of them. If it be so irksome to think of hell, what will it be to feel it? Now we cannot prevail with you to bestow a few sober thoughts upon eternity, but then you shall do it without entreaty. As a man that hath the stone and the gout, he cannot forget the pain, if he would never so fain; though now you cast off all thoughts of your condition, and therefore live peaceably in your sins, the time will come when you shall remember them. Thirdly, Application, and urging our own souls with the truths heard: Jer. 8:6, 'I hearkened and heard, but they spake not

aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turneth to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle;' Rom. 8:31, 'What shall we say to these things?' Job 5:27, 'Hear it, and know it for thy good;' Heb. 2:3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' We will not let the word come close and home to our own consciences. Rouse up thine own heart, and bring home the stroke of the word, or else it proveth not effectual. Self-love puts by the blow, and thrusts it to others, as if they were unconcerned.

2. Let us not hinder this work of compunction by way of commission. There is something that we cherish in ourselves that hinders this piercing of the heart.

[1.] A misconceit of God's anger against sin; this is one great means to hinder the power of the word. Men think that God doth make no great reckoning of their sins, that it will not be so bad with them as others say; indeed, that we care not for sin, it is no wonder we have not such a lively indignation against it. Oh, but 'God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' Hab. 1:13. His nature sets him against it. Any man that hath but a spark of the divine nature in him, how doth he hate sin! Lot's righteous soul was vexed from day to day; and if man, how much more God! If God make no great reckoning of sin, why hath he punished it so severely, as in drowning the whole world, burning of Sodom, bringing such calamities upon his people as we cannot read them with dry eyes? Why is 'his wrath revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men'? Rom. 1:18. If God make so little reckoning of sin, why is it that little infants, that are free from all actual sins, die? Rom. 5:14, 'Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.' And many times with great gripes and pains, such as would make a man's heart grieve to see it. If God make so little account and reckoning of sin, why is it that little sins to appearance are chastised with so great punishments? Adam for eating an apple, Uzzah for touching the ark, the Bethshemites for looking into the ark, 1 Sam.

6:19, 20; Ananias and Sapphira struck dead in the place for a lie, Zachary for unbelief struck dumb. Why are his people, the dearly beloved of his soul, so dreadfully punished? Prov. 11:31, 'Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner.' If God make so little reckoning of sin, why is hell and everlasting woe threatened to his creature, the work of his own hands? We cannot without horror think of the howling of a dog in a fiery furnace for half-an-hour. If God make so little reckoning of sin, why was Jesus Christ so troubled and exceedingly amazed when he stood in the place of sinners? Mark 14:33, 'And he began to be amazed, and to be very heavy.' He wanted not wisdom nor courage; he knew the value of things as well as you; had no want of fortitude; he foresaw the sufferings would be short, the event glorious; he knew God was his Father, that he loved him while he suffered; yet when he took the task of sinners upon him, he was sore amazed. Oh, therefore be ashamed of so sottish a conceit, as if sin were nothing.

[2.] Sensuality and inordinate love of pleasures. These take away the heart: Hosea 4:11, 'Whoredom, and wine, and new wine, take away the heart,' wasteth all tenderness and feeling. Pleasures bring a brawn and deadness upon us, thrust the soul into a dead sleep: 1 Tim. 5:6, 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' Like Nabal's heart, which died within him, and he became as a stone, 1 Sam. 25:37. These things stupify the conscience and dull the spiritual senses, so that men have not an ear for God, or a heart that is likely to be sensible of anything. Oh, therefore take heed of such a frame of heart.

[3.] Worldliness. Men throng their hearts with care and business, and so have no time and leisure to mind the state of their souls: Luke 21:34, 'Take heed unto yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life.' As Cain fell a-building to divert his conscience, or as they that offered their children to Moloch did still and drown their cries with drums and tabors; so the din and noise of business will not let conscience speak, they being 'cumbered with much serving.' They

that cumber themselves with many things seldom mind the one thing necessary. This keepeth away all heart-qualms.

[4.] Great and heinous sins. These cast the soul into a swoon, and deprive it of all sense. There is some tenderness left with lesser sins, as a prick of a pin will make a man start, but a heavy blow stunneth him. David, for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment, his heart smote him, and so for numbering the people, he was pricked and wounded in conscience, 2 Sam. 24:10; but in the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba it was not so; he lay long dead and senseless. We hear of no kindly meltings and workings of heart from him till Nathan came to him: Ps. 51, the title, 'A psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him after he had gone in to Bathsheba;' and that was when the child was born: 2 Sam. 12:14, 'Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born to thee shall surely die.' Let a man run on in a course of gross sin, and he loseth his feeling: Eph. 4:19, 'Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, and to work all uncleanness with greediness.' And that is a sad crisis and state of soul. Oh, take heed of these presumptuous sins: Ps. 19:13, 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, and let them not have dominion over me; so shall I be upright before thee, and innocent from the great transgression.'

[5.] The customary committing of any lesser sins against conscience; these lead on to hardness of heart, and senselessness, and stupidity. The heart of young men, especially if well educated, is tender, and startleth at the least sin and thought of God's judgments; the least sin will trouble it, and make it tender; but when once we give way to small sins against knowledge, we every day grow more and more bold and venturous, and then shall swallow greater evils without any great trouble or fear of wrath. Water, when it beginneth to freeze, will not endure anything; the least weight put upon it sinketh it presently; but after a while it will bear the weight of a laden cart. Therefore take heed of giving way to sin. That heart that was easily

troubled before, when once it is inured to sin, loseth all its sensibleness and tenderness, and what seemed intolerable at first will grow into a delight; as Alipius, St Austin's friend, first abhorred the bloody spectacles of the gladiators, but giving himself leave, by importunity of friends, to be present, but would wink, and not open his eyes, yet at length, when the people shouted, he gave himself liberty to see, and then not only beheld them with delight, but drew others to behold what himself once loathed. Sin at first seemeth insupportable, then heavy, then light; then the sense gone, then delightful, then desired. Oh, therefore watch over your souls if you would keep any feeling. *Ab assuetis non fit passio*. Things to which we are used do not work upon us; we are not much moved with them. Custom maketh men sleep quietly by the falls of great waters where much noise is; and some parts of the body grow callous, brawny, dry, and dead, as the labourer's hand and the traveller's heel, by much use. So doth the conscience; when often offered violence to, and used to sin, it groweth senseless, and less capable of this work, which is of such use and profit.

3. Do not smother it when God beginneth it. Oh, it is dangerous to stifle convictions or lose the benefit of them; for either afterwards conscience is more stupified or terrified. First, More stupified. No iron is so hard as that which hath been oft heated and oft quenched; so no heart so hard as that which hath outworn these convictions and compunctions. As God saith of outward strokes, 'Why should ye be stricken any more?' Certainly he that will not take such warnings as God sends him is every day than other more unapt to be wrought to repentance. As water that hath been heated over the fire congealeth the soonest after it is taken off, so they that have felt the motions of God's Spirit freeze the soonest in the dregs and lusts of the flesh, and have their hearts extraordinarily hardened if once they forsake him. God ceaseth to renew and continue his former motions, and sin gets more strength; conscience giveth over its office of checking, accusing, and awakening them. A wounded conscience neglected will prove a dead conscience; as an ungracious child, after many corrections, is hardened thereby, and at length quite given over and cast off. Oh,



therefore, when God cometh near, then call upon him: Isa. 55:6, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.' It is dangerous to slight these rebukes from God, and, when the waters are stirred, not to put in for cure: Prov. 1:23, 'Turn at my reproof.' Secondly, By slighting convictions, conscience is terrified; it maketh way for anguish of soul. They will be terrified when they come to die: Prov. 1:26, 'I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh;' Prov. 5:11, 12, 'And thou mourn at last, when thy flesh and body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof?' Oh, with what horrors and amazing thoughts will you be filled when conscience, which lay asleep in sin before, shall be awakened by the approaches of death and the fears of judgment to come, and your repentance shall not be repentance to life, but, like that of Judas, repentance to death, the beginnings of sorrow, or the pledge of the worm that shall never die. Oh, take heed then of smothering the work of God!

But when is this done?

[1.] When you take up with other comforts on this side Christ. Your hearts are set a-work, and your thirst is increased, but you quench it at the next ditch, not at the fountain of living waters. You drown all this work in mirth, and pleasures, and merry company. As Saul sought to cure the fit of the evil spirit by music, so these, when they are haunted with thoughts of sin, and guilt, and the world to come, think to put it off, and do not turn it to a right use, which is to turn to the Lord; or as a man arrested maketh the officer drunk that he may escape for that time; and so, when it might have been a beginning of conversion, it is to them a means of further hardening their hearts. This is quenching the Spirit, 1 Thes. 5:17, by suppressing his motions. Guard the heart then against all comforts but those which God speaketh and alloweth: Ps. 94:19, 'In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.' This is a work that must end well. Take heed lest the good seed be choked as soon as it is cast into the heart.

[2.] When you easily return to former sins, and after this qualm can lick up your vomit again. You have smarted, and been wounded, and burdened, and will you take up your load again? John 5:14, 'Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.' This is to run to hell again, when you have felt the smart of it. Pharaoh had his qualms, but as soon as the plague was off, he returneth to what he was: Exod. 9:27, 'And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.' Who could have thought but Pharaoh would have been another man? But when the qualm is over, Pharaoh is Pharaoh still, and there must be a new judgment to humble him. Ahab oppresseth Naboth, and God threateneth him, and Ahab humbleth himself and walketh softly, but afterward imprisoneth Micaiah, and then God slayeth him. Felix trembled, but still continueth his course. Many have their tears, and sighs, and sorrows, and after all this they relapse. Oh, this is dangerous!

Thirdly, We come now to the course they take for ease and relief: 'They said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Observe here—

1. To whom they go, to 'Peter and the rest of the apostles.'
2. What they say, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Where—

[1.] Their civil compellation and form of address, 'Men and brethren.'

[2.] Their solemn question, 'What shall we do?'

From the whole I shall make these observations—

1. The change that is wrought upon a sinner when God hath him under this preparative trouble; it doth not amount to a full conversion, yet it inferreth a change; a strange change in these men, both as to their thoughts of Christ and his apostles.

[1.] As to Christ, where are those words now, 'Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?' They are now convinced that Jesus is Lord and Christ. Where is now their fury, crying, 'Crucify, crucify him'? They are now pricked in their hearts, and hang the head: 'If thou lettest him go, thou art no friend to Cæsar.' No such thing heard now. No; but, 'What shall we do?'

[2.] Their thoughts are changed towards the apostles. Now it is *viri, fratres*, 'Men and brethren,' whom before they looked upon as deceivers, and men full of new wine; those whom they hated as enemies they now consult with as friends and physicians. They do not in contempt call them Galileans and impostors, but 'Men and brethren.' They have other thoughts of men and things than formerly they had.

I observe this—

(1.) To show the necessity of a change in conversion. If conviction and compunction work such a mighty change, what will conversion do? *Ego non sum ego*—I am not myself. A man should not be the same man he was before. There is as palpable a difference as between light and darkness, life and death, the old man and the new. Brokenness of heart varies the price and value of things and persons strangely. He that was judged to have a devil is now found to be Lord and Christ; and those that were mocked as men full of new wine, and had taken a cup too much, are now owned to be the precious servants of the Lord. We are not the same men, have not the same thoughts and notions of things, when the Lord beginneth to work upon us. Men look upon men and things in the glass of their own humours, and passions, and brutish lusts, when they are wild careless creatures; but when they come to themselves, and begin to be serious, they look upon things as they are in themselves. Men look upon men and things at a distance and by a slight view before; now they look upon them nearer at hand, and by a different and more accurate view. Peter Martyr's similitude wrought upon Galiacius Caraccialus. Those that afar off see men skipping and dancing would

think they were light and vain persons, but when they draw near unto them, they find their motion orderly, and keeping time and pace with the music, and as the laws of the exercise and dance require. There is a great alteration in men's notions of wisdom and folly, misery and happiness, liberty and bondage. The work of a sound conviction bewrayeth itself in nothing so much as in these things. They are wise who mind earthly things, fools and crazy brains who consult not with their profit, but their conscience; no happiness but to flow in ease and plenty; no misery like that to be kept short and bare in temporal conveniences and worldly accommodations; no such bondage as to be held to duty and in the fetters of conscience; no such liberty as to live at large. But afterward they find it to be quite otherwise; no folly like pleasing the flesh; no misery like the loss of God's favour; no bondage like the slavery of sin.

(2.) I observe it to show what difference there is in our thoughts of sin before and after the commission. With what a hurry and madness of a furious spirit were this people carried to desire the death of Christ! 'Crucify him, crucify him!' And now it is done, their consciences work, they are pricked in their hearts, and are at an utter loss: 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Christ foretold this: John 8:28, 'Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lift up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.' Evil men are permitted to run their own course, but when their consciences and God's judgments are let loose upon them, to see what a course they are engaged in, then they are 'pricked in heart.' Our first parents, when they had sinned, then their eyes were opened, and they knew they were naked, Gen. 3:7, that is, ashamed in their nakedness; they began to take notice of the miserable and sad condition into which Satan had brought them, that they might be humble, and seek to God for pardon. Many discover not aforehand the evils which their sins lead them into; but afterwards they see it, and are left shiftless and helpless. When Judas had betrayed his master, the foulness of the act terrified him, and he goeth and hangeth himself. Peter hath no sense of his condition while he is

denying Christ; but afterwards conscience beginneth to work: 'He goeth out, and wept bitterly,' Mat. 26:75. It is well when this is discovered to bring us to repentance for failings past, to make us more watchful for time to come, and to give us a fuller and quicker taste of God's mercy in our reconciliation by Jesus Christ. But when it is only discovered in order to our despair, as it was to Cain, Gen. 4:14, that is sad. Well, then, they have other thoughts. This is the general observation.

2. I observe again, that they took some course for their comfort and relief: 'They said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Felix trembled, but it was but a superficial work, and came to nothing, Acts 24:25; it was soon over; he delayeth and adjourneth the consideration of his danger. Cain and Judas being terrified, they despair: Gen. 4:13, 14, 'And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear;' Mat. 27:3, 4, 'He brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that.' But this in the text was a more kindly work. They do not turn the sense of their misery into a slothful despair and despondency, but ask counsel. Many have some qualms and risings of conscience, but they soon die away. Therefore it is good to see what we do with our trouble. It is *opus respectivum*; it reacheth to some further work, which we should look after, that we smother it not.

3. I observe that they take a good course. They do not go to the scribes and pharisees, whose malice would have prompted them to have defaced this work, but to Peter and the rest of the apostles; not to merry company and carnal delights, where it might be quenched, but to those that could best direct them how to improve it for good, to the ambassadors of Christ. When we are sick, it concerneth us to think what physician we choose; some are mere mountebanks, and will prescribe poisons instead of remedies. Many, when they are wounded in spirit, run to their carnal companions, and drink away sorrow, or game and play away sorrow, or read away sorrow, and

seek to put themselves out of the humour. Alas! this is but to put off that which they cannot put away, and to fly from grief, not to cure it: not to settle, but to sear the conscience; vain helps, that will in the issue perplex us the more, and make the cure the more difficult.

4. I observe in the general, that they speedily took a good course. It is not good to neglect the present time, and lose the importunity of the present conviction. While it is warm upon our hearts, let us carry on the work of God as far as it will go. Let us step in as soon as we see the waters troubled, John 5:4. There is much time in a little opportunity. As soon as the wound is given and felt; in bodily diseases delay is dangerous; as soon as we feel the first strivings and grudgings of conscience: Acts 24:25, 'Felix trembled.' He was all in an agony; but he put off his conviction, and we hear no more of him. We read of converts that followed Christ forthwith: Mat. 4:20, 'Straightway they left their nets, and followed him;' and Gal. 1:16, 'Immediately I consulted not with flesh and blood.' These impulses will be lost, and you will outgrow the feelings of conscience in a little time. These good motions are spent if not prosecuted, and then you will be in a worse condition than before. Your comforts will come the sooner, the sooner you look after a cure. Sorrow will increase to horror and desperation: 2 Chron. 24:19, 20, 'When the king heard the words of the law, he presently rent his clothes, and commands them to go and inquire of the Lord for him.' Green wounds are the soonest cured. When a bone is out of joint, the longer the setting is forborne, the greater will the pain of the patient be; yea, it may be so long neglected that no skill nor art can set it right again. So it is in the cure of a wounded spirit and bleeding conscience. The ground is fitter to receive the seed after it is newly ploughed, and the present impression of grace is a great advantage. Work while you have that advantage. Worldly occasions and distractions will choke the sense we have of our condition; therefore let us betimes strike in, and seek a remedy. To put it off is strangely to neglect the soul and eternal peace. When thy conscience is struck by the word, and thy heart is pierced, withdraw thyself from all other distractions, and drive the work home; seek presently for direction and remedy.

## SERMON III

And they said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?—ACTS 2:37.

OBSERVE in the words—(1.) To whom they go; (2.) What they say.

1. Their civil compellation.

2. Their solemn question.

First, Their civil compellation and respect to the apostles, 'Men and brethren.' Ministers are in season (and therefore in esteem) when men lie under distress of conscience. Pharaoh ran not to his magicians in his trouble, but to Moses and Aaron. Those that humour our lusts are ministers only for our carnal prosperity; those that deal conscientiously are ministers for our distress; and though they were contemptible before, and scorned by us, yet then they are in request. Before, they and their pains might be well spared, their persons are hated, their doctrine scorned and despised; but stay a little, till a pang of spiritual trouble comes upon them, and then their sentiments are altered. Those that mocked at them before will now be glad of their advice. The jailor put the apostles into the inner prison, and put their feet in the stocks; but when a trembling fit cometh upon him, then it is, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' Acts 16:30. Those that slighted holy things before, yet when chastened with pain upon the body, and their soul draweth near to the grave, and their life to the destroyers, oh, then for a faithful minister, for a 'messenger of God, one of a thousand, to show a man his uprightness,' Job 33:23. Then they are of great account and esteem. Oh, that we had the same notions of men and things in trouble and out of trouble, living and dying! it would prevent a great deal of mischief.

Reasons—(1.) Because the men are altered; (2.) Because their work is altered.

1. The men are altered, both in their judgments and affections.

[1.] In their judgments. The pride of their carnal reason is subdued; or rather, their reason is set free from the captivity of brutish passions. Now they know what sin is, the nature of it, and the danger of it, and what necessity lieth upon them to part with it. Formerly they lived by sense, and were under the power of brutish lusts, and they thought it more than needs to wind up men to such a pitch of holiness, or to call upon them to be so watchful, serious, and diligent; that this niceness and fond scrupulosity was over-doing. Now they see it is but necessary strictness; that these were their best friends. Smart experience openeth their eyes. They now feel the evil they never feared before; and by experience and sensible proof they see the deceit of them that cried, Peace, peace, that declaimed against strictness, and hated those that taught them the way of salvation: Prov. 28:23, 'He that rebuketh a man, afterward shall find more favour than he that flattereth with his tongue.' Rubbing an itch breedeth soreness and rawness.

[2.] Their affections are altered, the stubbornness of their hearts is subdued: Job 23:16, 'For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.' Before, Shall they pine and whine, and tremble at the word? No; they are no such babies. Till the arrows of Christ stick fast in the heart, they do not fall down before the truth: Ps. 45:5, 'Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee.'

2. Their work is altered. They mind that which requireth a minister's work, the salvation of their souls. They slight God and their souls, and therefore may well slight God's ministers. There is no work for them to do.

Use 1. To press ministers to evidence themselves to men's consciences rather than their lusts. Make known the truths of God sincerely to them: 2 Cor. 4:2, 'But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of



God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God;' 2 Cor. 5:11, 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.' You are accounted enemies for a while; but if ever God touch their hearts, they will love you, when they are freed from the slavery of their lusts. It is not those that have quaint notions and rhetorical flourishes, that cry, Peace unto them, that will then serve their turn.

Use 2. Is information, that he that hath a secret grudge and distaste against God's faithful servants and messengers was never kindly wrought upon. He might be touched at heart, but was not pricked at heart. They are sensible of a light that troubleth them, not a kindly remorse that maketh them to ask advice and counsel. If they had any true pangs of conscience, it would be otherwise.

Secondly, Their question, 'What shall we do?' that is, do to escape the deserved punishment, do to obtain remission of sins, do to be saved? Acts 16:30, as may be gathered by parallel places, and out of the apostle's answer, 'Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins;' and, 'Save yourselves from this untoward generation.' The point is—

Doct. That men are at a good and hopeful pass when once they come anxiously and fervently to ask, 'What shall we do to be saved?'

This is the usual question of men wounded in spirit and in straits of conscience: Acts 9:6, 'And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Luke 3:10, 'And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?' Acts 16:30, 'And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' Job 7:20, 'What shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?'

1. It is a weighty question.
2. When it is fitly proposed, it argueth a good and hopeful condition and state of soul.

1. It is a weighty question. The case is not for another, but for themselves. We read of an impertinent question put forth by Peter to Christ: John 21:21, 'Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, what shall this man do?' But here it is, 'What shall we do?' Many do not look inward, but are busy about the concerns of others. It is not, What shall he do? but, 'What shall we do?' It is not about intricate doubts, and nice debates, or the decision of scholastical questions, but a necessary thing. Curious questions argue too much levity and wantonness in those that propose them. Many that are heart-whole dispute and wrangle about nice things, but these ask advice. Those that wholly give up themselves to nice debates neglect the main profitable matters. A man in straits and pangs of conscience is not in a condition to trouble himself with niceties; he is in danger of hell, and his care is how he shall do to escape it. It is not about the body, but the soul; not for necessaries for the outward man. There are questions of that nature which we are apt to put: Mat. 6:25, 'What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we put on?' 'Take no thought for the body.' A man's main care is to save the soul. Christ, to divert them, puts them upon that: Mat. 6:33, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' These worldly questions perplex men's hearts; as their trouble is, so they inquire. If they distrust God's providence, what more usual than these questions? Once more, it is not about speculations, but practicals; not, What shall we say? but, What shall we do? Not about events: Luke 13:23, 'Lord, are there few that are saved?' but about duty. Chrysostom observeth well, They say not, How shall we be saved? but, 'What shall we do to be saved?' It is presumptuous folly to hope for the end without the means. There is somewhat to be done if we mean to be saved. Balaam said, 'Let me die the death of the righteous,' Num. 23:10. *At oportuit sic vixisse*—We should live so. There are means leading to every end. We must not think to go to heaven with hand in bosom, and land at the haven of glory when you turn the boat to the stream. Salvation will not be had without duty. That is worth nothing that is gotten for nothing, You cannot imagine such a worthy thing will cost you no pains. There is a proportion still between the means and the end: 1 Thes. 2:12,

'That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory; something that will answer the greatness of your hopes. Many will go to heaven as far and as fast as good hopes and good wishes will carry them. They make a gentleman-like life of the profession of godliness; their rents are brought in by their stewards, whether they sleep or wake, work or play. No; these converts propound it, 'What shall we do?' what course shall we take to save our souls?

But is not this a legal question, 'What shall we do?' as if heaven were to be had for doing?

Some think this is spoken with respect to the covenant of works, the sense of which is upon our hearts naturally. It is true such a question may be put in a legal way, as the young man that came to Christ, Mat. 19:16, 'And behold one came, and said unto him, Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' He was a rich man, but he saw his happiness lay not in riches, but in everlasting salvation; he desireth that, but he would earn it, and seek his justification by works. But to inquire after the necessary means without such a presumption of merit is not legal. Christ answereth him according to his legal apprehensions: ver. 17, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' That was the best way to humble a proud pharisee, to bid him make good his pretensions to keep the whole law in all points without sin; that was to hold him to his own covenant. But now Peter answereth these according to their meaning; they inquire after the way and means of relief: 'Repent, and be baptized for the remission of sins.' Well, then, we have found it a good and weighty question.

II. It is fitly propounded. It argueth a good and hopeful state of soul if anxiously and seriously put. We ask it in jest at other times, but convinced men are in the greatest earnest. Things now begin to be real, and seem other than formerly they did; they think, and speak, and talk like men in another world. Sin is another thing. They were wont to marvel what made men keep such a stir about sin; what

harm was it to take a little forbidden pleasure? that it was hard measure to be held so closely to duty; but now they have other thoughts, are at a loss, 'What shall we do?' This question seriously put argueth—

1. Their present helplessness, or a sense of their lost condition. They speak like men at a loss, and at their wit's end, finding Jesus to be the Christ, of whose death they were guilty, and so liable to God's heavy judgment. They had cried out, 'His blood be upon us and our children.' They could not undo what they had done, and now know not what to do. They speak like men wholly void of senses; as Reuben, 'The child is not, and whither shall I go?' Gen. 37:30. So upon this their perplexity ariseth. Sin will put men to a nonplus, and bring men to be shiftless and helpless; as Christ spake when he stood in our room, John 12:37, 'Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?' Job 7:20, 'I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?' What shall a sinner do? In earth there is no balm for his wounds. It is as the white of an egg. If he look to heaven, there is a God to condemn him; if to hell, there are devils to torment him. Their minds are distracted with the sense of the present evil. Now thus it should be before we can be brought home to Christ. He came to save that which was lost. You should be at such a loss that nothing should comfort you on this side Christ. Till the prodigal was brought to penury, and could no longer sustain himself by his shifts, he never thought of returning to his father; but then he did. There are two remarkable parts in conversion—to bring a man and himself together, to bring Christ and him together. A man cometh to himself by compunction, or a sense of his misery; but one great means to bring him to Christ is helplessness, when he can no longer shift for himself, and patch up a happiness by his own devices. Till we are at a loss, we go about like Ephraim: Jer. 31:22, 'How long wilt thou go about?' Man is a proud creature, loath to be beholden, would be sufficient to his own happiness; but when all his confidences are broken, then he casts himself into the arms of Christ, to be by him brought to God, when we see our utter inability to help ourselves.

2. This question argueth some kind of hope that there may be relief for them; for they do not give over the business as desperate, as if nothing could be done, but inquire, 'What shall we do?' Is there no remedy for such vile wretches as we are? They presume there is some course to be taken. There is a kind of twilight in the soul, neither utter despair nor certain hope; but only some present support, that we may not give over the business in despair: Joel 2:14, 'Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a meat-offering and a drink-offering unto the Lord your God?' They are in suspense, but incline to look for grace from God: Jonah 3:9, 'Who can tell if God will return, and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?' It is a venture, but such as encourageth them to wait. There is a possibility or probability, but not a certainty, that hope is the fruit of faith. Sensible sinners have many sad tossings and conflicts of spirit between the expectation of God's mercy and the sense of their own deservings, so that they cannot speak the pure language of faith nor the pure language of unbelief, but mixed and made up of both; as those Jews, Neh. 13:24, 'They spake half the language of the Jews, and half of Ashdod.' Yet such as it is, it maketh them wait and venture on God; as Benhadad's servants on the king of Israel: 1 Kings 20:31, 'And his servant said unto him, Behold, now we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth upon our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel; peradventure he will save thy life.' So these doubtful thoughts have a mixture of hope; yea, some predominancy of it; so that though they do not certainly determine, yet they will try what will become of it. Now the soul is in a hopeful way. Faith is coming on, and comfort will not be far off, when we make these adventures, and inquire, though we do not know what will come of it: Jer. 18:12, 'All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; for his righteousness which he hath done, he shall live.'

3. It expresseth their solicitude and anxious care, 'What shall we do?' It is a point of the highest consideration, and therefore they ask

counsel. When the Corinthians were made sorry by Paul's letter, 2 Cor. 7:11, 'This self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.' Carefulness and consultation about the means of grace and salvation is a hopeful beginning, and men are in a fair way of passing from death to life. The generality of the world is stupid and listless: Rom. 3:11, 'There is no man that understandeth, there is no man that seeketh after God.' Many never saw a need to do anything, nor have a heart to do anything; therefore when men come to consult, either with themselves or others, there is some hope. With themselves; as those lepers, 2 Kings 7:3, 4, 'And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate, and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians; if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die;' Luke 15:17, 18, 'And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish for hunger? I will arise, and go to my father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee.' And as the wise steward, Luke 16:3, 4, 'Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? For my lord taketh the stewardship from me: I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of my stewardship they may receive me into their houses.' Or when they consult with others, when a man asketh serious questions, how to frame his heart to the obedience of the gospel, how to establish his heart in the hopes of pardon and glory; this will come to somewhat. Men begin to be awake: Ps. 22:27, 'All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn to the Lord.' For a while they are like men sleeping and distracted; they do not act like men, having no sense, no heart for heavenly things. But when once they are full of pangs of conscience then there is hopes of them; then they are serious, and mind: things.

4. It expresseth their resignation. They do not stand hucking and dodging, but with readiness of mind offer themselves to be directed by the apostles: 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' As if they had said, We will do anything that you shall enjoin. This is the fashion and manner of those that are in a hopeful way of conversion. They are wont to resign and offer themselves to be guided by Christ in his own way to heaven, without reservation: Acts 9:6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' ready to obey him in all things. They do not dispense with some things, and say, Thus far can we go, or, The Lord be merciful to me in this; but absolutely, 'What shall we do to be saved?' There were some that would follow Christ upon conditions: Luke 9:59–62, 'And he said, Follow me; but he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. And Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury the dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. Another said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go and bid them farewell which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' Herod did many things; and the young man had a forwardness, and a longing desire. Now what is the reason they are so pliable to God's will, so ready to obey him in all things, without reserving any sin or lust? Partly because they see an absolute necessity of coming out of the condition in which they are. Turn and live, sin and die: Ezek. 18:32, 'For I have no pleasure in him that dieth, saith the Lord; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.' Therefore they are willing to be and do anything to come out of it. God being peremptory to punish sin, they must be as peremptory in forsaking sin, unless they mean to perish for ever. And partly because they think any condition more tolerable than that under which they are; for now they feel the evil they never felt before: Ps. 38:4, 'For mine iniquities are gone over my bead; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.' Therefore, if God will prescribe any terms to them, they will accept them. The evil of sin is so great, that there is no evil equal to it, no good that can countervail it. There is a pressing necessity on the soul. These are the considerations that prevail in this condition, before regeneration, or a real bent of heart towards God, and sound consent be wrought.

Use 1. Is reproof of our carelessness. We busy ourselves about the smallest matters: 1 Cor. 6:2, speaking of the things of this life, he calls them 'the smallest matters.' We will ask, What shall become of us? We are anxious about events, but not careful about duties; and this for the outward man, What we shall eat? not, 'What shall I do to be saved?' this question is very rare. A few poor, humble, broken-hearted christians, and some that are fallen under the chastening of the Lord, and are ready to die, they see the need and worth of salvation; but go up and down among people everywhere, we have no such questions as this. Now many live twenty or thirty years, and never question with themselves, Where am I? whither am I going? what shall become of me to all eternity? Oh, that we could more frequently, more seriously, put this question, and were more diligent and earnest to get it resolved. There is another question to make way for this: Jer. 8:6, 'What have I done?' And then there is another question after this: Hosea 14:8, 'What have I any more to do with idols?' These are the questions to be put to conscience. Certainly if you were troubled for sin, this would be your main inquiry; but in most people this is not in all their thoughts. Oh, how do we forget ourselves and our main errand in the world! How little do we mind that which most concerneth us! One drudgeth for riches, and another giveth up himself to pleasures. Hardly have we a thought wherefore we were born, and what will be the end of things; and therefore this is the least part of our care, how we shall do to be saved. Some that seem a little affected yet are not soundly awakened, have not such a care as so weighty a business doth require; like those that are heavy to sleep, that hear a great noise in the night, of wind, and rain, and thunder, or fire, are a little disturbed, but lie down and sleep again, and trouble themselves no more with it.

Use 2. To direct you how to further, and also how to judge of, your progress in the work of conversion.

1. When you begin to mind necessary things: Mat. 6:20, 21, 'But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal; for



where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also.' When you put questions to yourselves about heaven and the way thither, your thoughts must be more upon it, and your discourses tend that way; at least, you will be running to means to hear more of God and heaven.

2. When you have an anxious sense of your lost condition, and God hath showed you your danger, your hearts are troubled because of sin, that you find it a heavy burden, you are in the eye of the promise: Mat. 11:28, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest for your souls.'

3. When you find the burden groweth so heavy (as it was with the young man that came to Christ, Mat. 19) that you are resolved to save your souls whatever it cost you: Mat. 13:46, 'And when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all, and bought it.' Many cheapen the comforts of christianity, but do not go through with the bargain. You will not stick with God for anything, but set yourselves to do his will, whatever reluctances from within or disgrace and oppositions from without you meet with.

4. When your heart is so fixed and confirmed in this purpose, that when it cometh to trial and exigence, you do judge it better to deny your lusts, renounce your interests, run all hazards for Christ; you can thwart your affections, run through straits, disgraces, nicknames, scorns, and can lay down your life at Christ's feet, Mat. 18:8, 9; part with right hand or right eye. Better go to heaven with the loss of all, than to hell with the greatest crown.

## **SERMON IV**

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.—ACTS 2:38.

IN the former verse we had their serious question; here is Peter's seasonable answer. They that take a right course, and seriously inquire after the way of salvation, are not likely to be disappointed. God saith, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,' Mat. 7:7. Men that are in good earnest in the use of means shall not be refused in any needful suit. Therefore 'Stand ye in the ways, and see; ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls,' Jer. 6:16. So do these poor wounded souls do, and so must we do. Now what was the effect? It is the part of a good physician not only to discover the disease, but also to prescribe a remedy; especially should spiritual physicians be tender of broken-hearted sinners, willing and ready to give them counsel. When Judas had a wound in his conscience, he cometh to the high priest, and said, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.' But do they tender his case, or afford him any relief in his great straits? No; 'What is that to us? see thou to that,' Mat. 27:4; they leave him to his own horrors and despairing thoughts. But Peter dealeth more compassionately with these converts: he doth not upbraid them with their past sin, and leave them in despair, but giveth them wholesome counsel and advice for the good of their souls: 'Then Peter said unto them,' &c.

In Peter's direction and counsel to them take notice—(1.) What he persuadeth them to do; (2.) The argument by which he persuadeth them; what they shall do, and what they shall receive.

In the first, two things—

1. 'Repent.'
2. 'Be baptized in the name of Christ.' What? why? and to what end? 'For the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.'

First, The first thing he persuadeth them to is repentance. But this advice seemeth needless, yea, burdensome. Was it seasonable to

press men that lay under deep terror and compunction to repent? Is not this to break a bruised reed, and add sorrow to sorrow?

Ans. No such matter. Therefore I shall—

1. Show the difference between the former work, and that to which they are now pressed.
2. Evidence to you that this is a proper cure.

[1.] The difference. Before it was κατενύγησαν; now it is μετανοήσατε. There is a great difference between these things. The word is more capacious, implying a change of mind and counsel. If you take repentance for godly sorrow and trouble of heart, yet still there is a difference between the former work and this. The former sorrow was legal, wrought by terror, and a fear of being damned; this is evangelical, wrought by a sense of God's love. A malefactor ought not only to be sorry for his crime while he is in suspense, and knoweth not how his prince will deal with him, but after he is pardoned is still to be ashamed and grieved for his offence. Their former sorrow was an involuntary impression; this an active grief. They were pricked at heart whether they would or no. Now repent: he would have that work theirs. That was dolor morbi, the pain of the disease; this was dolor medicinæ, the trouble of physic, or the smart that comes by the cure. That sting was the effect of an accusing conscience, which may be in the wicked; this the grief of a confessing penitent, which argueth a tender heart.

[2.] It is a proper cure. They were in sorrow; therefore repent. *Ars deinde sequatur, natura monstrante viam.* Physicians will cure men of fluxes by giving a purge, and stay vomiting and a disposition to cast by a vomit, divert bleeding by letting of blood; so they were in trouble and anguish, and he presseth them to repent, in a kindly manner to come and bewail their sin to God: 'Repent, and be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins.'

Doct. Repentance is one special means which God hath instituted for the cure of a wounded soul.

Not only faith, as Acts 16:31, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;' but repentance. Indeed those two are the two great means: Acts 20:21, 'Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.'

I. Let us see what is repentance, or wherein it consists. There are three words by which it is expressed: μετανοια; that word you have in the text, and it signifieth an after-wit, or a change of mind. Secondly, The next word is μεταμέλεια, an after-sorrow, or a change of heart; that word you have Mat. 21:29, 'But afterwards he repented, and went,' μεταμεληθείς ἀπῆλθε; he was sorry for his refusal. Thirdly, μεταστρεψις, an after-turning, or a change of course. That word you have Acts 3:19, 'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted;' μετανοήσατε καὶ μεταστρέψατε: Acts 9:35, 'And turned to the Lord;' as he that hath walked in a wrong course bethinketh himself, and goeth back again, and taketh another way. In all these three consists repentance; not in one alone, not in a change of mind. Many a man knoweth better, but doeth that which is worse. Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor. There must be a change of heart as well as a change of mind, such a sorrow for sin as 'crucifieth the flesh, with the affections and lusts,' Gal. 5:24, that doth weaken the power and interest of sin in the heart; and not only a change of heart, but a change of course. Many men are troubled for sin, but still go on in the practice of sin. Vera pœnitentia est, saith Augustine, pœnitenda non admittere, et admissa deflere; such a change of heart as draweth with it a change of life; to repent for what is past, and amend what is to come: Prov. 28:13, 'He that confesseth, and forsaketh his sin, shall find mercy.' Well, then, repentance consisteth not in an acknowledgment of sin, and saying, God be merciful; but it is a change of our minds, hearts, purposes, and evil course of life.

1. Μετάνοια, a change of mind and understanding: Rom. 12:2, 'Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.' A transmutation is necessary, by which a sinner beginneth to approve the law of God, which before he disliked, and to prize holy things, which before he lightly esteemed; to see the excellency and sweetness of the spiritual life, and walking in communion with God, which before he disesteemed as a heavy bondage or a foolish niceness: 1 Cor. 2:14, 'For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' In short, men's eyes are opened, and they have other thoughts of sin and duty than ever they had before. They did not think sin so bad as they find it; nor that there was so much good and sweetness in a course of obedience. Now he seeth that all this while he hath gone astray, and been prejudiced against his own happiness: Titus 3:3, 'For we ourselves were sometimes foolish and disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another;' 1 Cor. 3:18, 'Let no man deceive himself; if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.' That sin which was his delight before, is now his burden. He was wont to marvel why men kept such a stir about sin, and that their complaints were but words of course; now he seeth it is the most hateful thing in the world, and all that was said is little enough to express the odiousness of it. He was wont to think a course of holy walking to be a dark, sad, and gloomy course; but now his judgment is altered, he seeth that nothing is so lovely and sweet as obedience, and no liberty but in God's service; that none live at large so much as they whose lusts are restrained, and whose consciences are still held under the awe of God's precepts. He was wont to call the proud happy and blessed, and that none lived so comfortable a life as they that had both ability and opportunity to please the flesh; now he seeth they are the most miserable creatures in the world, because their snares and temptations are multiplied, and that poor afflicted godliness is a far better condition; no preachers or scriptures are now too strict for him. This is a change of mind.

2. Μεταμέλεια, an after-care, when the soul cometh to grief, and shame, and sorrow, and hatred of sin: 2 Cor. 7:10, 'For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death.' Godly sorrow is of great use in repentance, to alienate and turn away the soul from sin. Our evil estate consisteth not so much in this, that we have sin, as that we love sin. Here lieth the root of all our mischief, that we are φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι, 'that we are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God,' 2 Tim. 3:4. Therefore, to dig at the root of sin, this breaking and rending the heart with godly sorrow is necessary, that the bitterness of grief may make it loathsome to us: Job 2:13, 'His grief was great.' Therefore we must exercise ourselves with grief, and shame, and sorrow, because of our doings, and be touched with a deep sense of our folly and unkindness to God, that we have wronged God, and abused his grace.

3. There is μεταστρεψις, a change of life. This ensueth upon the change of heart. By the change of heart we put off the old man, with his deceitful lusts; and then there must needs be a change in our conversations: Mat. 2:2, 'Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance;' such as will evidence a thorough change wrought in us, and give us a certain proof of it: Isa. 55:7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' This is always a-doing, wherein there is something privative and positive: in the privative part, the internal work is the chief, when a man maketh conscience of his thoughts; the positive part is when a man maketh it the great business and trade of his life: Acts 24:16, 'And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men.'

Reasons to prove that this is one special means which God hath instituted for the cure of a wounded soul.

1. Because it is God's prescribed course. The Lord himself must state the terms upon which his grace shall be dispensed; now he hath

appointed this way: Acts 3:19, 'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Repentance is a means or condition, or moral qualification on our parts; it is *conditio sine qua non*, without which we are not capable of the benefit. The first moving cause is the mercy and grace of God: Isa. 43:25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' The meritorious and procuring cause is the blood of Christ: Eph. 1:7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin.' That is the satisfaction given to God for our offences, to repair him in point of honour. But the causes do not exclude our duty; there must be something done on our part by way of application to make our right and title clear, and that is faith and repentance: these two sister graces, the one respects God, and the other the Mediator Jesus Christ: 'Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' Acts 20:21. The offence is done to God, and he is the party to whom we return by Christ. These two graces go hand in hand, and we must not put asunder what God hath joined together. If you ask which goes first? that is hard to say; there is not such a distinction of time in the work of conversion that we can tell which is first or which is last; the work is intermingled. The case in the new birth is somewhat like as it was in the travail of Tamar, Zarah putteth out the hand, but Pharez breaketh out first. We feel repentance, it is first in our sense; but faith is the first-born, the elder sister. When a candle is brought into a room, the light showeth itself before the candle. Faith is first in order of nature, for without it no act is pleasing to God, Heb. 11:6. Well then, repentance is God's prescribed course to get our sins blotted out; that is, either out of the book of his remembrance, or out of the book of conscience. Out of the book of his remembrance: Col. 2:14, 'Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us, nailing it to his cross;' that is, crossed out by the blood of Christ. But out of the book of conscience it is blotted by the Spirit of Christ: Heb. 10:22, 'Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water;' when he giveth us gospel peace and comfort.

2. Because the saints have found it an effectual course, and marvellously successful. God taught David by his own experience that the exercise of repentance was the right way to seek relief, after his spirits had been wasted and his flesh almost dried up: 'I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity I have not hid; said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin,' Ps. 32:5. When he resolved sincerely to humble his heart before God, nay, though the purpose was not yet put into act, he felt the comfort. Another instance may be that, Jer. 31:18–20, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon the thigh: I was ashamed; yea, confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.' There is Ephraim's bewailing his sin, and God's returning an answer full of fatherly affection: at first he was like an unruly bullock, not easily brought to the yoke, but yet at length, when he was touched with shame and sorrow, then, 'Is not Ephraim a dear son? a pleasant child?'

3. Because it is the way to remove sin, which is the ground of the trouble, and that which hath given the soul such a deadly wound. There are two things that trouble the conscience, the guilt and power of sin; and we must be eased of both, or else the plaster will not be as broad as the sore. A man that hath his leg broken, to be eased only of his smart will not suffice him, he must have it set right again: 1 John 1:9, 'If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Now repentance worketh on both parts of the sin, the removal of the guilt, and also the filthiness and inherent corruption; it maketh way for the pardon of sin and the removal of the guilt of it, as I said before; and the whole tenor of the gospel showeth it, as Melancthon rightly defineth



it against Islebus first, and Flaccius and his followers. The gospel is nothing else but a doctrine of repentance and remission of sin: these are two great points. Look upon Christ as a lawgiver: Luke 12:47, 'The servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.' Or as a saviour and fountain of grace: Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.' He requireth and giveth repentance in order to the remission of sins. Secondly, For the other part, the power of sin; it mainly serveth for that, and is required for that. We use salt and bitter potions to kill the worms. The lusts that haunt our souls are best mortified by the bitterness and sorrows of repentance, otherwise it is sweet and dear to the soul, and we are apt to roll it under our tongue. This rending of hearts spoileth the taste of sin: Gal. 5:24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.' Sorrow assaulteth sin in its strength, which is love of pleasure, for all sin is founded in flesh-pleasing delights; it is lust draweth him away by some pleasurable lure or bait; the flesh is all for sensitive pleasure, and the proper cure for it is godly sorrow.

Use 1. If this be God's instituted course to ease troubled consciences, then they are physicians of no value for poor wounded souls that would direct you to another course; either, first, pleasures, and sports, and plays, and play-books, and other merry books and company, and carnal diversions to get off heart-qualms. Some such mountebanks in religion there be in the world, that seek to divert men's grief rather than to put it away; this is like a man in debt, that drinketh away the thoughts of it, but his misery is never the further off. Secondly, Others seek to cure trouble for sin with further sins; as men to ease themselves of the pains of a scald will hold the flesh to the fire again. This may stupify the conscience, but God hath means enough to awaken it. There is a worm that shall never die, and you will feel it one day. Others would have altogether lenitives, and cannot endure the sour doctrine of repentance, but would have men honied and oiled with grace; decry this as not suiting with their loose apprehensions of the gospel. John said, 'Repent,' Mat. 3:2; Jesus

Christ saith, 'Repent, and believe the gospel;' Mark 1:15; and Mark 6:12, 'And the apostles went out and preached that men should repent.' There is a fleshly laziness and wantonness in men; they cannot endure to hear of the severe and grave exercises of religion; and when we go Christ's way to do them good, they are displeased. If we did come to you in our own name, and had a liberty of giving indulgence to one another, we might huddle up the matter; nay, if we were left to our reason and discretion, we need not stand so exactly upon godly sorrow and serious self-loathing; but God hath prescribed this course. Now why should we stick at it? You should thankfully acknowledge the privilege; be glad that repentance is granted, rather than grumble because it is required that we have leave to repent; not mutter because of this command to repent. It was counted a favour heretofore: Acts 11:18, 'Then hath God also to the gentiles granted repentance unto life.' The law doth not say, 'I will not the death of a sinner, but that he repent and live;' but, 'Do this and live, sin and die.' The law doth not say, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden;' but, 'Depart, ye cursed.' It calleth for exact obedience, or threateneth eternal ruin. It is a grace granted to man above angels. God did not propound terms of repentance to them, whereby they should recover their lost estate, when they sinned; they were left to their own obstinacy. A truly burdened soul is glad of this order and method; the guilt of sin is not only his trouble, but the power of it: they like no terms like God's terms. Fulgentius saith, It is vile unthankfulness to prefer softness and carnal ease above the comfort of godly exercises. If repentance seem a burden, the fruits of sin in the end will be much greater: if this part of religion seem distasteful, the comfort of being well settled and established upon sound terms will be much greater than all the trouble it puts us to.

Use 2. Is to persuade you to this work upon the necessity of this course. It is not only necessary necessitate præcepti, but medii. It is an irksome duty, but necessary. Till ye are brought to repentance, ye never had, nor can have, pardon of sins, and so no true peace of conscience. Some things have only the necessity of a duty, we sin if

we do it not; but this hath the necessity of a remedy, we perish if we omit it. It is not only a duty but a remedy. When a father shall command a sick child to use such a remedy to save his life, he is not only guilty of disobedience if he refuse it, but destroyeth his own life by refusing a remedy necessary to preserve it. This is absolutely necessary. If you disobey God in other things, yet you should not in the command of repentance: those that need none, and care for none, Christ will have nothing to do with them: Mat. 9:13, 'For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Would you hope for mercy in another way than God and Christ are agreed on? But because exhortations lose their force unless they be particularly directed, I must speak to two sorts.

1. Some that never yet repented nor turned to the Lord. Oh, consider, without repentance no pardon, and without pardon no salvation; he that remaineth in his sins shall die in his sins. You may have experience of God's patience and common goodness, but never of his special mercy. A dog when he dieth will be in a better case than you: a dog when he dieth, his misery dieth with him; but the misery of an impenitent sinner then beginneth. You are condemned already, what hindereth execution? only God tarrieth, 'is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,' 2 Peter 3:9. He is willing to take a little more pains with you, to give you a little further time; but do you know how long he will bear? Have you any certain lease of enjoying the world and the comforts you now have? After a few more refusals of his renewed offers, and slighting of his mercies and patience, who can tell but God may take the denial, and fret the slender thread of life asunder? Who knoweth but the next day he will say, 'Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?' Therefore it is time to set about self-loathing and grieving for your sins, and dedicating yourselves seriously to God's use and service.

2. To those that have repented already, to renew their repentance. This is a work that must always be doing, if you would maintain quiet and peace in your souls. As long as there is sin in your hearts, you

ought to groan under it: Rom. 7:24, 'Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!' And as often as sin is committed, so often must repentance be renewed: sin and trouble are inseparable. Conscience would be no conscience if it were otherwise. Therefore I would press you—

[1.] To use this way constantly of fetching out grace. As your salvation is carried on from faith to faith, Rom. 1:17, so from repentance to repentance. By repeated acts of the first graces our privileges are continued to us. Faith is never out of season, nor repentance; it is as necessary afterwards as it was at first, whenever you sin against God. Those that have a Father in heaven must still come to him for forgiveness, Mat. 6:13. It is a renewed act, for the continuance, sense, and the increase of the sense and feeling of pardon. If you are prejudiced against such a course, you have no reason to think your sins are pardoned. The christian religion revealeth no other way of comfort and sound peace; and that assurance is justly liable to suspicion which can be maintained without repentance.

But you will say, Sinners are pardoned already; justification is one indivisible act of grace, pardoning all sins past, present, and to come.

I answer—Though there be a justification of the person, yet there is a reiterated remission. There is a great deal of difference between the merit of pardon, justification of the person, and the actual remission of sin: the merit is but once, Christ never needeth to suffer more; the justification of the person is obtained upon our actual interest in Christ; then there is a release from the eternal punishment and wrath due to us because of sin. A believer can no more come under the power of the second death: this sentence is never reversed.

But now, pardon of sin is another thing: Acts 13:38, 39, 'Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by

the law of Moses.' The sinner is justified, but not the sin; these are distinct things. Justification noteth the state of the person, that is once upon our implantation into Christ; but upon every peccant act we need a new pardon, that is repeated as sins are committed. Before it is committed it is not remitted, for it is not sin. It is pardoned in that notion in which it is sin; virtually pardoned, but not formally. Justification is the grant of a privilege, that we have interest in remission of sin.

Well, then, let me press you to—(1.) A daily repentance for daily sins; (2.) A solemn repentance on the occasion of special duties.

(1.) To a daily repentance for daily sins. As we pray for daily bread, so for daily pardon; we need one as much as the other. We daily heap up new sins, and we must daily sue out our pardon. This was the method God took with Adam when he was fallen: God came to him in the cool of the day, Gen. 3:8. God would not let them sleep in their sins, that he might bring them suddenly to recall themselves, and consider what they had done, that they might long rest quiet in their sins. Under the law, if a man were unclean, yet when the evening came he was to wash his clothes, Lev. 11:25; so we read of the evening sacrifice: Num. 28:3, 4, 'This is the offering made by fire, which ye shall offer unto the Lord; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt-offering: the one lamb shall be offered in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even;' Eph. 4:26, 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.' If poison is taken, a man would get rid of it as soon as he could. While our faults are in mind, repentance is more kindly; as fresh wounds are best cured at first, before they fester and rankle into a sore. Sin gets less ground, and we shall have rest the sooner; and it is good to divide our work by parts, to come to an account, and make all even between God and us every day, as merchants sum up their accounts at the foot of every page; we shall have the less to do when we come to die.

(2.) To a solemn repentance on the occasion of special duties. At the Lord's table we come to renew our sense of the remission of sins; for

the cup of the new testament is given for that end: Mat. 26:28, 'For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.' We use this duty for the obtaining of this benefit, either to get a confirmation or new extract when our discharge hath been darkened by former failings. Now as we would renew the sense of pardon, so we must renew the exercise of repentance. There are two duties required of us in order to that work—(1.) Examination; (2.) Meditation on Christ's death.

First, examination, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.' Look into thy bill; what owest thou? When we come to counting and reckoning with ourselves, how many defects and failings may we discover! If that work be done seriously, we must needs come humbly and penitently. Well, then, in this serious work consider—

1. The exact purity of the law; it condemneth the secret motions of our souls, thoughts, lusts, imperfect desires: 'The law is spiritual, but I am carnal,' Rom. 7:14. 'What shall we do?' There are few that can stand before the letter of the law, but who can stand before the spiritual meaning of it? You do not set up other gods; ay, but your hearts are estranged by the secret idols of your hearts from the true God: Ezek. 14:3, 5, 'These men have set up their idols in their hearts, because they are estranged from me through their idols;' as the Jews preferred Barabbas before Christ. Practical atheism is worse than speculative. You may reason a man out of one, but not out of the other; that is cured by grace. You abhor idols and images, but do your hearts submit to all the ordinances of Christ, to use them to the ends appointed? You cannot endure vain or rash swearing, but doth thy life praise God? Is there that reverence and seriousness in all matters of God? You hate Sabbath profanations, but do you call it your delight? You honour parents, but do you carry yourselves well in all your relations, and live as in the fear of God, and make conscience of the duties which belong to them? You are no murderers, but make no conscience of rash anger; no adulterers, but yet have wanton glances and unclean motions, Mat. 5:28. No thief, but have no charity; do not take away that which is another's, but do

not give your own; no liar, but a slanderer, whisperer, backbiter; thy life is a lie, when thou wouldst seem better than thou art; suppress the first motions; but, 'Who can say his heart is clean, I am pure from my sin?' Prov. 20:9.

2. The holiness of God, we have not sense enough of that: Job 4:18, 'His angels he chargeth with folly;' 1 Sam. 6:20, 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?' I would excite christians to have a sense of this above all things.

3. Our proneness to sin: Ps. 40:12, 'For innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me.'

4. The strictness of the last day's account. A long process: 1 Cor. 4:5, 'Who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart.' Not only the state of the person, but all our actions. Conscience will be extended to the recollecting of all our ways; a general bill will not serve the turn: else how will the wicked be ashamed, and the righteous applauded? Idle words will come into account at that day, Mat. 12:36.

Second, Meditation of Christ's death. He that maketh light of sin is guilty of the contempt of Christ's blood, that either despiseth the causes or effects of it: 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 done despite to the Spirit of grace?' It was not shed for a light cause, nor to produce mean effects: it showeth the heinousness of sin as well as the worth of God's image and favour: Zech. 12:10, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.' Faith is required to promote repentance.

(3.) After heinous sins we are especially to humble ourselves before God: this is the ready way to obtain pardon: Ps. 32:5, 'I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquities have I not hid: I said, I will acknowledge my transgression unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin;' 1 Kings 20:32, 'And they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee let me live.' Better come in voluntarily, than be drawn in by force. Heinous sins are wont to rifle all our confidences, therefore after such failings we are more seriously to renew our repentance, and to humble our souls in the sight of God.

## **SERMON V**

Repent, and be baptized in the name of Christ.—ACTS 2:38.

DOCT. That we obtain remission of sins by believing in the name of Christ.

By 'the name of Christ' is meant Christ himself, as revealed and set forth in the gospel; the doctrine of his person and office: Acts 4:12, 'Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved;' that is, Christ is the only person by whom we shall be saved; and Christ, as revealed in the gospel; for that is the name by which he maketh himself known to us. Now this must be received and applied by faith; so Peter explaineth it elsewhere: Acts 3:16, 'And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong.' The name of Christ is Christ himself, and he puts forth his power upon believing.

I shall, for the opening of this point—(1.) Show what Christ doth or hath done for the pardon of sins; (2.) That no other but Christ can procure this benefit for us; (3.) The necessity of faith, that we may apply it to ourselves.



I. What Christ doth or hath done in order to the pardon of sins. This benefit is chiefly the fruit of his priestly office. Now in his priestly office there are two parts—his oblation and intercession. They are spoken of in many places, but both together you have in one place: 1 John 2:1, 2, 'My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not; and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.' Our propitiation and our advocate. Let me insist upon these two notions—

1. He is our propitiation. Christ is not only ἱλαστής, our propitiator, but ἱλασμός, our propitiation; that is, victima, ἱλαστικὴ, the propitiatory sacrifice that was offered to God to appease his wrath for our sins. He is both the priest and the sacrifice, the propitiator and propitiation. This last is what we now pitch upon; and the apostle telleth us, Rom. 3:25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.' The justice of God, and the truth of his commination in the former dispensation, permitted not so great a benefit to be bestowed without a satisfaction; and this Christ hath made: so that God may be just, though he forgive sin. There can be no propitiation for sin without the expiation of it. The expiation of sin is by suffering the punishment due to it, which Christ hath done for us by his death, and so made way for our pardon and discharge.

2. He is our advocate, 'We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' There are several terms by which Christ's pleading his merit for us, and going between us and God, are set forth, and they have all their proper use. We shall compare them with this term of an advocate. The general word is 'mediator.' Christ is a mediator both in respect of his person and office, but an advocate only in respect of his office. A mediator, as a middle person indifferently disposed between two parties, that hath a mutual interest in both parties: Job 9:33, 'Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.' One that mindeth the concernments of both, and could value the honour of God and

the sins and misery of man. A mediator in respect of all his offices, but an advocate in respect of his priestly office. A mediator, as he doth deal with God for man, and with man for God, pacifying God towards man, and bringing man to God; but an advocate as interceding with God and pleading our cause in heaven: 'We have an advocate with the Father.' Another word is 'intercessor.' Intercession doth more of itself look like a friendly entreaty; as Jonathan interceded for David: 1 Sam. 19:4, 'And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because his works have been to thee-wards very good.' And Joab for Absalom's return, after he had suborned the woman of Tekoah: 2 Sam. 14:22, 'And Joab said, To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.' But advocate is *verbum forense*, a judicial word; it noteth Christ's undertaking the cause of a believer in a legal and judicial way; not to solicit our pardon, but plead it, and make it out in a judicial way. Once more, Christ is not *patronus*, a word used in the civil law, but *advocatus*. A patron or defender is one that undertaketh to justify the fact, but an intercessor or advocate is one that pleadeth to prevent the punishment, that doth not defend the fault, but intercedeth for the remission of the offence.

Now in what manner this intercession is managed, and how Christ acts the part of an advocate for us, needeth a little to be cleared.

It will not be enough to say that his merit and sufferings do continue to deserve such things for us, as if his pleading were only the virtue of his merit, which figuratively may be said to plead good for his people. So the apostle telleth us, 'The blood of sprinkling doth yet speak,' Heb. 12:24. As the blood of Abel against Cain, so his blood for us. To grant no more than this would quite overturn the great act of Christ's intercession. And yet, on the other side, it cannot be thought that he intercedeth with such gestures and verbal expressions as men use with men, or as he himself did in the days of his flesh, when he offered up prayers with strong cries and tears, Heb. 5:7, which did

become the state of his humiliation, but not his glorification. These are the two extremes.

Let us now see what it is.

[1.] This intercession of his may be conceived to consist in his appearing in heaven in our name, whereby the Son of God, being now man, presenteth himself as ready to answer for such and such sinners. His very being there in our nature speaketh his purpose in reference to this end, and God accepteth of it according to appointment: Heb. 9:24, 'For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' He presenteth himself as one that hath made satisfaction for our offences, hath performed his sacrifice without the camp, and bringeth blood before the mercy-seat.

[2.] It may be supposed also to include a declared willingness and desire in our behalf to have such requests granted, such sinners pardoned. This was a part of his intercession: John 17:24, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.' 'Father, I will.' He declareth this to be his will; it was his interceding to have it accomplished. The like may be conceived in heaven. Thus far Aquinas explaineth it: *Interpellat autem pro nobis, primo, humanitatem, quam pro nobis assumpsit, representando; item animæ suæ sanctissimæ desiderium, quod de salute nostra habuit, exprimendo*—he intercedes for us by presenting his human nature, which he took for us; and also by expressing the desire of his most holy soul for our salvation.

But is there not more? Certain it is that a proper and formal prayer is not contrary to the human nature of Christ in that glorious estate in which it now is, neither as hypostatically united to the Godhead, nor as glorified. Not the first, for that he had in *via*, in which he made prayers and strong cries, Heb. 5:7. Not the second; still it is a creature, inferior to God, therefore capable of prayer. Indeed, when

he was in the form of a servant, there was more subjection than now in heaven; but still he prayeth. Therefore—

[3.] There is a holy, reverent, though inconceivable adoration of the sovereign majesty of God, whereby the Mediator, now at the Father's right hand, doth in all his appearing for us, as being the head of the body, adore the sovereignty, goodness, and wisdom of God with respect to the covenant of redemption, and sue out the benefits due to him thereby, namely, the pardon of our sins, and our comfort and peace: 'Ask of me,' Ps. 2:8. By virtue of his paid ransom he may call for those blessings that are necessary for those that come to God by him. His saying to his disciples oftener than once, 'I will pray the Father for you,' John 14:16, 'And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;' this doth imply some address to God, even in respect to peculiar persons and particular cases. It is a suing out of his merit in their behalf. I would add one thing more.

[4.] He presents our prayers and supplications which we make in the behalf of ourselves to God, after he hath set us a-work by his Spirit: Rev. 8:3, 'And there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne;' Heb. 8:1, 2, 'We have such a high priest, who is seated on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary.' He presents our prayers to his Father, perfumed with his merit. By his Spirit we are furnished with sighs and groans.

II. No other but Christ can procure this benefit for us.

1. Because none else was appointed: Acts 4:12, 'Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' Authorised by the Father: Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.' This is necessary, because the supreme authority resideth with

God, who must and will choose in what way he will be satisfied and reconciled to sinners. Moses, that interposed of his own accord to be a mediator, was refused: Exod. 32:32, 33, 'Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.' Christ is authorised to do you good: John 8:42, 'Neither came I of myself, but he sent me.' Christ had a commission from his Father.

2. Because it needed to appear to us upon good evidence that he is the party whom God sets forth to save sinners. This is *opus liberi consilii*, an act of God's free grace; and therefore it cannot be determined by natural reason, but we must stand to the way revealed by God. The light of nature may show that man is fallen, but the light of nature cannot show the way of restoration. Heathens could not dream of it. The angels only knew it by the church: Eph. 3:10, 'To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' Those natural apostles, the sun and moon, are gone up and down the world to preach a God, an infinite and an eternal power; their sound is gone out into all lands; and conscience joining with this discovery will easily tell us that this God hath not been glorified as God; therefore we are obnoxious to him.

3. This appointment needed to be evidenced to the world by some notable discovery, that the world may be satisfied that this revelation is from God: John 6:27, 'For him hath the Father sealed.' Christ hath a commission and letters patent sealed with the broad seal of heaven. As every ambassador hath letters of credence under the hand and seal of that prince from whom he is sent, so Christ working miracles, and giving other demonstrations of the divinity of his person, hath manifested his commission, that he is the person authorised to do us good: Acts 10:38, 'How God hath anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him;' ver. 43, 'To him gave all the prophets witness, that, through his

name, whosoever believeth in him should receive remission of sins.' He is the person. If you saw none of his miracles, the whole church in all ages and places will come as a witness and deposit for it, and we have the scriptures of the old testament, and many evident principles of natural light, that have a fair correspondence with this mystery. Well, then, God, the supreme judge, hath taken up the controversy between him and us, and appointed Jesus Christ to be the person. His institution is instead of all reasons.

Again, none else is able to satisfy God and pacify conscience.

[1.] Not to satisfy God. Sin being committed against an infinite majesty, the suffering by which he is expiated must be of an infinite value; and therefore it is impossible that any or all the angels, though holy and just, should propitiate God for our sins. As angels, they were not capable of punishment; and though they should have assumed human nature, yet being but finite creatures, the worth of their sufferings would not be infinite. Therefore Christ himself, being God and man, was capable to suffer, and give a value to his sufferings; and therefore we are said to be redeemed by the blood of God, Acts 20:28, that is, by the blood of that person that was God. God would lose no glory by the fall; therefore, whoever was the redeemer, he was to restore what Adam lost: Ps. 69:4, 'I restored that which I took not away.' Adam was the robber, but Christ was to make amends. By the fall God's authority was violated, his honour despised. His authority was violated in the creature's transgression; his command was just, our obedience reasonable. Now it was meet that God should keep up the authority of his law. His majesty despised in the threatenings; his holiness, as if he did not hate sin; his justice and truth, as if he would not punish it; his power, it was an act of presumption, and a contest with God. Now in all these respects it was necessary God should vindicate his glory, and be no loser, which is fully done by Christ.

[2.] Not pacify conscience. Conscience is not pacified till God be satisfied. God is infinitely merciful, but infinitely just. We cannot

expect any more pity from his mercy than fear from his justice; yea, guilty nature is more presagious of evil than of good, as appeareth when we are sensible and serious. Every conscience must have content and satisfaction; therefore till we can have such a righteousness as will take off the guilt of former sins, and make us bold to stand before God, which only we can have in Christ, guilty nature can never be quiet, nor till God be pacified. Conscience is God's deputy; till he be satisfied, the creatures are at a loss. The great inquiry of nature is, 'Wherewith will he be pleased?' Micah 6:6, 7, 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, and the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' Barbarous cruelties and costly offerings. Again, lost nature knoweth something of a sacrifice, and something of price and value. Now judge you whether God be satisfied or no. First, A priori. He hath the sacrifice of his own appointing: Heb. 9:13, 14, 'For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?' The sacrifices of the law could do that for which they were appointed, which was typical expiation and external sanctification; they did qualify for worship-work, so far as appointed. And the same apostle saith, Heb. 9:9, 'Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as appertaining to the conscience.' There was no real worth in themselves. The conscience could not have found any ground of satisfaction how God's justice could be satisfied by such mean things as the blood of bulls and goats. There must be something penal, something of value. But in this sacrifice, besides God's institution, there is a real intrinsic worth, which is the dignity of the person and the innocency of the person; but he could not offer it for himself, therefore it must be intended for some other. Secondly, A posteriori. Consider how God

hath accepted Christ. Christ is risen, our surety let out of prison. The Lord sent an angel to remove the stone, not to supply any lack of power in Christ, but as a judge, when the law is satisfied, sends an officer to open the prison doors. As the apostles, Acts 16:38, 39, 'And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates; and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans; and they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.' 'The God of peace brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ,' Heb. 13:20. Though Christ had power to rise, yet not authority till the angel rolled away the stone: he did not break prison, but was brought out; then he arose. If our surety had perished in prison, we could have no assurance; and if he had continued under death, the world could have no discharge. But he rose again for our justification, Rom. 4:25. And not only so; Christ is not only taken out of prison, but carried up to God in glory and honour: received into heaven, 1 Tim. 3:16; not ἀνέβη, ascended, but ἀνελήφθη, received. God hath rewarded him; therefore Christ hath perfectly done his work. God hath not only taken him out of the grave, but taken him up to glory. Certainly God is well pleased, since he hath not only given him a discharge, but a reward. He did undertake to carry it through; as Reuben said, Gen. 43:9, 'I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, let me bear the blame for ever.'

[3.] None so willing to relieve a poor afflicted creature as Christ: Heb. 2:17, 'Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and a faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.' He was once at liberty, but when he had undertaken he was bound. He was merciful to undertake, and faithful to accomplish it. He was God, equal in glory with the Father; yet merciful to us, and faithful to God: merciful in dying, faithful in interceding, and mindful of us at every turn; and so every way qualified to do our souls good.

III. The necessity of faith, that it may be applied to us.



1. There must be an application. Many think there is a Jesus Christ, we need take no further care, he did die for sinners, and therefore we shall do well enough. No; there must be some way how we may come to receive benefit; besides the meritorious cause, there must be an effectual application, for we read of blood shed and blood sprinkled, of making the atonement and receiving the atonement, Rom. 5:11. It is for Christ's sake, for his merit and worthiness, that we are accepted. But then there is a way appointed how we shall be accepted; therefore let us not presume of a propitiation without application. The cup of salvation yieldeth no benefit to us except we drink of it. Therefore since such a great part of the world miscarry, let us see that we do not defraud ourselves of so great a benefit.

2. That God must state the way of application as well as the way of redemption. There is the same reason for the one as for the other; that God should propose the terms upon which Christ should be made ours; for all is a work of his free grace and counsel. Well, then, we must be careful to find out God's appointment, and the way of salvation which he hath declared: Rom. 3:25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' Not, 'through his blood;' but 'through faith in his blood.'

3. God hath declared this way to be faith: Acts 10:43, 'That through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' First, The scripture is very express in limiting the promises of pardon to believers: John 3:16, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Secondly, In declaring all those to be under the curse that believe not: John 3:36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' Thirdly, In placing faith, correlatively taken, in the room which works had in the first covenant. Thence so often have we these sayings, 'It is of faith, not of works,' which we meet with everywhere; so that there needeth no more ado. Faith is then required, not in the popish sense, as if faith were the beginning of that righteousness for which sins are forgiven;

neither is faith that which God accepteth instead of righteousness, but the means to receive it as our legal qualification.

4. This faith must be of a right constitution; namely, such a believing in Christ as receiveth him to all the ends and purposes that God hath appointed him; that he may be Lord and Christ, Prince and Saviour: John 1:12, 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name;' James 2:14, 'What doth it profit, my brethren, though he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?' Christ must be received so as he may dwell and rule in our hearts, and quicken us in the way of holiness to everlasting glory. When a sinner doth thus take Christ to himself, and give up himself to Christ, the work is ended: Acts 26:18, 'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.' This is the faith that is required on our part, as on God's part there is required the intervention of Christ's merits; this is the faith that every one should strive to get, and see if we have it, yea or no.

Use 1. To show us what course to take for peace and pardon. When we lie under a sense of guilt and anguish for sin, plead Christ's satisfaction to God's justice. O Lord Jesus Christ, thou didst take these my sinful debts upon thyself, and undertake to satisfy for them; and I know that he hath made a full satisfaction; I renounce all other hope of pardon and rest for my soul but upon his precious blood. If he be not able to save, I am content to perish: 'But he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.' When you do this in a penitent broken-hearted manner, God will not refuse. As Adonijah took hold of the horns of the altar, 1 Kings 1:51, and said, 'If I perish, here will I perish;' so are we to plead that satisfaction before the tribunal of God. We are allowed to ask blessings in his name, and use his merit in pleading with God: John 16:23, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.' When you have a feeling of all your wants, and seriously need the pardon of sins, you will get a

good answer. This is to use Christ as our propitiation: Heb. 10:14, 'For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' There needeth no more to be done by way of expiation.

2. When you are confessing your sins, depend upon him as your advocate, as one that died for your sins, and is ready to appear before God, to plead for you, and put all your debts upon his score. Let us be sure to arraign and accuse ourselves: we must confess our sins, 1 John 1:9, and then Christ will plead for the pardon of them. If we think to be our own advocates, and do deny, extenuate, or excuse sin, it will never succeed well with us; but if Christ be our advocate, how can we miscarry? There will not want accusers to lay sin to our charge: 'But we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'

It is not a servant or a friend, but the dearly beloved of his soul that pleadeth for us, one that pleadeth not by way of entreaty, but merit: he is Jesus Christ the righteous. Now 'the prayer of a righteous man availeth much,' James 5:16, but much more the prayer of a righteous Saviour; he that hath fully suffered for thy sins, that can bring blood to the mercy-seat, he prayeth for no more than he hath paid for. Oh, who shall condemn? Rom. 8:33, 34, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' Here is comfort enough, if we were in a condition to beg it, nay, if we were in a condition to need it; for this comfort is for poor burdened souls.

The next clause in this verse is remission of sins; but this being handled in the first and second sermons of the twenty that were printed in quarto, and in the Lord's Prayer, and on 1 John 2:11 in this volume, it is omitted here.

## SERMON VI

Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.—ACTS 2:38.

IN Peter's answer we have two things—(1.) His advice; (2.) The encouragement.

In his advice we have two things—(1.) Repent every one of you; (2.) 'Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.'

The second part of the advice I shall now insist upon: 'Be baptized every one of you.' And here I shall speak to three questions.

Quest. 1. Why is baptism mentioned rather than faith, and other things more internal and necessary to salvation?

Ans. 1. Faith is implied: Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' For baptism is an open and real profession of faith in Christ crucified; so that it must be explained thus: Be baptized, believing on the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins. Surely he would not have them dissemble, and seek remission of sins without faith in Christ, by the bare submission to the outward rite of baptism.

2. Baptism is mentioned, because it was the visible rite of receiving proselytes to Christ. Now it imported them who were convinced as persecutors to turn professors, if they would have ease for their consciences; and not only to believe with the heart, but to make their profession manifest and open by submitting to this way: Rom. 10:10, 'For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.'

Quest. 2. Why in the name of Christ only? The Father and the Holy Ghost are not mentioned, according to the precept, Mat. 28:19, 'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'

Ans. He speaketh not of the form of baptism, but the use and end thereof. Now the great use of baptism is, that we may have benefit by the mystery of redemption by Christ; therefore we are said to be baptized into Christ, Rom. 6:3, and Gal. 3:27, 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' He is the head of the church, and by baptism we are planted into the mystical body.

Quest. 3. Doth not this put too great an honour and necessity upon baptism to entitle remission of sins to this act, as if every one that were baptized had his sins forgiven him?

Ans. When we submit to the gospel covenant, we believe that God for Christ's sake will forgive us our sins: in testimony of this faith we receive baptism, which, supposing that we do not ponere obicem, lay any block in the way, that we repent and believe the gospel, doth seal and deliver a pardon to us; it doth seal, that is, confirm us in the expectation of it, and deliver it to us. It is our legal investiture; it is the rite by which we are first solemnly put in possession of it. Supposing that we have a promise before, as all that repent and believe have, it doth seal and deliver. But because most are baptized in infancy, it doth excite and oblige us to take the way whereby we may obtain pardon according to the new covenant; doing what is necessary, it assures and confirms us that he will be as good as his word.

Doct. That baptism hath an especial use and respect unto this benefit of obtaining remission of sins in the name of Christ.

To evidence this unto you, I must take it for granted for the present that baptism belongeth to the gospel or the new covenant; or, if you will have it confirmed, that place doth it fully which was mentioned before: Mark 16:16, 'Go, preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.' Whence it followeth clearly and undeniably that baptism belongeth to the gospel or new covenant. Supposing this, let me take my rise a little higher.

1. That God hath ever delighted to deal with his creatures in the way of a covenant, that we might know what to expect from him, and we might look upon ourselves under the firmer bonds of obedience to his blessed majesty; for in a covenant, which is the most solemn transaction between man and man, both parties are engaged; God to us, and we to God. It is not meet that one party should be bound and the other be free; therefore both are bound to each other, God to bless, and we to obey. Indeed, in the first covenant the *debitum pœnæ*, the debt of punishment, is only mentioned, because that only took place: Gen. 2:17, 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' But the other part is implied, Do and live, sin and die.

2. Because the first covenant was broken on our part, God was pleased to enter into a second, wherein he would manifest the glory of his redeeming grace and pardoning mercy to fallen man. This was brought about in Christ: 2 Cor. 5:19, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' And therefore this second covenant was called a covenant of peace, as being made with us after the breach, or with man obnoxious to the wrath of God: Isa. 54:10, 'The covenant of my peace shall not be removed, saith the Lord.' Man needeth such a covenant, and Christ offereth it to us.

3. In this covenant of peace, both the privileges and duties are suited to the state in which man was when God invited him into covenant with himself. Man was fallen from his duty, and obnoxious to the wrath and displeasure of God, and therefore the new covenant is a doctrine of repentance and remission of sins. What is 'preach the gospel to every creature,' in Mark 16:15, is in Luke 24:47, 'That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.' That is the gospel, or the new remedial law of our Lord Jesus; repentance to heal us and set us in joint again as to our duty, and remission of sins to recover us into God's favour; and both these benefits we have by the Redeemer: Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.' He giveth the one

simply, and both gives and requires the other; so that by the new covenant remission of sins is conveyed to all true penitents.

4. The more distinctly to understand the nature of this covenant, we must consider both the duties and privileges thereof; for in every covenant there is *ratio dati et accepti*, there is something promised and given, and something required; and usually the promise consisteth of somewhat which the party is willing of, and the duty or condition required is that to which he is more backward, and loath to submit unto. So in the covenant of grace; in the promise God respecteth man's want; in the duty, his own honour. Every man would have pardon, and be saved from hell, but God will have subjection: every corrupt nature is not against desires of happiness; these God maketh use of to gain us to holiness. All men naturally greedily catch at felicity, and would have impunity, peace, comfort, glory, but are unwilling to deny the flesh, and are unwilling to renounce the credit, profit, or pleasure of sin, or to grow dead to the world and worldly things. Now God promiseth what we desire on condition that we will submit to those things we are against. As we sweeten bitter pills to children that they may the better swallow them; they love the sugar, though they loathe the aloes; so doth God invite us to. our duty by our interest. Therefore whoever would enter into the gospel state must resolve to take the blessings and benefits offered for his happiness, and the duties required for his work. Indeed, accepting the benefits is a part of the condition, because we treat with an invisible God about a happiness that lieth in another world; but it is but part, for there are terms: Heb. 10:22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.'

5. The privileges are two—pardon and life. These are the great blessings offered in the new covenant; you have both together, Acts 26:18, 'To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.'

These two benefits are most necessary, the one to allay the fears of the guilty creature, the other to gratify desires of happiness, which are natural to us; the one to remedy the misery incurred by the sin and fall of man, the other to establish our true and proper felicity in the everlasting enjoyment of God; the one to ease our consciences, and to support us against troubles of mind, the other to comfort us against all the outward troubles and afflictions which sin hath introduced into this world. In short, the one to free us from deserved punishment, the other to assure us of undeserved blessings; for one importeth deliverance from eternal death, the other entrance into everlasting life.

6. The duties thereof do either concern our first entrance into the christian state, or our progress therein. Our Lord representeth it under the notions of the 'gate' and 'way;' Mat. 7:14, 'Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life.' Other scriptures deliver it under the notions of making covenant and keeping covenant with God. Making covenant: Ps. 50:5, 'Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.' Keeping covenant: Ps. 25:10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant;' Ps. 103:18, 'To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.' The covenant must not only be made, but kept.

[1.] As to entering into covenant with God, there is required true repentance and faith: Mark 1:15, 'Repent ye, and believe the gospel.' Repentance respects God as our end, faith respects Christ as the way to the Father: Acts 20:21, 'Repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.' God is our end: 1 Peter 3:18, 'Christ also hath once suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' And Christ is our way: John 14:6, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me.' And Christianity is a coming to God by Christ, Heb. 7:25. Now in our first entrance faith and repentance are both mixed, and it is hard to sever them, and to show what belongeth to the one and what to the other; at least it would perplex the discourse. Both together imply that a man be



turned from a life of sin to God by faith in Christ, or a renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, and a devoting and dedicating ourselves to God as our God.

(1.) A renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh; for these are the three great enemies of God and our salvation. When God is laid aside, self interposeth as the next heir. That which we count self is the flesh: Eph. 2:2, 3, 'Wherein in time past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.' There all your enemies appear abreast: the devil as the grand deceiver and principle of all wickedness; the world, with its pleasures, honours, and profits, as the bait by which the devil would deceive us, and steal away our hearts from God, and pervert and divert us, that we should not look after the one thing necessary; the flesh is the corrupt inclination in us, which entertaineth and closeth with these temptations, to the neglect of God and the wrong of our own souls. The flesh is importunate to be pleased, and is the proper internal cause of all our mischief: James 1:14, 'But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.' These must be renounced before you can return to God: Josh. 24:23, 'Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel.' We must be turned from Satan to God; we must be delivered from the present evil world; we must abstain from fleshly lusts; for God will have no copartners and competitors in our hearts.

(2.) A devoting, consecrating, and giving up ourselves to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as our God: 2 Cor. 8:5, 'But first gave themselves to the Lord;' Rom. 6:13, 'But yield yourselves unto God.' As our owner by creation: Ps. 100:3, 'The Lord is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.' As his by redemption: 1 Cor. 6:19, 20, 'And ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in

your body and in your spirit, which are God's.' As your sovereign Lord: Jer. 24:7, 'I will give them an heart to know me that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart;' Isa. 26:13, 'O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us.' As the fountain of our life and blessedness: Ps. 31:14, 'But I trusted in thee, O God; I said, Thou art my God;' Lam. 3:24, 'The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore I will hope in him;' Ps. 119:5, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord; I have said, I will keep thy words.'

[2.] As to our progress, continuance, and perseverance; for this is not the work of a day, but of our whole lives. This is our walking in the narrow way, and evidenceth our sincerity in making covenant, and our pursuit showeth it is a true consent. As to this progress and perseverance, three things are required—

(1.) As to the enemies of God and our souls, there must be a forsaking as well as a renouncing. The devil must be forsaken, we must be no more of his party and confederacy; we must resist, stand out against all his batteries and assaults: 1 Peter 5:8, 9, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith.' The world must be overcome: 1 John 5:4, 'For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth Jesus is the Son of God?' The flesh must be subdued and crucified: Gal. 5:24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts;' that we be no more governed by the desires of it. If we be sometimes foiled, we must not go back again, but the drift of our lives must be for God and heaven.

(2.) As to God, to whom we have devoted ourselves, we must love, and please, and serve him all our days: Luke 1:75, 'In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.' We must make it our work to love him, and our happiness to be beloved of him, and carefully apply ourselves to seek his favour, and cherish a fresh sense

of it upon our hearts, and continue with all patience in well-doing, Rom. 2:7, till you come to the complete sight and love of him: 1 John 3:2, 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'

(3.) You must always live in the hope of the coming of Christ and everlasting glory: Titus 2:13, 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;' Jude 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' As we die at first, thankfully accept of our recovery by Christ, and at first consent to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and resolve to follow God's counsel and direction, we must still persevere in this mind, and use his appointed means in order to our final happiness. The sum then of our Christianity is this, that we should by true repentance and faith forsake the flesh, world, and devil, and give up ourselves to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that he may take us as his reconciled children, and adopt us into his family, and for Christ's sake pardon all our sins, and by his Spirit give us grace to persevere in these resolutions, till our glory and final happiness come in hand.

7. This covenant, consisting of such duties and privileges, God hath confirmed by certain visible ordinances, commonly called sacraments. These are baptism and the Lord's supper; both which, but in a different manner, respect the whole tenor of the covenant; for as the covenant bindeth mutually on God's part and ours, so these duties have a mutual aspect or respect to what God doth and what we must do. On God's part they are a sign and seal; on our part they are a badge and a bond.

[1.] On God's part they are sealing signs. As circumcision is called a 'sign and seal of the righteousness which is by faith,' Rom. 4:11; that is, of the grace offered to us in Christ; so is baptism, which came in the room of circumcision: Col. 2:11, 12, 'In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism.' Surely the gospel ordinances sign as

much grace as the ordinances of the Jews or legal covenant; as circumcision was a sign and seal of the righteousness which is by faith, or a pledge of God's good-will in Christ, so is baptism, and so is the Lord's supper, to signify they are signs, and to confirm they are seals, to represent the grace, and confirm the grant of pardon and life by the use of these duties. As, for instance, baptism signifies pardon and life, so doth the Lord's supper: Mat. 26:28, 29, 'For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins. I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' That for our growth and nourishment, this for our initiation. Baptism is under our consideration at present. That this hath respect to remission of sins, the text is clear for it; and so are many other scriptures. It was Ananias, advice to Paul, Acts 22:16, 'Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' His sins were solemnly washed away by baptism: Eph. 5:26, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word.' This washing represents the washing away of the guilt and filth of sin. And it signifieth also our resurrection to a blessed and eternal life: 1 Peter 3:21, 'Even baptism doth now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' Well, then, it is a sealing sign: 2 Kings 20:8, 'What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me?' It is a witness between us and God: Gen. 31:48, 'This heap is a witness between me and thee this day.' So baptism is a witness that God will pardon our sins, and upon pardon give us eternal blessedness.

[2.] On our part they are a badge and a bond to oblige us to the duties of the covenant; a badge of the profession, and a bond to engage us to the duties which that profession calleth for. It is a debt: Gal. 5:3, 'For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to the whole law.' He bindeth himself to the observances of Moses' law; so a christian to the law of Christ. Therefore the apostle saith, Rom. 8:12, 'We are not debtors to the flesh.' And it is an answer towards God, 1 Peter 3:21, or an undertaking faithfully to

perform the conditions required of us. It is a vow or obligation taken upon ourselves: Rom. 6:11, 'Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' It bindeth us chiefly to the duties that belong to our entrance; as the Lord's supper doth more directly to the duties which belong to our progress. It bindeth us to a true belief of the gospel, or an acceptance of Christ, and a consent to the covenant of grace; to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh; and therefore the baptismal covenant, by which we are initiated into the christian religion, is expressed by being 'baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,' Mat. 28:19, which implieth a dedication or giving up ourselves to them in their distinct personal relations. To the Father, that we may return to him and obey him as our rightful Lord, that we may love him and depend upon him as our all-sufficient happiness, and be happy in his love as his dear children, and may prefer his honour before all sensual pleasures in the world. We are baptized in the name of Christ, that we believe him and accept him as our Redeemer and Saviour, expecting to be saved by his merits, righteousness, and intercession, from the wrath of God, and the guilt of sin and eternal death. And we are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost as our guide, sanctifier, and comforter, that he may free us from sin, and change us into the image and likeness of Christ, and lead us into all truth and goodness, and fit and frame us for all holiness and godliness of conversation, and comfort us with the sense of our present interest in God's love, and the hopes of future glory.

8. These visible confirming ordinances give us great advantages above the word and bare proposal of the covenant there, as these sealing signs are an expression of God's earnest and sincere respect to our salvation. God hath opened his mind in the word concerning his love and good-will to sinners in Christ, and he hath also added his seal, that the charter of his grace might be more valid and authentic.

[1.] It argueth the goodness and communicativeness of God to give notice in his word, but his solicitousness and anxious care of our

good, to give us visible assurance, as sacraments do, as being willing over and above to satisfy the heirs of promise, Heb. 6:17. When any one is more than ordinarily cautious to make all sure, it is a sign his heart is upon the thing. It is a great condescension that God would dispose his grace into a covenant form; but it is a further condescension that he would add seals, which needed not on God's part, yet he added them to give us the more strong consolation. *Nudum pactum*, a naked promise is not so valid and authentic as when articles of agreement are put into a formal instrument and deed of law, and that signed and sealed, and interchangeably delivered; this breedeth more confidence and security on both sides. God's word certifieth us of his good-will; but when he is pleased to make a formal indenture of it, and to sign it and seal it, it doth breed more assurance in our minds that his promises are made with a real intent to perform them; and it bindeth us the more firmly to God when, besides our naked promise, there is a kind of vow and oath on our part solemnly entered into by baptism.

[2.] There is this advantage in the sacraments above the word, that they are a closer application. The word speaketh to all promiscuously, as inviting; the sacrament to every one in particular, as obliging. By the word none are excluded from the grace offered to them upon God's terms: 'Go, preach the gospel to every creature;' but by the sacraments every one is expressly admonished of his duty. The object revealed in the word is like the brazen serpent, which without difference was exposed to the eyes of all, that whosoever looked upon it might be healed; but the same object offered in the sacraments is like the blood sprinkled on the door-posts, that every man might be assured that his family would be in safety. Now the reason of this difference is because things propounded in the word are like a treaty between God and us. It is an offer and a debating of matters till the parties do agree; but sacraments are not of use till both sides have agreed upon the conditions of the covenant, in adults at least. The word conduceth to the making of the covenant, the sacraments suppose it made; therefore the word universally propoundeth that which in the seals is particularly applied. Now those things do not

affect us so much which are spoken indifferently to all as those that are particularly applied to ourselves. These stir us up to a more accurate care and endeavour to fulfil the duty incumbent upon us. The conditions are propounded in the word, Repent and believe, and I will pardon and give eternal life; but the sacraments suppose an actual consent, that thou hast done or undertaken to do it. And then God cometh and saith, Take this as an undoubted pledge that thou shalt have what I have promised, which doth more increase our hopes, and persuade us to our duty.

[3.] By these sealing signs we are solemnly invested into a right to the things promised, put in possession; as when we are put in possession of a bargain by formalities of law; so, 'This is my body.' It is our solemn investiture. A believer receiveth Christ in the word: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him.' And is he not received in the Lord's supper? his right is solemnly owned and confirmed in the way which God hath appointed. As soon as a man consents to a bargain, he hath an interest in the thing bargained for; but that right is made more explicit when it is delivered to him by some formality of law; as an house by a key, or a field by a turf or twig, when put in possession of what he hath bargained for. Every penitent believing sinner hath a right to Christ and pardon, but his solemn enfeoffment is by the sacraments: 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins;' 'Arise and be baptized for the washing away of thy sins,' Acts 22:16. God gave Abraham the land of promise by word of mouth, Gen. 13; but he biddeth him go through the land, and build an altar, and offer sacrifice there; then he was actually invested. God gave Israel a grant of Canaan, but the clusters of Eshcol were as it were the livery and seisin of it. Though the gift be sufficiently made over by the promise, yet it is further rectified, and more solemnly conveyed and delivered, by the sacraments.

[4.] This is one advantage more, that the mysteries of godliness are laid before our eyes in some visible rites, and so have a greater force to excite the mind to serious consideration. When God will condescend to give us helps against our infirmities, it must needs be

by the senses, by which all knowledge cometh into the soul. Now feeling, smelling, tasting, seemeth not so fit for this, as being more gross, and conducing to the welfare of the body; but sight and hearing convey objects to the understanding, and therefore are called the senses of discipline and learning. Now the covenant is made by words which strike the ear, but the seals by visible things before our eyes: Gal. 3:1, 'Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you.'

Use 1. Is caution to us, that we be not slight in the use of baptism and the Lord's supper, for they imply a solemn covenanting with God, that we may obtain remission of sins and eternal life, if we accept the covenant for ourselves or others. For ourselves in the Lord's supper, for others in offering our children to baptism. We must come 'with a true heart, in full assurance of faith,' Heb. 10:22; with a true heart, purposing the duties; in full assurance of faith, depending upon the promises of Christ for the privileges thereof.

As to children, we must resolve to instruct them in the duties of the covenant, repentance, faith, and new obedience: Eph. 6:4, 'And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' This is to make way for the blessing, and to remove the obstructions: Gen. 18:19, 'For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, and do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.'

As to the privileges, to admire the grace of them: Gen. 17:3, 'Abraham fell on his face when God talked with him;' and David, 2 Sam. 7:19, 'And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come: and is this the manner of man, O Lord God?' Waiting for the accomplishment of them in God's way, as considering how loath God is to let go his covenant children: Acts 3:25, 26, 'Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our



fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed: unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning every one of you from his iniquities.'

Use 2. Is to put us upon self-reflection. We are all baptized in the name of Christ, but what are we the better? have we the more confidence of pardon of our sins for his sake? Voluterranus reports of Lucian, that scoffing atheist, that when he revolted from the profession of christianity, he scoffed at his baptism, saying, *Se nihil ex eo consecutum, quam quod nomen ipsi esset corruptum, ex Lucio Lucianum factum*—That he got nothing by his baptism but a syllable to his name. What do the most get but a name? It should not be so with you; you should improve your baptism.

1. For the obtaining of this benefit by a more serious work of faith and repentance, for the washing away of sin: 1 Cor. 6:11, 'And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.'

2. For the further sense, continuance, and increase of it, even to the rejoicing of faith: Heb. 6:18, 'That we may have strong consolation;' Acts 8:39, 'And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.' Hath God applied to me his covenant, taken me into his family, planted, me into the mystical body of Christ; and shall not we be glad, and rejoice in his salvation?

3. For comfort in all our afflictions, perplexities, doubts, and fears. Luther telleth us that all his answer to the devil tempting him to despair was, *Ecce ego baptizatus sum, et credo in Christum*—I am baptized into the belief of the christian faith. We must expect to be tempted. The devil tempted Christ after his baptism to question his filiation: Mat. 4:6, 'If thou be the Son of God,' &c. So in outward troubles, Dionysia comforted Majoricus her son, an African martyr, with this, *Memento fili, te in nomine Patris, &c.*—Remember, son,

that thou wast baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. So in temptations to sin: Luther speaketh of a holy virgin, who, when tempted to sin, replied, *Baptizata sum*—I am baptized. A christian hath but this one answer, I am dedicated to God to obtain pardon and life.

Use 3. To condemn—

1. The careless, who never look after the remission of sins so solemnly sealed in baptism, and those saving graces which may evidence their title thereunto: 1 Peter 1:3, 'Blessed be God, who hath begotten us to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'

2. The profane, that live directly contrary to their baptismal engagement. To be worse than our words to men is bad enough; but to forfeit our words to God, to list ourselves into his service, and then to turn deserters and fight against him, is grand apostasy. To be made christians by baptism, and then to live like heathens, is a sin which will be attended with a severe doom.

## **SERMON VII**

And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.—ACTS 2:38.

THIS chapter giveth an account of the pouring out of the Spirit, according to promise, presently after Christ's ascension. As soon as he was warm in the mediatorial throne, he was mindful of the church, and shed abroad his Spirit for the gathering and increasing thereof by the gospel. As soon as the Spirit was poured out, the apostles were enabled to speak in various languages, to the astonishment and wonder of the hearers. This was for the glory of God, and the confirmation and authorising them as messengers. At the sight of this miracle, some wonder, others mock, as if this speaking with divers tongues had been a confused jabbering that

proceeded from the fumes of wine rather than the operation of the Holy Ghost. To satisfy both, Peter declareth the effect and intent of the miracle, proving Jesus Christ, whom they had slain, to be Lord and Christ. When they heard this, many of the most obstinate among them were pricked in their hearts, and relented. A happy sermon it was that Peter preached; for it brought in thousands of souls to Christ; the first handsel of the power of the Spirit and success of the gospel. It is good to observe what course they took for ease and relief after this piercing and brokenness of heart: 'They said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?' This is the usual question of men under sound and pressing convictions. To their serious question Peter maketh a seasonable answer, of which the text is a part. It is the part of a good physician not only to discover the disease, but also to prescribe a remedy; especially should spiritual physicians be tender of broken-hearted sinners, willing and ready to give them counsel. In Peter's direction and counsel to them observe—

1. What he persuadeth them to do.
2. By what motive and argument. We have seen already what they must do. Now what they shall receive: 'And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' There are twofold gifts of the Spirit—common or saving. The common were either miraculous or ordinary. The miraculous and extraordinary were those gifts of tongues, and prophecy, and healing, which, in the primitive times, were poured out upon the church. The common are such gifts as are still vouchsafed.

Now the question is, which of those gifts are intended in the promise, the extraordinary gifts, which were so rife in those times, or the gifts of the Spirit, which are necessary to salvation.

I answer—I take the promise indefinitely, as it is propounded, and so exclude neither the one nor the other.

First, The extraordinary gifts are not wholly to be excluded, partly because these were the things which they now saw and admired in the apostles. Now saith Peter, Repent, and believe in Christ, and ye shall be made partakers of these gifts which ye so admire in us. And partly because the promise is to be interpreted by the effect. Those gifts were given to many upon their baptism: Acts 4:30, 31, 'By stretching forth thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of the holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost;' Acts 10:44, 45, 'While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word; and they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.' And partly because these gifts are not to be slighted, because they conduced much to the propagating and confirming of the gospel: Heb. 2:4, 'God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.' They were wonderfully confirmed by this means in the assurance of the truth of the gospel.

Secondly, Besides this gratia gratis data, these free gifts, there is gratia gratum faciens, saving graces; these are principally intended; for—

1. Miraculous gifts would have been small comfort to them that were pricked in heart, and did so anxiously inquire after the way of salvation, to put them off with tongues, and prophecy, and gifts common to hypocrites: Mat. 7:22, 23, 'Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I know you not; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity;' 1 Cor. 13:1, 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.' The apostle, who knew better how to satisfy and to heal these wounded souls,

promiseth such a gift of the Holy Ghost as is joined with remission of sins.

2. All parts of Peter's answer, both the precept and the promise, must be supposed to be suited to the question asked. Now the question asked was, 'What shall we do to be saved?' or freed from the misery into which we have plunged ourselves? His answer was, Repent, and seek remission by baptism in the name of Christ. If you do so, you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which shall teach you all things, and make you fit to do all things that are necessary to your salvation; you are weak and impotent, but you shall have power from the Holy Ghost. For it concerned them not only to know what they should do, but whence they should have strength to do what was required of them.

3. In the next words the apostle speaketh of a promise, and such a promise as was to them and their children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. This promise was the promise of internal grace; be it the promise in Joel, or the promise in John 7:38, 'He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters.' And the evangelist telleth us in the words that follow, 'But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.' Those rivers out of the belly imply something flowing out of the heart; a spring of living waters there, that would send forth life and influence to all their actions. Well, then, this was the promise, and a promise that did not only concern the first age, when these miraculous and extraordinary gifts were dispensed, but all the ages of the church; a promise to us and our children, and as many as the Lord our God should call. It relateth to the gracious covenant, that God will be our God, and the God of our seed; even that promise spoken of Gal. 3:14, where the apostle saith that Christ was made a curse for us, 'that the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.'

The blessing of church privileges was Abraham's blessing, even ordinances accompanied with the Spirit.

4. The process of the story showeth what the gift of the Holy Ghost is: ver. 41, 'There were added to the church about three thousand souls that day,' who received the faith of Christ, joined themselves to the apostles, conversed together in a wonderful, charitable manner, owned Christ boldly and comfortably in the midst of afflictions. The sum is this, that though all had not miraculous gifts, yet they had better, being enabled to believe on Christ unto righteousness, and make a bold profession of his name with their mouths, and live with his followers in a high pitch of charity.

Doct. Those that repent, and believe on Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

I shall handle this point in this method—

1. Show you in what sense we are said to receive the Spirit after repenting and believing.
2. The use and office of the Spirit so received.
3. The peculiar property and right of those that repent and believe to this gift.

I. In what sense we are said to receive the Spirit after repenting and believing; for this doubt doth presently arise in our minds, Can we repent and believe before we receive the Spirit? or can a man convert himself to God without the Holy Ghost? So much seemeth to be intimated by the apostle's method, 'Repent, and be baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' I answer—

1. We must distinguish between the spirit of regeneration and the spirit of adoption and perseverance; for though the spirit of regeneration be tied to no condition, but is dispensed according to

the good pleasure of God, yet the spirit of adoption and perseverance in holiness is tied to conditions, and is promised to all those that, with true faith and repentance, do seek after the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Therefore this receiving of the Spirit is meant of the increase of his grace in us; namely, that the spirit of regeneration is followed with a great increase of light, comfort, and virtue. First the Holy Ghost is given to us to unite us to Christ, and afterwards to take up his abode in us as in his temples, and to dwell in us for our comfort and support. First as a Spirit of regeneration he buildeth an house for himself, then as a Spirit of adoption and perseverance he cometh to dwell in the house so built and furnished; as bees first make their cells, and then dwell in them. By repentance and faith there is a fit mansion and resting-place prepared for him, and then he resteth upon us: 1 Peter 4:14, 'The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.' He taketh up his residence in us: not, comes upon them, but resteth on them. These two things must be carefully distinguished, the Spirit of regeneration and the Spirit of adoption, or God's converting and confirming grace. The first is given us that we may believe, the second upon believing. The first is spoken of Titus 3:5, 6, '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, which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. The Lord out of his good pleasure, not excited by any works of ours, but merely by his grace, shed abroad the Holy Ghost in our hearts, to renew and sanctify us, that we may repent and believe, and return and obey him. This his prevailing grace also is spoken of Zech. 12:10, 'I will pour upon them the spirit of grace and supplication.' This goeth before faith and repentance, and is the cause of it, as is there expressed.

2. There is the Spirit of adoption and perseverance, that is, after believing: Gal. 4:6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' First we are sons, and then we have the spirit of sons. When we are entered as heirs to the promises, the Spirit of God doth more manifest his

presence in our hearts, and put forth his gracious operations there: Eph. 1:13, 'After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.' Though none can actually believe before the Spirit of God works in them, yet upon believing, he cometh to dwell in the heart, and doth manifest that he hath taken up his abode there.

II. The use and office of the Spirit so received. It may be referred to two things—(1.) Sanctification; (2.) Consolation.

First, Sanctification. The great work of the Spirit is to be the fountain and principle of the new life of grace within us, or to maintain and keep afoot the interest of Christ in our souls: Gal. 5:25, 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.' He doth not only begin life, but continueth it, and still actuateth it, enabling us to all the duties thereof. There is having and walking; thence he is compared to a spring or well of living water, that is always springing forth: John 4:14, 'The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.' Not only a draught, but a well. They that have any measure of true grace have the Spirit as a fountain to make this grace endure in itself and in its effects. Some have only a draught, a vanishing taste, others a cistern or a pond, that may be dried up; but they that have the Spirit have a well, and a well that is always fresh and springing up and flowing forth till this stream become an ocean, and mortality be swallowed up of life. It is a spring that sendeth forth streams to water the ground about it. As the heart of man sendeth forth life to every faculty and member, and a general relief to all his parts, so doth the Spirit influence all our actions. Now both parts of sanctification are promoted by the Spirit, mortification and vivification, subduing of sin and quickening us to holiness. Mortification is seen in two things—purging out the lusts, or suppressing the acts of sin.

1. In purging out the lusts of it. The Spirit is said to cleanse us, and to purify us to the obedience of the truth: 1 Peter 1:22, 'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.' The Spirit showeth what purity of heart is pleasing to God, and worketh it



in us, casting out pride, and hard-heartedness, and malice, and hypocrisy, and sensuality, and all those lusts which defile our hearts, and dispose us to walk contrary to God. It is the contrary principle that sets us a-warring and striving against the flesh.

2. Preventing and suppressing the acts of sin: Rom. 8:13, 'If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' That they may not break out to God's dishonour and our discomfort. We cannot do it without the Spirit, nor the Spirit without us: Gal. 5:16, 'This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' There is no possibility of getting the power of inbred corruption subdued, or the lusts of sinful flesh curbed to any saving purpose, without the Spirit of God; otherwise lusts will gather strength, and range abroad without any effectual resistance. He warneth us of our danger, and checketh sin. If we would hearken to him, and observe his checks and restraints, sin would not transport us so often beyond the bounds of duty; a man cannot sin so freely as before.

[1.] He doth quicken us to holiness, increasing the internal habits: Eph. 3:16, 'That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man.' That we may be fitted for the service of God, for which before we were indisposed to, and prepared to every good work. There is an inward man, holy and gracious qualities infused into the soul, which are so called. These are created by the Spirit of God, and supplied and cherished by him that reneweth strength upon us from day to day, that we may go from strength to strength, and be more able for God's service. Though a renewed heart be yet continued, yet, as the two olive-trees, Zech. 4:13, dropping into the lamps, and emptying through the golden pipes the golden oil out of themselves; so doth the Spirit of Christ supply an increase of grace to our graces.

[2.] Exciteth to action, and helpeth us and aideth us therein, and inditeth good thoughts, and stirreth up holy motions and desires, besides new qualities, that we may be lively and fresh in God's

service: Ezek. 36:27, 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.' Phil. 2:13, 'For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.' Especially in prayer: Rom. 8:26, 'The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities;' goeth to the other end of the staff. Clothes do not warm the body till the body warm them, and the body cannot warm them till the soul, which is the principle of life, warm it; so there can be no fervency in prayer without the Spirit, no warmth in the heart. Oh, what a mercy is it that we have an help at hand! the Spirit of God dwelling in our hearts, to relieve us in all our necessities, and quicken us in the ways of God, which else would soon grow wearisome and uncomfortable to us.

Secondly, The Spirit serveth for consolation, to uphold our hearts in the midst of all trials and difficulties, that we may go on cheerfully in a course of holiness, waiting for the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls. The Holy Ghost, where he cometh, he cometh as a comforter, refreshing and relieving the soul, especially when we most need comfort, after great conflicts, and contrition, and brokenness of spirit. Cordials are for those that faint: 'To revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones,' Isa. 57:15. To those that were pricked in their hearts Peter saith, 'Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' It is welcome news to poor wounded souls that they shall have the Comforter. So in deep afflictions: 1 Peter 4:14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.' The Spirit of God dwelleth in the hearts of all his own, whether they be sufferers or not; but especially in the hearts of those that suffer, in regard of his comforting and supporting operations. Philip, the Landgrave of Hesse, in his imprisonment said, *Se divinas martyrum consolationes sensisse*—that he felt the divine comforts of the martyrs. Their sense of his presence is greater and sweeter, and their allowance of comfort larger than what others have, or themselves formerly had. How doth the Spirit comfort? Partly with respect to the time present, and partly with respect to the time to come; to witness our present standing in a state of grace, and to assure us of life and glory to come.

1. For the present, to witness to us our adoption and pardon of sins, and acceptance with God: Rom. 5:5, 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.' The love of God is shed abroad in the scriptures: 'Thy name is poured out as a precious ointment.' But it is shed abroad in our hearts, that is, by the Holy Ghost. How doth the Holy Ghost comfort? Per modum argumenti, et per modum causæ efficientis. Per modum argumenti, by way of argumentation. The Spirit is given as a pledge of God's love; he is known by suitable gifts. Those whom God pardoneth he enricheth with grace. Some things are never given in judgment, as the Spirit. The comforts and honours of the world may be given us in wrath; it is a plain evidence. So per modum causæ efficientis, by way of an efficient cause. He maketh us to feel the love of God in our consciences, and to be sensible of the comfort of it: Rom. 15:13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost;' Rom. 8:16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.' A witness is one who giveth in a testimony against a man or for a man. Every matter of worth and weight is to be transacted before and proved by two sufficient witnesses. Now here are two witnesses, our spirit and God's Spirit. Our conscience doth accuse or excuse, but that is fallible; but then there is the Spirit itself. A greater witness cannot be had than the Spirit of God, that knoweth all things, the deep things of God and our own hearts. When he assureth us that we have God's favour, and may go boldly to him as to a father, why should we doubt?

2. To assure us of life and blessedness to come. The Holy Ghost is given for this end, that we may look and long for heaven. Our hearts of themselves are taken up with trifles and childish toys. Therefore, that we may more vehemently long after and desire the actual possession of this glory, and to sweeten the bitterness of the cross, the Spirit of God doth somewhat about our future hopes as well as our present interest. It is an earnest, and as the first-fruits. An earnest: 2 Cor. 1:22, 'Who also hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit;' Eph. 1:14, 'Which is the earnest of our

inheritance.' It is not only donum, a gift, but pignus, a pledge; not only pignus, but arrha, an earnest. A pledge may be taken away, but God hath given us an earnest, that is, a part to assure us of the whole. Now it is not only an earnest to show how sure, but the first-fruits to show us how good: Rom. 8:23, 'We ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit.' Some foresight and foretastes of glory to come, some preparations. Increasing grace is begun glory: 2 Cor. 3:18, 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.'

III. Quest. How is this peculiar to them that believe, to have the gift of the Holy Ghost? Acts 5:32, 'And so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him;' that is, that obey the gospel, that repent and believe: John 14:16, 17, 'And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.' That place plainly showeth and proveth that he is peculiar to believers; and that they are incapable of such a gift in the increase of it that have not any begun presence of the Spirit in their hearts. (1.) The world doth not receive him, because they value him not. Carnal men value nothing but the visible pomps and powers of the world; they slight other things. It is so with all men in the state of nature and under the power of sin: 1 Cor. 2:14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' They have no value for spiritual comforts and spiritual privileges. If religion would make them great in the world, they would embrace it; but these things are so little desired, because so little known. (2.) The world cannot receive them; they are not prepared. There is a capacity or receptivity necessary; they neither see him nor know him. They took no notice of his visible operations, and did as little understand with their heart as see with their eyes; but ye know him, and he dwelleth in you. His familiar presence shall be in them in a larger measure.

Use. First, Why? To quicken us to look after this gift. Let us see why and how.

1. Consider our necessity. Better never had the spirit of a man, if we have not the Spirit of God. Man is only in fieri, in the way to his perfection. A brute hath all things now that belong to the perfection of his nature. Man, that was made for a higher end, must have a higher guide: Job 32:8, 'But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.' A brute, when he hath served out his time, hath done his work, and when he dieth, his misery and happiness dieth with him; but man's happiness or misery then beginneth.

2. If the Holy Spirit of the Lord be not in you, the evil spirit is. God and Satan divide the world. The heart of man is not a waste; it is either possessed by God or the devil. Natural men, the devil worketh in them, Eph. 2:2. The heart of a wicked man is Satan's forge and workhouse: 1 Sam. 16:14, 'The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.' As soon as God is gone, the devil taketh possession.

3. You may know where your mansion, your everlasting residence will be, by the spirit that dwelleth in you. Every spirit fitteth for his own place. There are vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and vessels of mercy prepared unto glory, Rom. 9:21. Heaven is not only prepared for us, but we for heaven; and who prepareth us? 2 Cor. 5:5, 'Now he that hath wrought us for this self-same thing is God, who hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.' The house and home of good spirits is heaven, of bad is hell. Each of them labour to conduct us to the several places whence they come.

4. Thou art unable for any duty, and incapable of any comfort: 1 Cor. 12:3, 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost;' that is, acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the true Saviour of the world. Thou canst not so much as pray, which is the most natural duty: Rom. 8:26, 'For we know not what we should pray for as we ought.'

Instinct teacheth all creatures to look for relief of their necessities. And thou art incapable of any comfort. All the good thoughts in us, all the good desires, the good hope we have, is by the Spirit; all that we have and shall receive, all the spiritual joys and satisfactions. The Spirit indeed did not die, suffer, satisfy, reconcile you to God, purchase grace and glory for you. You are beholden to Christ for this; yet all the sweet comforts depending thereupon, and the application of them to our souls, is from the Spirit. Your joy is from the Holy Ghost. You can neither live nor pray, nor work, nor walk, nor hope without the Spirit.

Secondly, How?

1. Pray for it. If you feel the want of the Spirit, and do in good earnest seek for him, you shall find him. A cold suitor shutteth the door upon himself: 'Ask, seek, knock,' Mat 7:7; Luke 11:8, διὰ τὴν ἀναιδειαν, 'Because of his importunity he will rise and give him.' A father may deny a wanton child bread to play with or throw under his feet, but not a starving child, that cries, Bread, bread, to preserve his life. He may and will deny the Spirit to them that ask him in a careless fashion, or to pride himself in his gifts; but not the hungry soul, that is pinched with a want of his grace, that crieth to him, Father, give me thy Holy Spirit. Nay, the vehemency is some evidence that thou hast him already: Isa. 44:3, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.'

2. The hopes to obtain him. It is donum, a gift: 'Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' It is donum promissum, a promised gift: 'I will pour my Spirit upon all flesh,' Acts 2:17. It is donum necessarium, a necessary bequest. When you pray for the Spirit, you pray as children when they ask bread. Bread is not so necessary for this life, as the Spirit for the life of grace; it is the spring and fountain of holiness. We may crave health, and wealth, and outward prosperity, and receive that answer, 'Ye know not what ye ask.' But when you go beg the Holy Spirit, you ask that which is good and

necessary for you. It is such a gift as is the foundation of all the rest, and without which we can have no pledge and assurance of God's love. Compare Mat. 7:11, with Luke 11:13. That which is called 'good things' in one place, is called the 'Holy Spirit' in the other. Of whom do you seek? Of God, who is your Father. Tam pater nemo, tam pius nemo. No one is so much a father and so good a father. In whose name do you seek it? In Christ's, whose merit hath purchased this gift for you: Titus 3:5, 6, 'The renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour;' Eph. 3:12, 'In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence by the faith of him.' By him we have a kind of right. He opened the door by his merit, and keeps it open by his intercession.

3. Wait in the word; the Spirit is gotten and increased there: Gal. 3:2, 'Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' The ordinary means whereby God worketh this grace is by the hearing of the word: 2 Cor. 3:6, 'Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life;' Acts 10:44, 'While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.' Therefore wait at wisdom's gate; lie at the pool till the waters are stirred, John 5; wait for the secret illapses of the Lord's grace; improve the Lord's supper. Sacraments are blessed means to convey the Spirit. Christ is said to return from his baptism full of the Holy Ghost, Luke 4:1. Especially the Lord's supper: 1 Cor. 12:13, 'For by the Spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.' One Spirit is spoken of as the author, and the other as the end. It is the Spirit that is figured by water, which maketh fruitful, and wine, which maketh cheerful: Cant. 1:4, 'We will remember thy love more than wine.' Now what further degree do you get by every receiving? What further comfort and strength? Now quicken your desires after the Spirit. When Elias was about to depart, he saith to Elisha, 'What shall I do for thee?' 'Only,' saith he, 'that thy spirit may be doubled on me.' Christ, in the same night in which he was betrayed, instituted this supper. Lord, thy Holy Spirit we ask. Will God deny such a request? When Solomon

asked wisdom, the thing pleased the Lord. Will a natural father give a scorpion instead of fish, or a stone instead of bread? Ask the Spirit to guide and sanctify and comfort you with the sense of his love; ask and fear not: let your faith be strong. The woman said, 'If I can but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole.' We have more reason to expect a blessing on these instituted signs than she by touching the hem of his garment. Renew your expectations. You take the cup to assure you. Christ continueth the same form in the covenant still. Observe what effect you have. In ordinary repast, how doth a man know that what he hath eaten doeth him good? Why, he findeth himself fresher, abler, stronger, and more cheerful for his work. Do you go away walking in the fear of God and the comforts of the Holy Ghost? Only take heed there be no secret sin harboured in the heart or allowed in the practice: Ps. 66:18, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.'

Use 2. Let us see whether we have the Spirit or no. We cannot say it—

1. Because we have some good motions stirred in us. The devil stirreth up evil motions in the hearts of the godly, and maketh a foul stir in their bosoms; yet he doth not dwell there as in those that are in the carnal state. These are slaves of Satan. But the Holy Spirit is often moving in the hearts and consciences of carnal creatures, counselling, rebuking, exciting them; but all cometh to nothing: Gen. 6:3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.'

2. It cannot be known by common gifts, illumination, conviction, restraining grace, assistance to perform external duties even to admiration: Mat. 7:22, 23, 'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, we have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works, and then will I profess, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity;' 1 Cor. 13:1, 'Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.' All this is nothing when he doth not take possession of your hearts as his dwelling-place and temple, 1 Cor. 6:19.



3. It will be known by your temper and frame; if you have a divine nature and disposition put into you: John 3:6, 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' A soul is raised above his natural inclination as much as a man is above a beast: 2 Peter 1:4, 'Whereby are given unto us great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature.' A man beginneth to look like God his Father, and to resemble him for heavenly wisdom, holiness, and righteousness; he acts in another manner, as one that hath a divine spirit in him.

4. By your savour: Rom. 8:5, 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.' Find therefore what thy gust is, and thou mayest know whether thy life be natural or spiritual. Dost thou value thyself by earthly enjoyments or spiritual?

5. They are led by the Spirit: Rom. 8:14, 'As many as are led by the Spirit are the sons of God.' Dost thou take his counsel? Art thou ruled and determined by him which way thou shalt go? What authority and sway doth it bear with thee? Art thou not driven, but led? There is spontaneity and readiness for holy things.

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## MONERGISM BOOKS

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