

PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND TARES OPENED

SERMON XXXV.

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field : but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way: but when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also," &c. — Matt xiii. 24, 25, &c.

1. The design and scope of this parable (as it plainly appears to me) is to show, that though the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles, and faithful ministers in the primitive times, had lain a good foundation of the church, and sowed good seed, from whence wheat or holy persons sprang up ; yet through the remissness of some succeeding ministers, Satan through his malice, by his instruments, (or subtle deceivers) would sow false doctrine or pernicious errors, which would produce evil persons called tares ; i. e., men of abominable principles, holding dangerous heresies, and guilty of vile practices, and these would spring up among the wheat.

2ndly. To show that the good and bad should abide together in the world, and not that the tares should be rooted out by persecution, or be cut off by sanguinary laws, but that both should abide together in the field of the world, to the end thereof.

3rdly. That at the last, a discriminating day will come, or a time when the wheat and tares shall be separated or severed from each other, and one be gathered into God's kingdom, and the other cast into hell. So much as to the scope of the parable.

Secondly, We shall proceed to explain the terms and parts of this parable.

1. By the kingdom of heaven here is meant the Gospel-church, in which would not only be true believers, but also some hypocrites or ungodly persons ; or, 2. The ministration of the Gospel dispensation.

2. The man here spoken of, is the same as in the foregoing parable, viz., the Son of man, the Messiah, Jesus Christ; for it is he that sows the good seed, from whence the wheat ariseth, or godly Christians spring up. See our Lord's own exposition of this parable, ver. 37 "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man."

2. The good seed are godly Christians, "the good seed (saith our Saviour) are the children of the kingdom," ver. 38.

3. "The tares are the children of the wicked one," ver. 38, either such that are erroneous in their principles, or secret hypocrites.

4. The field is the world ; though it may, as some think, also refer to the church. Marlorate saith, by a synecdoche, a part put for the whole, it signifies the church, though this seems doubtful to me, and I rather believe it means this world.

1. For where is the church put for the world ? though the elect before the world, called, are called the world sometimes, as John i. 29, 2 Cor. v. 19, 1 Johnii. 2 ; i. e., the elect amongst Jews and Gentiles.

2. Because tares, when discovered to be such, must not grow amongst the wheat in the church ; but ought to be cast out, though they ought to live together in the world.

5. "The sower of the evd seed (our Lord saith,) is the devil," from whence the evil seed the tares sprung up, i. e., the children of the wicked one : that is, they are the product either of evil doctrine, or else of the filthy lusts that Satan by his temptations infuseth into the hearts of all unrenewed persons ; for all sin and false doctrine is of the devil. " Ye are of your father the devil," John viii. 44, i. e., the produce of his evil seed.

6. The harvest is the end of the world, when time shall be no more, for the godly and the wicked to live together, as now they do and shall, until the end thereof.

7. The reapers are the angels. "As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom, all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them iuto a furnace of fire. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear," ver. 40 — 43

1. This shows the woful state of all wicked men and seducers at the day of judgment. The angels will find them all out, and bind them up in bundles, and cast them (after the judgment is ended) both body and soul into hell.

2. It also shows the blessed state of the righteous, i. e., such that shall be found clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and also inherently righteous, righteous at being renewed and sanctided by the Holy Spirit.

For none are made, or imputed righteous, in the first sense, who are not truly inherently holy and righteous in the second ; there are two or three verses which our Lord opened not, ver. 25 — 27.

"But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares, and went away," ver. 25.

By men sleeping here, no doubt is meant the ministers of the Gospel, or pastors of churches, being remiss and careless in watching against Satan's sowing of tares or evil seed ; either the seed of lusts and" earthly mindedness, (by which means some professors might be utterly spoiled, and come to nothing) or else the seed of errors and heresies ; both are from Satan.

"But when the blade was sprung up," &c. That is, when true believers brought forth the fruits of the Spirit, to show they were wheat.

"Then appeared the tares also," ver. 26. Then some false or corrupt persons appeared and were discerned (by him who is all eye, and perhaps to the angels and men also) to be amongst the saints.

"And the servants of the household came and said unto him. Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field ? From whence then hast it tares ?" ver. 27.

By the servants are either meant the angels, or else ministers or magistrates ; as God is the God of truth, and of holiness, so all errors and evil seed is from the devil.

"The servants said unto him, wilt thou that we go and gather them up ?" that is, the tares.

(1.) Some conclude by the servants here, are meant the angels. If to angels, then it may denote that God would not have some judgments to be brought upon the wicked, lest some godly persons fall also with them.

(2.) Some think our Lord refers to Christian magistrates, who have been, and may again be pious persons, and may be ready to cut off by death such offenders, whom our Lord would have lived in the world until the end thereof comes ; not but that murders and traitors ought by the sword of justice to be cut off, or pulled up ; but not such who are only guilty of divers sorts of errors in matters of faith, or such who many ways are immoral in their lives.

"But he said, nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them," ver. 29.

This shows that persecution upon the account of religion, is utterly unlawful, though men may hold grand errors, yet no magistrates have any power to persecute them, much less in the highest degree, so as to put them to death.

1. Because the best of men on earth are not infallible. They do not know but that which they call heresy may be a truth of Christ. "After that way, which they call heresy, (saith Paul) so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things that are written in the law and the prophets," Acts x.-civ. 14. And as good men are not able to distinguish between some truths and errors, so they may think such and such are tares who may be wheat, i. e., gracious and holy persons ; and this is the reason our Lord allegeth why they should not root out the tares, " Lest they root out also the wheat with them."

2. Because Jesus Christ is only the king and sovereign of the conscience. None ought to impose upon the consciences of men in matters of religion. They must stand and fall in such cases to their own master.

3. Because it is directly contrary to that golden rule, or true moral precept, " Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do yo the same unto them." Persecution is therefore a palpable violation of this holy precept. Would they have others (were they in

like power) to persecute them, (for what they believe and practice, according to their light and consciences) no sure, why then they ought not to persecute others ; besides, we never find that any Gospel church was a persecuting church, but contrariwise were persecuted.

4. Because such severities have no tending to convince the conscience (if it be erroneous) it may make men to act like hypocrites, i. e., out of fear to do that which is directly against their consciences, and so to sin against God, who alone hath power over it, and will punish those at last accordingly, for obeying man rather than God. When the disciples asked their Lord, whether " they should call for fire from heaven to consume their enemies, (He answered) ye know not what spirit you are of," Luke ix. 54, no more do they who persecute others for their conscience sake.

Yet let none suppose that our Saviour by these words, " Let both grow together until harvest," meant that he would have his people suffer wicked and heretical persons (if discovered,) to abide in his church ; no, for that is directly contrary to those condemned rules of discipline he hath left in the holy gospel, both in respect of private and public offences ; and also in the case of heresy, such ought to come under a just and righteous censure, but for no such evils, but only for murder, treason, felony, &c., ought persons to be delivered up to the civil magistrate, to suffer corporal punishment. This condemns the church of Rome, and all other people, who are persecutors of men for religion.

Thus having briefly opened the several terms and parts of this parable, I shall proceed to take notice of some doctrinal propositions, from some of the principal thmgs contained therein.

Doct. 1. That it is our Lord Jesus Christ that soweth by his word and spirit the good seed, i. e., that seed from whence all the holy habits, holy acts, and the holy lives of all true believers springs ; all grace and holiness proceeds from Jesus Christ, " Of His own will begat he us by the word of truth," James i. 16. Ministers cannot sow the grace in sinners' hearts, no, they are indeed instruments in Christ's hand, by whom he works, but Christ is the great agent, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God," &c. 1 Pet. i. 23. And hence we are said to be " born of the Spirit, and are spirit," John iii. 6. i. e., spiritual. " Which were born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 13.

Doct. 2. Believers are a choice people, choice grain; they are wheat, the and precious product of choice and precious seed ; or may be compared to wheat ; which is the most precious grain in all the world.

First, I shall show you the saints are a precious and choice people.
Secondly, Show you why they are compared to wheat.
Thirdly, Briefly apply it.

I. By the names given to them they appear to be a choice and precious people.

(1.) They are called the excellent in all the earth, and such that are more excellent than their neighbours, " My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight," Psal. xvi, 3.

(2.) They are called precious ; " If thou separate the precious from the vile."

(3.) They are called, " The precious sours of Zion, comparable to fine gold," Lam. iv. 2 ; also are often called gold, which is a precious thing.

(4.) They are called honourable ; " since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable," Isa. xlii. 4.

(5.) They are called God's inheritance, his portion, his treasure, nay, his jewels, "They shall be mine in that day that I make up my jewels," Mai iii. 17.

(6.) They are called Christ's brethren, also his friends, his love, his dove, his spouse; all serve to show that they are a very choice and precious people in God's account.

II. They are a choice and precious people, because of the seed from whence they spring ; they are the seed of God, the seed of Christ ; " He shall see his seed," Isa. hii. 11, the seed or product of the Holy Spirit, and of the word; therefore in respect of their choice and precious birth they are a precious people.

III. In respect of that holy image which is stamped on them ; they bear the image of God, and are like to God, and to Jesus Christ ; the new creature- is a glorious creature, a most choice and excellent creature.

IV. In respect had to their union with Christ ; " He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit ; every believer is espoused, joined or married to Jesus Christ ; they are the beloved, and dear Spouse of this most excellent Prince, and therefore are a precious and most choice people ; the church is the Queen of this Prince ; " Upon the right hand did stand the Queen in gold of Ophir," Psal. xlv. 9.

V. In respect of those rich robes, Christ hath put upon them the wedding garment, i. e., the righteousness of Christ is a glorious robe ; moreover it is said, that " The king's daughter is all glorious within, and her clothing is of wrought gold," Psal. xlv. 13 ; inherent righteousness is a rich garment.

VI. In respect to those choice ornaments with which they are adorned. Grace is compared to a crown of gold on the head, and chains about the neck," Prov. i. 9, Ezek. xvi. 12. Now what are these, but the precious graces of the Spirit?

VII. If we Consider what an excellent spirit they are of, and how they walk with God every day, and what communion they have with the Father and the Son, it fully shows, they are a choice and precious people in God's esteem.

VIII. Also the precious food they have upon, and the choice and excellent privileges God in his free grace hath bestowed upon them, and what glory they are heirs of, shows they are a precious people.

IX. They are the elect of God, and the price of the blood of Christ, also the workmanship of the Spirit, therefore a precious people.

X. The care God takes of them, and the precious thoughts he hath towards them, and the wonders he hath done, and is about to do for them, tends to make them great, and glorious, and renowned, or a choice people in his sight.

Quest. How the saints come to be a precious and peculiar people?

Ans. 1. They become a peculiar people by virtue of God's special and peculiar love from everlasting ; that they who are the people of God, were beloved with a peculiar love, is evident ; " The Lord appeared to me of old, saying, yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love," &c., Jer. xxxi. 3. Our Lord Christ saith, before he was made, his delight was with the sons of men, Prov. viii. 31. That is, with those that were given him, delight proceeds from love. My brethren, all those blessings which we receive in time, are but the effects or fruits of God's peculiar love to us, before all time, or from everlasting ; we must receive all divine favours, either from our merits, God's mercies, from our deservings, or from his peculiar affections, all do not (that is evident) receive alike favours and special blessings; from whence is it? can God's love be purchased? or can sinners deserve anything at his hand ? no, no, he had a peculiar love to some from everlasting, and from thence they become a peculiar people ; " Therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."

2. They become a peculiar people : by virtue of God's peculiar choice they were elected, (as I told you) as well as beloved from everlasting, " According as he hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before Him in love, — having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will," Eph. i. 4 ; all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ, are according to God's choice of us, ver. 3. Peculiarity, either of state or qualifications, flows from the Father's choice or election ; " that his purpose, according to election, might stand," Rom. ix. 11, 13, (he saith) " Jacob have I loved," &c. Either it is of man's free will, or of God's free grace ; but " it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy," ver. 16.

See how St. Paul argues in this case, "Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace," Rom. xi. 5. Well, but may not this election be from foreseen faith, good works, or holiness, no, and if it be of grace, (saith he) it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace ; but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work," ver. 6. We do not signalize ourselves by our love and obedience to God, that we are a peculiar people, and have peculiar favours, as it is among men, as when a commander, or soldier acts with much bravery

and courage, is promoted to peculiar honow by his prince ; no, if it be thus, it is of works, and grace is no more grace.

III. They become a peculiar people, by virtue of that peculiar covenant, made between the Father and the Son, before the world began. Jesus Christ, my brethren, did not engage or covenant with the Father to become a Surety, and to die in the stead of all mankind ; no, but only for his own elect ; he was not like the first Adam, a head or representative for every individual man and woman in the world, for then all must and would be saved. See St. Paul, " Who hath saved us, and called us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. i. V. "What grace we receive in time, it was in that covenant granted to Christ for us in eternity ; and his covenant stands firm, his seed shall endure for ever, it is confirmed by the promise and oath of God, " Who hath sworn to it by his holiness, and will not lie to David," Psal. lxxix. 27, 28, 29, 35.

IV. They become a peculiar people, by virtue of a special and peculiar price laid down to redeem them. Did God love all men alike, and Christ give himself for all with the same degree of love, and with the same intention, design, and purpose of grace to save all, as he did in respect of some, certainly then all would be saved ; for who shall frustrate the absolute design and purpose of Jesus Christ ? But this was not so, " His name shall be called Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins," Matt. i. 21. Not save all people from their sins, no, none but his people, i. e., such that were given to him by the Father. " The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all," Isa. liii. 6. Us all, who were they ? Read the bth ver., " For the transgression of my people was he stricken," John. X. 15. "I lay down my life for my sheep." " Christ purchased the church with his own blood," Acts. xx. 28.

God, in the gift of the Son, acted for his own sovereign pleasure; like as a prince may redeem and save some captives, or pardon some notorious rebels or traitors, and not all, though they as well as the rest deserved to die ; all men are guilty of the highest treason against God, and he might justly have left all under wrath ; but as an act of infinite, peculiar and sovereign grace, Christ died in the room or stead of some, to redeem and save them.

V. They become a peculiar people, by means of the special and peculiar workings and operations of the Holy Spirit, upon their hearts ; is there no specific difference between that grace which is given to some, and that given in common to all ? As the gospel is not sent to all, but to one nation and kingdom, and not to another, so the Spirit (where the gospel is preached) works grace in one man, and not in another. " The wind blows where it listeth — so is every one that is born of the Spirit," John iii. 8. The Spirit is a free agent, he opens one man's heart and eyes, and not another ; he gives faith, knowledge, and regenerates some, and passeth by others ; the Spirit divideth to every man (that is, to every saint) as he will ; either God maketh the difference between one man and another ; or else men makes themselves to differ ; there are, my brethren, special and peculiar operations of the Spirit, and only common operations. " Paul planteth, and Apollos watered ; but it is God that gives the increase ; neither is he that planteth

anything, nor he that watereth anything; but is it God that gives the increase," 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. To such that are elected, whom God will save, the gospel comes in power, but to others in word only ; and were there not such a special power put forth upon some, all would reject the word, and perish for ever. God does no wrong to such that refuse Christ, though he manifesteth peculiar love, to such that truly believe on him ; thus by their receiving peculiar grace they become a peculiar people ; such as is the cause, is the effect ; the effects cannot exceed the cause ; the bare preaching the word is not the cause of men's believing, but it lies in the agency of the Holy Ghost ; and if the cause of light, grace, and regeneration lay in the power of man's will, or in the power of him that hears the word, then the will and power of man would be more noble and excellent than the new creature, which is but the effects thereof.

There is a common faith, a temporary faith, and a faith that is precious, and special, and only peculiar to God's elect, this cannot be denied, unless men will contradict the Holy Ghost. " Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect," Tit. i. 1.

"To them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour," 2 Pet. i. 1.

Observe, this precious faith is given according to the righteousness of God ; that is, according to his justice, truth, and righteousness, in performing his promise to Jesus Christ, in behalf of his elect in the covenant of grace and redemption ; or else through Christ's righteousness, his obedience, death, and merits, who purchased it for them ; it is true in both respects : special faith hath special operations, and they are called the operations of God, and they are peculiar operations to his elect.

"VI. They are a peculiar people, by virtue of that peculiar and vital union they have with Jesus Christ ; like as a virgin of low degree, by marrying a king, is brought or raised to peculiar grandeur, honour, and greatness ; so are sinners that are united and espoused to Christ, raised to special and peculiar dignity, and spiritual grandeur

VII. It is by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit ; the Holy Ghost hath taken up his habitation in these men's hearts, they are his temple, the Father dwells in them, and the Son dwells in them through the Spirit, or by the Spirit ; and they walk with God, converse with God, and have communion with the Father, and the Son, and Holy Spirit, and thus they become a peculiar people.

Secondly, Why are the saints compared to wheat ? I told you, Wheat is the product of a rare and choice seed. So are they the fruit and product of choice love ; electing love is choice love ; redeeming love is choice love ; espousing love is a choice love ; but all this may be said of every true believer ; and they are also the product of the Holy Ghost : the seed that forms the new creature is the Holy Spirit.

2. The seed of wheat must be first sown in the earth, before it can produce increase ; so must the seed of grace be first sown in men's hearts, before they can bear God's image, or bring forth the fruits of holiness unto his praise and glory.

3. Wheat is a profitable sort of grain, to that land where there is plenty of it.

"So the saints and people of God, are a profitable people unto the world; they are the interest of those nations, cities, and places -where they dwell ; thus was Joseph profitable to Potiphar, everything was blessed which he had for Joseph's sake," Gen. xxxi.K. 5. So was Laban blessed for Jacob's sake. " The lips of the righteous teed many," Prov. x. 21 ; " as poor," saith Paul, " yet making many rich ; as having nothing, yet possessing all things," 2 Cor. vi. 19. Sodom was safe whilst Lot was in it ; " except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and should have been like unto Gomorrah," Isa. i. 9.

Happy is that land, that has in it abundance of choice wheat ; but much more happy is that land, or kingdom, that hath abundance of choice Christians, or Christ's spiritual wheat in it.

4. Wheat will abide, endeavour and live in the sharpest winter, when some other grain will not. So true believers do abide, endeavour and live in the times of sharpest trials, persecutions, tribulations, and temptations.

" Because I live, ye shall live also ; they shall not know when drought comes, neither cease from yielding fruit," John xiv. 19. Cold nor heat injures wheat, but it thrives the better, so spiritual cold nor heat hurts true believers ; but as their tribulations abound, their consolations abound also ; they being ordained to bring forth fruit, and that their fruit should remain," John xv. 16.

5. Wheat seems sometimes as if it were quite dead ; you can in winter hardly see one green blade ; so the saints seem sometimes to themselves as if they were almost dead, " I have been afflicted, and ready to die, from my youth up," saith Heman, Psal. lxxxviii. 15. " My hope," saith Job, " is perished ;" but though they seem as dead bones, and cry we are dead, yet they have life in their roots.

6. Wheat is sometimes, by reason of unseasonable weather in the spring, very sickly, the colour being changed ; so in like manner by reason of Satan's temptations, and the corruptions of their hearts, and evils of the times, poor believers are very sickly and weak, and their countenance is changed.

7. Yet when the sun shines sweetly upon wheat, and God sends dry and seasonable weather, it wonderfully on a sudden revives, (as I have often observed with my own eyes). So when the Sun of Righteousness shines sweetly on believers, they on a sudden revive ; " they shall revive as the corn," Hos. xiv. 7.

8. Wheat needs weeding ; and if it be not, it will soon be grown over with weeds, thistles, nettles, &c. Therefore the diligent husbandman takes care upon that account, though slothful persons too much neglect their fields ; so the hearts of believers must be daily weeded, lest the seed of grace be choked, and the weeds of corruption cover their souls, as you heard concerning the thorny ground. " The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful," Matt. xiii. 22.

Some Christians are too much like the man Solomon speaks of, " I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding ; And lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, &c. Then I saw and considered it well, I looked upon it, and received instruction," Prov. xxiv. 30, 31.

9. Full ears of wheat hang down their heads, being full of corn ; so sincere believers are humble, and lowly-minded ; they are poor in spirit, being little, nay, nothing in their own eyes : how humble was Abraham ? " I that am but dust and ashes," &c. And David, who cries out, I am a worm and not man. And Ajjur, " Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the knowledge of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy," Prov. xxx. 2, 3. And also Job, " I abhor myself," Job xlii. 6. Isaiah cries, " Wo is me, for I am undone ; for I am a man of unclean lips," &c. Isa. vi. 5. Paul also saith, he was " less than the least of all saints," Eph. iii. 8. That soul that is humble, and nothing in himself, is full of grace. " I know thy poverty, but thou art rich," Rev. ii. 9.

But proud and haughty professors, are like empty ears of corn, that hold up their heads ; they are light, and of a lofty spirit, thinking none more wise and knowing as themselves.

10. Wheat is not ripe presently, but must have time to grow to maturity, and receive the former and latter rain, before it is fit for the sickle.

So believers are not come to full growth in grace, as to degrees, as soon as they are born again ; no, that child would seem a monster, that in a week's time after it is born should grow to the stature of a man ; a full assurance is not had presently, nor without time, and much diligence, and such must receive the latter, as well as the former rain of the Spirit ; though some are ripe for heaven sooner than others.

11. Tares oft-times are found to grow amongst wheat, which tends greatly to mar its beauty. So in the churches of the saints are often found wicked persons, by which means the beauty of those congregations are much marred ; and the ungodly of the world vilify and reproach them, as if they were all such ; therefore as soon as they are discovered, they are cast out of the church, as the incestuous person was, 1 Cor. v. 1 — 5.

12. Wheat, when it is fully ripe, is gathered into the barn ; so when Christ sees a believer is ripe for heaven, he gathers it as a flock of corn fully ripe.

13. Sometimes a harvest seems much in bulk, but there is but a little corn. So the spiritual harvest may seem much in bulk, a mighty appearance of a great harvest ; but there may be but a few sincere believers amongst them.

14. Wheat dies first, before it rises ; " Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." Wheat seems to rot and die before it rises, so the bodies of believers must die, and lie under the clods of the earth, before they are raised at the last day. But remember, it is the same corn of wheat, the same grain that is sown, that rises again ; it is the same I say, as to the matter or substance of it ; (though like a grain of wheat, it is not the same as to its beauty and glory) but if it were not the same body, it could not be a resurrection, but a new creation ; and then shall not that body that glorified God here be raised to glory ; nor the same body of the wicked that sinned be punished, but an innocent body. And by the same reason it may be denied, it was the same body of Christ that suffered for our sins, that was raised from the dead, and so all our hopes of being saved must perish for ever.

APPLICATION.

1. We infer, that the world is strangely deceived, who look upon believers, or the people of God, as a base and contemptible company, even as the refuse of all things ; whereas they are, as you have heard, the most honourable ; none so excellent, choice, and precious in all the earth, as they are.

2. We refer the excellency of divine grace ; all men, my brethren, naturally are alike vile, sinful, and odious by sin ; there is no difference ; it is only that mighty work of the Spirit of God upon the souls of his elect, that makes them so glorious, amicable, and precious in the sight of God ; and that our chief comeliness is that which we have in Christ, by having his comeliness, his righteousness put upon us ; by which means Christ calls, " His spouse, his love, his dove, his undefiled," Cant. v. 2, 4, 7, and saith, there is no spot in her ; " Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty. For it was perfect through my comeliness which I put upon thee, saith the Lord," Ezek. xvi. 11.

3. This should teach all true believers to admire the special and distinguishing love and grace of God to them in Jesus Christ, and to see they lie low at his foot, and ascribe all the glory and praise to him alone.

4. Moreover, what reproof may this be to the ungodly, who hate the saints, because of that grace and holiness that is in them, and strive to tread them under their feet ; alas, it is God that is in them, Christ that is in them, which they hate ; for as they are men they hate them not, but because they are such men that cannot run to the same excess with them, cannot worship with them, nor have fellowship with them ; " They being not of the world, but because Christ hath called them out of the world, therefore the world hateth them."

5. The saints also may learn from hence, to strive to be a choice people, a holy people, a peculiar people, above all other people in the world. Let it appear, my brethren, that

we are the product of a choice seed, the offspring of God, such that are born of God, that are the chosen of God, the delight of God, or the wheat of Jesus Christ; the best wheat, not lean wheat, not smutty wheat, some wheat is smutty ; it is black, and needs washing and so indeed do many of the saints of God, they are not white wheat, but contrarywise, have much filth cleaving to them, many spots, blemishes, and infirmities. Such ought to labour after the sanctification of the Spirit, and mortification of sin ; "And to hate the garment spotted by the flesh," Jude 23 ; and get their hearts, their consciences and their lives cleansed by the Spirit, and by faith in the blood of Christ ; " Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Cor. vii. 1.

6. Moreover, by what you have heard, you may try yourselves, and see whether you are the choice, the holy and beloved ones of God, or not ; such that are like wheat, you may go for such, and think yourselves to be such, and yet be mistaken, and not be such ; some are taken to be as wheat, who may be but tares, or chaff in God's sight.

(1.) Are your hearts and lives holy ? Do you differ from others ? Who hath made thee to differ from another ? As. there is some wheat better, more fine than others ; so there are some of the saints, who in grace, hohness, and spiritual gifts, excel others ; yet all far excel all unrenewed siimers, both in heart, in principles, and in conversation, and in the end of their conversations also.

(2.) Are you humble, lowly-minded, full of grace, seeing your own nothingness ; and like a full ear of wheat, do you hang down your head iu the sense of that inward corruption and filth of your own hearts ?

(3.) Are you profitable to all you converse with ? Do others receive spiritual benefit by you ?

(4.) Do you endure temptations, and thrive under sore trials, and flourish like Wheat in a time of drought?

(5.) Do you love God and Jesus Christ, with your chiefest love and affections, and all that are his members, all that are born of hioi ? Then no doubt but you are wheat in his sight ?

SERMON XXXVI.

Another parable lie put forth unto them, saying, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field, &c. — Matt. xiii. 24, 25. &c.

We have prosecuted one point of doctrine, from one principal part of this parable, viz. That believers are a choice grain, they are wheat ; the product of precious seed, &c.

I shall now proceed to another point of doctrine.

Doct. 2. The ungodly are a base sort of people ; low and contemptible tares, good for nothing.

1. That the wicked, are a base, low, and a sordid sort of people, appears by the names that are given to them in God's Word ; they are called sons of Belial, unprofitable, or without yoke, rude or untameable.

2. They are called the children of the wicked one.

3. Children of darkness, and children of this world.

4. Infidels, people without faith ; every one that believes not savingly in Christ, is an infidel, though not an infidel in the grossest sense ; he may own a deity.

5. They are the children of the devil ; " In this are manifested the children of God, and the children of the devil," 1 John iii. 10 ; as the saints are a renowned, an honourable people, by being called the children of God, so the wicked are a sordid, a base and contemptible people, by being called the children of the devil. What adds greater glory to the one, or greater shame and contempt unto the other ?

6. They are " called children of fools, yea, children of base men," Job. xxx. 8. The Hebrew word, as Caryl notes, signifies a man fallen, or failing and withered in his understanding. A fool wants filling, or furniture for his mind ; he is like bare walls, or an empty house. They are children of Nabal, saith he a son of Belial, is of the same signification in holy language, with a son of Belial ; disobedient, rebellious ones, who will not endure the yoke ; or foolish ones, as having little wit to choose their way, so they make as little conscience of their way ; but as he observes by an Hebrewism, it doth not refer to their parents, as to themselves, base men, as Mr. Broughton renders it, or the most ignominious among men; they are men without honour, who understand not, and so are like the beasts that perisheth.

7. They are frequently called rebels against God, and haters of God ; " The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves," Psal. lxxxi. 15. Can a more odious name be given to men, than to be called haters of God?

8. They are called devils; " Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" John vi. 70. " The devil shall cast some of you into prison," &c., certainly he means wicked men influenced by the devil.

9. How often are they compared to brutes ; nay, to the most contemptible of brutish creatures. They are called dogs, swine, &c. " Cast not your pearls before swine ;" " beware of dogs," Mark vii. G. Phil. iii. 2.

10. They are called tares, because it imitates the wheat, and groweth up with it, as if it were the same kind with the wheat ; it should not, saith one, be translated tares, but evil seed ; it is that which we call the deaf ears, which grow up with the wheat, and cannot be discerned till harvest, and then it appears nought ; for those we call tares, or fitches, are soon discerned, and plucked up ; nor are fitches so contemptible, being good food for cattle. Therefore that seed called tares among us, cannot be the tares our Saviour alludes to.

Now since wicked men, particularly hypocrites, who strive to imitate the saints of God, are called tares, or evil seed, it shows they are of no worth, of no value, but hateful in the sight of God.

And though those tares are so much like wheat, whilst in the blade, that they cannot, as Mr. Wilson observes, be discerned ; yet when the harvest comes, they will appear vile and contemptible.

2. The ungodly are a vile, low, and sordid sort of people, doth appear. 1. In that they are the offspring of the devil, the seed of Satan ; as they are men and women, it is true, they are from God, or his workmanship ; but as they are wicked and ungodly, they are from the devil, " Ye are," saith our Lord, " of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do," John viii. 44 ; hence Cain is said to be of the wicked one, 1 John iii. 12.

He that committeth sin, is of the devil ; not every one that sins, for there is not a just man on earth, that doth good, and sinneth not ; but he that sinneth with full purpose and consent of his will ; or that liveth in a course, trade, or custom of sinning, he is of the devil ; let him be whosoever he will, though he be a King, or one of the greatest potentates of the world, and boast never so much of the nobleness of his descent, blood, and family, he is for all that of the devil. how may this tend to lower the top-sails of the haughty monarchs of the earth ! Believers (you heard the last day) are the seed of God ; but all wicked men are the seed and offspring of the devil ; they are begotten of him, proceed as it were from his cursed loins.

II. Ungodly persons are a base, a sordid, and contemptible people, appears from that low, that base, worldly, and earthly spirit they are of; the apostle gives them their character, " Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things," Phil. iii. 19. That is, they mind earthly things more than those things that are above ; value their earthly riches, their sinful pleasures, and carnal honours, above God, or Jesus Christ ; nay, preferred their base, sordid, and vile lusts, above all that good which is in the blessed God, or in Jesus Christ. Doth not this show what a poor, base, and contemptible spirit they are of?

III. But not only from hence do they appear of a base and sordid spirit, but much more in that they are so much like the devil himself in sensuality and earthly-mindedness ; they show they are like mere animals ; but by their pride, cruelty, malice, are like the envy and hatred of the saints, they show themselves to be mere incarnate devils, or devils in the shape of men ; they have his very image upon them, as they proceed from him ; is the devil an enemy to God, to Christ, to the saints, and to holiness and virtue ? So are wicked men. Do devils sin freely, with full purpose, and cannot but sin ? So do wicked men : Do devils do what they can to encourage vice, and all profaneness, and by one means or another strive to hinder or suppress real godliness?

This is also the great design and endeavour of some wicked men ; is the devil so malicious an enemy against the godly, that God seeth it necessary to restrain or chain him up.

The like he seeth in ungodly men, and therefore he restrains them also ; for as the devil is houndless in his rage and malice to mankind, so are many of his emissaries against their fellow creatures.

Doth the devil prompt and tempt men to sin, to make them if he could as vile as himself? So do wicked men entice, tempt, or draw others to sin, and to commit all acts of abomination also. Is the devil swelled with pride ? So are wicked men. Is the devil an accuser of the brethren? Why, wicked men are in that like unto him. Also thus as wicked men have Satan's name given to them, so they have his hellish nature also in them, and therefore are a base, vile, and contemptible people.

Note also, that pride, malice and envy, are diabolical evils ; and the more proud or malicious, the more like the devil is any man or woman.

IV. Ungodly men are a low, base, and sordid people, if we observe what food they eat or live upon ; princes and noble ones of the earth fare high, they eat the fat, and drink the sweet ; they have all varieties of delicious food ; but the baser sort, such that are ignoble, poor, and contemptible, feed on mere trash, on roots, or mean diet ; even so the saints being noble and high-born souls, kings children, princes, or the most honourable of the earth, you heard they feed on choice food, heavenly food ; they eat at the king's table ; they "eat that which is good, and their souls delight themselves in fatness," Isa. lv. 2.

But the wicked feed on husks, which the swine eat, with which (like the Prodigal) they would fain fill their bellies ; nay, they are said to feed on ashes, and on the wind ; by husks are meant the riches, honours, and sinful pleasures of this world, which can never satisfy the immortal soul of man.

By feeding on the wind, is meant false doctrine, errors, and any notions ; and hence it is that this sort are puffed up like bladders with pride and vain-glory, Hos. xii. 1.

V. This further appears by the poor and vile clothing they wear ; noble persons are known by their rich apparel, their excellent robes, and by being decked with , jewels, pearls, and precious stones ; if you see a person in cloth of gold, and a crown on his head, you presently say he is a king. Thus the saints, you heard, are in a spiritual manner clothed and adorned. (Ezek. xvi. 12, 13, Psal xlv. 9, 13)

But the wicked are clothed with nothing but filthy rags, Isa. lxiv. 6, even the best of them, who live a moral sober life ; for if a believer's own inherent righteousness is in comparison of the righteousness of Christ, but as filthy rags, or filthy garments ; Zech. iii. 5 ; what sordid rags are they that wicked men have on, even the best and most reformed of them ? And as for the rest they are quite naked, and their shaae appears to all, and therefore they are a poor, low, wretched, base, and sordid sort of people, and so may well be compared to tares. Rev. iii. 17.

VI. It appears also by the company they keep ; wicked men delight in the baser sort, they cannot tell how to behave themselves amongst such that are born from above ; no, no company pleaseth them but such who have the same swinish and brutish nature, who like a sow love to swallow in the mire and filth and horrid pollution, 2 Tim. ii. 2.

VII. In respect of those filthy and loathsome sores they have on them, they appear a base, a hateful, and sordid sort of people ; they have nothing from the soles of their feet unto their head but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores, as well as they are covered with nothing but loathsome rags, Isa. i. 6.

VIII. They are a low, base, and a sordid sort of people, doth also appear in respect of their end, to which they are appointed ; tares are for the fire ; when harvest comes, then the wheat shall be gathered into Christ's garner, and the tares shall be bound up into bundles, and thrown into the fire, and they shall be burned, being good for nothing but to make fuel of; hence also they are compared to thorns and briars fully dry, which were not created of God, but are the fruit of the curse, Isa. xxvii. 4, Gen. iii. 12.

APPLICATION.

1. We may infer from hence, that God doth lay the wicked under the highest contempt.
2. How blind are all ungodly persons ! In a spiritual sense they only see with fleshly eyes, and behold things that are visible and temporal ; but they cannot discern any beauty in spiritual things and objects, because they are spiritually discerned. Moreover, they cannot taste how good God is, they favour not, relish not, heavenly food ; no, nor is it possible they should, unless they had a heavenly nature ; for it is the new man, the new creature, or such that are born of God, who know how gracious and good God is.
3. We infer that sin hath made a fearful change on mankind, and strangely altered his first glorious constitution, marred and spoiled his beauty ; how glorious was he when he came, out of God's hands ! He was made but a little lower than the holy angels ; but by sin he is become almost as black and odious as devils.

4. From hence also we may infer, that " a wicked man is loathsome," Prov. xiii. 5, as Solomon saith ; and well may the Holy Ghost say, that sinners naturally were cast forth in their blood and filth, " to lie loathing of their persons," Ezek. xvi. 5.

5. Moreover from hence we may see the cause why God values them no more. They are of little worth to him, and therefore he hath, for the sake of his own people, his beloved ones, given whole nations of these sordid wretches to the sword, and valued them not, but trod them under his feet as dirt and filth : " I have Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee ; since thou wast precious in my sight, -thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee," Isa. xliii. 4. Well, and what then ? " Therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life ;" and from hence also it is said, he reproveth kings for their sakes ; " When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another, he suffered no man to do them wrong ; yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes : saying, touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," Psal. cv. 13 — 15.

The haughty kings of the earth are as filth, or hateful persons in Christ's sight ; and he therefore " will come on these princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth the clay," Isa. xli. 25 ; they shall know that he abhorreth them, and will take vengeance upon them, for all the wrong they have done to his saints and beloved ones, who are as precious to him as the apple of his eye.

6. From hence also we infer, that grace is of a transcendent nature ; what a change doth it make in one of these odious, loathsome creatures? when God gives his Spirit, infuseth grace into the heart of a vile sinner, what a wonderful change doth it produce in such a one ! It makes the vile honourable, the deformed beautiful, and the swinish nature a lamblike nature ; the churl liberal, the proud humble, the malicious pitiful ; in a word, it turneth the diabolical nature into a Godlike and a Christlike nature and disposition.

7. Let sinners therefore from hence learn to lothe themselves, and attend upon the word of God. look to Christ ! Cry to him that he would work a blessed change in you, that you may find the effects of the blood of Jesus, and the nature of true faith upon your hearts ; that, though now you are base and filthy creatures in God's sight, being polluted with sin, and in many things resemble the devil, you may find a blessed change, and become beautiful and glorious in God's sight.

8. We also infer from hence, that there is just cause for sinners, when God opens their eyes, to lothe themselves, " Ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight, for all your evils that ye have committed," &c., Ezek. xx. 4y. Grace makes a believer ashamed of his former state, and abominable filthiness, " That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord," Ezek. xvi. 63.

Lastly, you that are Christ's wheat, the product of his good seed : or who are believers, praise God and admire his free grace, who hath wrought such a blessed change in your souls who were once as vile, as filthy, and as abominable as others ; but now ye are washed, justified, and sanctified, let God have all the glory ! It is he alone that has made the difference, and let it appear you are a choice and precious people ; and labour to live to the glorifying of his grace, who hath called you. I shall now proceed to another point of doctrine, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

Doct. The blessed God would have the wheat and tares, i. e., the godly and the wicked, grow together in the field of this world, and both to ripen for the harvest ; i. e., the end thereof.

1. He would have his own people abide in the world, though they meet with many sorrows, afflictions, trials, and . 1 usage whilst they are here, by reason of sin, Satan, and the ungodly that dwell therein, "I pray not that thou wouldst take them out of the world, but that thou wouldst keep them from the evil," John xvii. 15. Our Lord doth not mean afflictive evil, or the evil of afflictions, (unless it be such afflictions that are penal, or in a way of wrath, and divine justice, which none of the godly shall ever meet with ; because our blessed Saviour hath born all penal evil, or vindictive wrath, for them) it is therefore the evil of sin ; such sin that would or might be ruinous to their souls, he prayed we might be kept from such evil ; for the Father heard our Lord always, therefore he granted what he asked of him here.

Quest. But why would he not have his wheat, his saints taken out of the world ?

1. He does not mean that he would have them live in this world always ; no, but so long, even until they are ripe for heaven ; wheat is not ripe presently. Believers shall abide here, until they are actually fit and prepared for God's garner above.

2. Because they are in some sense the " light of this dark world," Matt. v. 14. Should all the saints be taken out of the world, what a dark world would this be ? Moreover, they are the salt of the earth, ver. 13; this world would stink in the nostrils of God, were it not for the saints that are in it, who like salt in some sense preserve it from putrefaction.

3. Because they have much work to do for God's glory, and for the good and benefit of mankind in their several generations, whilst this world shall continue.

The saints, especially the ministers of the gospel, are God's witnesses, who stand up for him, witness to his truth, his holiness, justice, mercy, love, faithfulness, &c., to the establishing and comfort of the elect and to the condemnation of the wicked, and the aggravation of their sins.

Quest. But why would God have the tares also to grow in the field of this world, and not rooted out of it ?

Answ. 1. He would not have his church and people to root them out, (were it in their power) for the reason he gives, i. e., lest they root out some of this wheat with them, which I hath spoken unto already.

2. God himself will not destroy them, or root them all out of the world presently ; because their sins, like those of the Amorites, may not be yet full, or they may not be fully ripe for the harvest.

3. That God may show his patience, long-suffering, and forbearance towards them, as the apostle shows. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

4. Perhaps some of God's elect may be amongst them, or at least some of their offspring may be such ; for the election of grace runs to many persons, who are the children of ungodly parents ; or such that are here called tares ; an hypocrite, or an abominable wretch, may have a godly child ; the stock therefore must live until the fruit be brought forth ; but no more as to this. Moreover, we may note from the answer given to the servants, (who would pull up the tares).

Doct. That some of the tares are much like the wheat ; or do in some things especially, whilst in the blade, resemble the saints, being not discovered till harvest.

This shows, that by the tares, hypocrites are rather meant than profane persons, who show their sin, as Sodom, and hide it not.

I shall hint a few tilings to this observation.

1. Hypocrites may own the true doctrine of the gospel, and make a profession of religion, and be taken for saints by the godly, as is showed in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins.

2. They may be under the common illuminations of the Spuit, and partake of the gifts thereof, as is showed by the apostle, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

3. They may be found in the discharge or performance of all external duties of religion ; and particularly they may pray often ; for thus tie Pharisees clid ; " I pray twice a day," &c.

But having in two parables showed largely how far a hypocrite may go, (and how much he may resemble a true Christian) I shall say no more to it here. (Parable of the sower and of the virgins)

SERMON XXXVII.

Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? but he said, nay, lest while you gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until harvest. - Matt. xiii. 28-30.

I Have spoken already to one or two points of doctrine, showing both the nature of the wheat and tares.

Doct. 6. We again observe, that the remissness of Christ's ministers and churches, in not watching against Satan and evil men, is of a bad and dangerous nature. sleeping.

While men slept, the devil sowed his evil seed ; that is through the negligence, slothfulness, or remissness of Christ's ministers and his people ; Satan by his vile instruments sowed the seed of errors and heresy in the church, or rather in the field of the world ; from whence many evil men sprang up, to the hurt and prejudice of God's people.

And this evidently appeared in the succeeding ages, next the apostles' time ; what evil men! Yea, cursed wolves rose, as St. Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus there would, " For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock," Acts. xx. 29.

What evil men were Hyraeneseus, Alexander, Nicolaitans, Hermogenes, and after them Arius and his followers, who denied the God-head of our blessed Saviour ; and multitudes more of cursed heretics also sprang up, which doubtless was through the carelessness of some of Christ's servants, and all chiefly through the malice of Satan, that enemy of God, and of the souls of men, and to show his cruel hatred to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine of the gospel, yet no doubt but those wars that rose in the church about the Arian heresies, is condemned, by our Lord in this parable ; it may be feared, some wheat might be plucked up in those times among the tares, by the slaughter of such a multitude.

USE.

This may caution all ministers of Christ, and churches, to take heed they sleep not, but watch, and take heed lest evil seed be sown amongst them, I mean the seed of error and heresy ; or such doctrine that tends to licentiousness, or to corrupt the doctrine of God's free grace. For,

1. Many may under fair pretences of exalting Christ, sow pernicious and poisonous seed ; and others under a colour of promoting holiness and sanctification, have corrupted the doctrine of free justification by Christ's righteousness alone.

2. By way of council, beware of such men who are lifted up with pride, who to magnify themselves, seem to despise others, perhaps more worthy than themselves.

3. Beware of such that effect novelty, and strive to promote new notions in matters of religion, and all to have themselves admired by the multitude, and unthinking persons.

4. Likewise have a watchful eye, of such that cry up this and that man, and cry down others ; lest the evil seed of the enemy spring up, and prove ruinous to their own and other men's souls ; also lest they prove tares.

5. Moreover, watch such who are subject to wander from their own fold and pasture ; and such also that are ready, on every small occasion, to take offence, and quarrel with their brethren, or to neglect to assemble themselves with the church, Heb. x. 25 ; also such that seem earthly, cold, or lukewarm in the things of God. But I shall add no more to this.

Let both grow together until harvest.

Doct. 7. From hence I note. That both the wheat and the tares, true believers and hypocrites, saints and sinners, do ripen for the harvest.

1. I shall show you how the wheat, or sincere Christians, ripen for the harvest,

2. Also how the tares, or evil men, do ripen also.

I. As Wheat after it is sown hath its ripening time. So have the saints and people of God

(1.) They are first rooted in Christ, by virtue of a vital union with him.

(2.) Then they sprung up.

(3.) They ear as it were, and appear full of grace and divine virtue.

(4.) Then afterwards they come to full maturity.

II. Wheat ripens gradually, that it is hardly discerned: so the godly ripen gradually also, it is hardly discerned by themselves or others. He that most complains for want of growth, may be the most growing Christian ; for there is a growing downward in humility.

III. Wheat must have showers to ripen it. So must the saints have the showers of divine or heavenly doctrine, or spiritual dew to ripen them ; one minister by his doctrine planteth, his gift chiefly lieth that way : another he watereth, his doctrine tends most to establishment, growth, or to edification of the saints, and to their comfort and consolation. " I have planted, and Apollos hath watered," 1 Cor. iii. 6.

I have gathered you to Christ, (as if Paul should say) and Apollos hath built you up, and confirmed you in Christ, with sound and edifying doctrine ; " But God gave the increase," 1 Cor. iii. 7, the new heart ; and all increase of grace is from God ; it is he that

blesseth the word and ordinances; the word of God is the rain, and it comes with power, and is set home upon the soul by the holy Spirit, there is a divine growth.

Rain is much desired in a time of drought, and much prayed for, and it is a great judgment to have it withheld. So the divine rain of heavenly doctrine is greatly desired by all sincere Christians ; " I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for thy commandments," Psal. cxix, liii ; moreover, there cannot be a worse judgment than for God to withhold or take away His word and ordinances from a people ; or to have the word, and yet the soul cannot receive it, or take it in, but like rain that falls on a rock it slides away ; this argues the heart is hard ; in time of drought the husbandman cries, Lord, send rain! O send a soaking shower to soften the earth ! And to cause the corn to grow and flourish, even so should we cry, when the spiritual rain is withheld from us, Heb. vi. 7, 8.

IV. Moreover, believers grow and ripen for the harvest, by means of the shining and sweet fructifying influences of " the Sun of righteousness," Mai. iv. 2 ; if Christ is withdrawn, or shines not upon our souls, we grow not, flourish not in grace and holiness, but droop, and seem to wither or decay in our souls ; it is Christ that quickens, enlivens, and ripeneth us for harvest ; and such who have most of the influences of the Spirit ripen most ; they flourish while others decay ; " it is from me that all thy fruit is found," Hos. xiv. 8.

V. Some Christians are like wheat smitten or blasted, in respect of their hope, peace, joy, &c., and so seem to languish ; we find God of old smote some with a mddew, Amos iv. 9. let us fear nothing more than this ! Also some sow sparingly, and so shall reap sparingly, whilst others shall reap plentifully, 2 Cor. ix. 6. " Look to yourselves, that we lose not those tilings which we have -nThought, but that we receive a full reward," 2 John viii. Ministers may fail of a full crop : and members fail of a full crop also.

Quest. What should a believer do to ripen for the harvest ?

Ans. 1 . Improve all opportunities, all seasons of grace | consider well the worth of them ; also how short and uncertain they may be : some that ripen not, thrive not, neglect gracious seasons and opportunities, or are very care- ripen for less and negligent in the matter ; they prefer the world above the word.

2. Observe well and cherish all those convictions of your consciences, and of the Holy Spirit, either in respect of sin or duty, lest ye sin them away.

3. Improve all the dispensations and providences of God, or those various trials, afflictions, and temptations you meet with ; the rod feeds as well as the word ; the godly are "like the palm-tree," l'sal. xcii. 12, which thrives the more by the weights hanged upon it ; or like camomile, the more it is trod upon, the more it gi-ows and flourishes, Jer. x. 5.

4. Live much in the sense and thoughts of death, and of the judgment day ; think much of the harvest, i. e., the end of the world ! Deut. xxxii. 29. That will quicken thee to duty, and tend to make thee more serious and diligent in the whole course of thy life.

5. See that you gather day by day, get more strength against sin, and the corruptions of your own hearts, and mortify these inordinate lusts, and give not way to a carnal and worldly frame of heart, Eom. viii. I'd ; " But live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit," Gal. V. IG, being spiritually-minded ; these thrive and ripen apace for the harvest : " Abstain from all fleshly lusts that war against the soul ! " 1 Pet. ii. 11.

6. Labour to " add to your faith virtue," &c., 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, to grow in faith, get stronger and more steadfast faith in Jesus Christ ; and grow in love to God, to Christ, and to his saints ; and not only in faith and love, but in humility and patience also ; how did those saints, St. Paul speaks of ripen ? " Your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you towards each other aboundeth." So that we glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure," 2 Thes. i. 3. This is, my brethren, the glory of Christians ; that they grow in all the graces of the Spirit, and in experience, in holiness, and heavenly-mindedness.

7. The way to ripen for heaven, is to strive against all those things that hinder or obstruct your growth, as thorns and briars ; i. e., the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches. Mat. xiii. 22; we must also labour against spiritual drowsiness, sleepiness, and idleness, in God's service, and against all things whatsoever that tends to hinder our communion with God and Jesus Christ : it is a sign a Christian ripens for glory, when he cannot be satisfied if the face of God be hid, or hath lost sight of it ; they will also not withhold doing good while it is in the power of their hand ; some refuse doing good whilst they live, or leastwise so much good, pretending they purpose to do it at their death. O then, say they, the servants of Christ, the interest of Christ, and the poor saints, shall be remembered.

Alas, it is far better you do it now, for may be then they may not need it as they do now, or perhaps Satan will be too hard for you, and change your purpose before that time comes ; or others may (may be) deceive such to whom you intend to leave something ; "whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might," Eccl. ix. 10 ; do it now ; do not defer it ; present promises touching what a man, saith he, will do in time to come, seldom ends in real performances.

8. Labour in all things to keep a good conscience, both towards God, and towards man ; this was the care of holy Paul, that so whether he was present or absent he might be accepted of God.

9. Labour for a full assurance of faith ; when a man has attained to a full assurance he is ripe for heaven; but many may be ripe without this assurance.

Secondly, I shall show you how the tares, or the wicked, ripen for the harvest of sorrow and denial burning.

Note by the way, as the godly ripen for the harvest of joy, so the wicked ripen for the harvest of sorrow ; as the growth of the one is gradual, so also is the other.

(1.) Mercies not improved, but slighted and neglected, ripen the wicked apace for the harvest. God affords a plenteous time or season to gather in, and to lay up, or to provide for another world ; but they neglect it, and trifle it away ; they have sermon after sermon, but no word fasteas upon their hearts ; " the gospel comes to them m word only," 1 Thes. i. 5 ; perhaps they put the word away from them, as that wlich concerns them not ; but may say when they have heard a sermon, there was a word for such a one, and such a one, but did not hear any word that concerned themselves, and so the word becomes to them " a savour of death unto death," 2 Cor. ii. 16,

(2.) When conscience is disregarded, men turning a deaf ear to those checks and sharp rebukes they find in their own breasts, this tends to ripen them for ruin ; for as a man uses or deals with his own conscience, (which by light received from God's word reprovcs for sin) in the same manner he deals with the Holy God himself; for conscience acts, and speaks, and reprovcs by the command and authority of God. It is God's vicegerent in the soid, and this ungodly sinners shall know one day. Conscience is God's witness in man, and will at the great day come in against all ungodly persons, as being privy to all heart-evil, and all deeds of wickedness done in secret, Rom. ii. 15, 16. (See a poem called "War With the Devil")

(3.) When a man " being often reprovcd hardenethhis neck," Prov. xxix. 1, ministers, parents, good men, and his own conscience, often reprovcs him ; and God by many sore providences and disappointments reprovcs him ; but still he is hardened, and Pharaoh-like goes on in his former evil, and wicked courses ; this ripens such persons for the harvest wonderfully !

(4.) When the judgments of God instead of softening, harden the sinner ; this was that which ripened Pharaoh and the Egyptians. God brings fearful symptoms of his wrath and displeasure upon this and that man, this and that nation, but they regard it not ; may be just whilst the hand of God is upon them, they will cry out, and say, if the Lord pleaseth to spare them, they will amend their lives, &c. But no sooner hath the Lord done it, but they are as vde, as hypocritical, and as abominable as they were before ; nay, perhaps worse, " Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet wiU he not learn righteousness : iu the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of God," Isa. xxvi. 10. And this made the prophet say, " Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, &c., the goodness of God in his sparmg mercy works no change in them ; but that which should lead them to repentance hardens them in their sins.

"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of the Lord leadeth thee to repentance, but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasiu'est up wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. ii. 4, 5.

(5.) When the motions of the Spirit, in his common operations. Gen. vi. 3, are quenched ; God strove with the old world, and so he strives with sinners now, but they resist the Holy Ghost ; but yet he is pleased to exercise patience toward them ; but at last he will pour forth his wrath, when they are fully ripe for cutting down ; " What if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endure with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitteth to destruction," Rom. ix. 22:

(6.) The tares or wicked men ripen for the harvest, by letting lusts conceive in them ; they readily and freely suffer it to conceive, and then ruminate upon it, and are pleased with the thoughts thereof ; either from the profit, or the pleasure and sweetness of it : the lusts of malice seem sweet to some men, as unclean thoughts are pleasant and sweet to others.

(7.) Another gradation or progressive motion to ripening sinners, is when lusts conceived, break forth into acts, or into the abominable commission thereof ; " When lust is conceived it bringeth forth sin," &c. James i. 15.

(8.) A third step is, when sins, yea, great sins, are extenuated and rendered small ; and little sins perhaps looked upon as no sin, or such that never offended their blind and misguided consciences.

(9.) When sin is delighted in, some men they take pleasure in wickedness, they love their cursed abominations. Sin is a sport unto them, they " drink it in, as the fish drinks water," Job xv. 10 ; some such are near ripe for harvest.

(10.) When they are told of their sins, and hellish pollution, and they plead excuses as if the fault was not theirs : but like Adam, say, the woman thou gavest me, she gave me and I did eat : I was drawn in unawares to commit this and that sin ; such or such enticed me into their company ; sirs, this far from confessing thcu' sins, is but the way to hide and cover them ; and certainly this sort are near ripe also for ruin, or for cutting down.

(11.) Such men are certainly ripe for the harvest, who are found glorying in their sin and shame," Phil. iii. 19. Some gloried, how many virgins they have defiled : or, how many whores they have had : and still have others, how craftily they cheated such and such persons ; and others, how many robberies they have committed. Some also glory, how many silly fellows they have druck down, (as they call it) to what a degree of sin and wickedness are such beastly wretches arrived, who thus glory in their filthiness !

Lastly, a hardened heart, a seared conscience, final unbelief and impenitence follows, and so they come to be fully ripe for the harvest ; many do not only love all acts of wickedness, and glory in their shame, but draw in others, or are rmg-leaders to all profaneness ; and also hate, reproach, and vilify all that are truly pious and religious ; now if any man hates any child of God, because of his likeness to God, or because of his religion and piety ; to what a degree of wickedness are such grown ! But to close

"with this, pray take notice, that when neither the Word of God, nor the Rod of God, neither mercies, nor judgments, neither reproof from without, nor the checks of conscience from within, take any place to humble sinners, or leastwise to restrain them from their hellish practices ; but God hath left them to their own hearts' lust, and to walk in their own council ; and he says to all reprovers, let them alone, who have hard and impenitent hearts ; these are every way ripe for the harvest.

APPLICATION.

See here what different effects the gospel hath upon the children of men ; even as the sun hath in respect of his hot beams, i.e., if it shines upon wax, it softens that ; but if it shines upon the clay, it hardens diat ; also it shines upon a garden, and causeth the herbs and flowers thereof to send forth a fragrant sceut ; it shines upon a filthy dunghill; and what a loathsome and stink doth the same beams cause or produce ! So the gospel sun makes the hearts of believers soft and tender, but it tends (through sin and Satan's temptations) to make the hearts of some wicked men more hard ; the gospel is a savour of life into life to some, and the savour of death to death to others ; some bless God for the word, and others blaspheme God and his servants who preach it.

1. We see as the sun that shines on the wheat ripens that; so the same sun shining on the tares ripens them.
2. We also may infer, that no evil is like unto the evil of sin, in respect to the horrid effects of it upon the minds of the children of men. And what folly, madness, and ignorance is there in their hearts, consideruig what the effect of sin is which they so much love, and what the fruit of it will be m the end ! for when sin is linished it bringeth forth death.
3. From hence let me exhort sinners to ponder their way ; consider what we are a doing, and whether they are going ; what will the end of these tares be ? " Where shall the sinner and ungodly appear?" 1 Pet. iv. 18. Even where the wicked rich man appeared ; " in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment," Luke xvi. 23 ; some men's eyes will never be opened, until they are in eternal flames.
4. O let us try ourselves by what hath been said, and see whether we ripen for heaven or for hell !
5. By way of admiration, we may all stand and wonder at the patience, goodness, mercy, and long-suffering of God ; who lets the wicked alone so long before he cuts them down : you that are tares tremble, but let the saints and people of God rejoice, who are his choice grain, the wheat of Jesus Christ, for they shall not be taken out of this world, until they are ripe for heaven.

SERMON XXXVIII.

Let both grow together until harvest — Matt. xiii. 30.

Doct. The harvest will come, which will be a discriminating day ; the wheat then shall be clearly discovered from the tares.

1. I shall show you how fitly the end of the world may be compared to harvest.
2. Show how then the wheat shall be known from the tares, or sincere believers from hypocrites.
 1. The harvest is the time that the husbandman longs for, and hath much patience until it cometh.

So this spiritual or mystical harvest is the day which all the godly long for, and are exercised with patience under all their trials and afflictions until it comes.

2. When the harvest is fully ripe, then both the wheat and tares are severed one from another by the servants of the husbandman.

So all sincere Christians and hypocrites, shall, by the angels, be separated one from another at the end of the world.

3. When the harvest is fully ended, there is no more wheat nor tares growing, or to be found in the field.

So when this world is ended, there will be no people, either godly nor wicked, to be found to live as they do together, now in this world, any more for ever. For as the saints shall be received into God's glorious barn, so the wicked shall be cast into hell.

4. Harvest is a time of great joy to an industrious husbandman, but the sluggard meets then with great disappointment, and is perplexed with grief and sorrow.

So the end of the world will be the day of the saints' joy and gladness ; " everlasting joy shall be upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away," Isa. xxxv. 10. The joy of believers then shall far exceed the joy of harvest.

But the wicked and slothful person, who sowed to the flesh, whose heart, doctrine, and life, demonstrated they were tares, when the end of the world cometh, shall reap sorrow, shame, and confusion of face for evermore. " He that soweth to the flesh shall reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall reap life everlasting," Gal. vi. 8.

Secondly, how shall the tares be known from the wheat, or hypocrites be discerned from sincere believers, at the end of the world?

1. The tares, or ungodly persons, shall then be known by their contemptible bodies ; for though the bodies of the wicked shall be raised immortal, to endure everlasting punishment ; yet their bodies shall not appear glorious, as the bodies of the saints shall ; for the saints' bodies shall be made " and fashioned like to Christ's glorious body," Phil. iii. 21.

And by that the one shall be clearly known from the other.

2. The ungodly will (no doubt) be known by their company, the saints shall be attended by all the glorious angels ; but the wicked shall have no other retinue than their own condemned companions, viz., ungodly persons and devils ; such company men have chiefly loved and delighted in here, shall be their companions for ever in the world to come ; and by this men may know how it shall go with them in that day.

3. The wicked will be known by their being naked, or perhaps by that which will be worse than being naked ; but the righteous shall be most gloriously clothed, even in wrought gold ; we cannot conceive how glorious their immortal robes will be in that day.

4. The wicked will be known by their dismal cries and lamentation. " Behold, my servant shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit," Isa. lxxv. 14. The consciences of the wicked will accuse, condemn, and terrify them, so that their lamentation will be exceeding great.

5. The ungodly will in that day be known from the saints, by that signal act of our Lord Jesus Christ. " Before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," Matt. xxv. 32. This division and act of Jesus Christ will make a full discrimination.

6. Moreover it will be known by the different placing of the one and the other ; and "he shall set the sheep on his right hand, the goats on the left ;" by these things the tares shall be known from the wheat, when the harvest comes, and the saints return from their graves ; which will make good that word of the prophet Malachi, " Then ye shall return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not," Mai. iii. 18.

Even in this parable our Saviour saith, that the " Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity," verse 41. Like tares they shall be bound up in bundles, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. From this clause let me note.

Doct. That the wrath of God in hell, or the place of the damned, is like a furnace of fire ; into which all ungodly men shall be cast after the judgment day is ended.

What is more dismal, more terrifying, and more tormenting, than to be cast into a hot burning fiery furnace ? The torments of the wicked will be intolerable. See that similitude of the fan in Christ's hand, and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus ; " And then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," verse 43.

1. We have here a description of the glorious state of believers, called the righteous ; they shall shine.

2. The nature or manner how, or to what degree they shall shine, " as the sun."

3. The place where they shall thus shine, i. e. " in the kingdom of the Father."

4. The time when, then, that is, at the end of the world, or at the resurrection day, then shall the righteous shine. Believers have a twofold righteousness.

1. The righteousness of justification, viz., the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ; and in this righteousness they shall shine gloriously for ever, for that is the righteousness that carries them to heaven; " Of righteousness, because I go to the Father," John xvi. 10.

2. The righteousness of sanctification, which shall be perfect in that day, and in that righteousness they shall shine gloriously for ever also.

Quest. What need shall the saints have to shine in Christ's righteousness, when they shall be perfectly holy in themselves ?

Answ. Great need and reason there will be for it.

1. Because it was not their own inherent righteousness which was their title to heaven, but the righteousness of Christ alone ; therefore they shall boast of, and shine in the righteousness of Christ for ever.

2. Because their own inherent righteousness was imperfect and full of spots whilst they lived upon the earth, and it was made perfect only as an act of Christ's purchase, or the fruit of his merits and obedience to make them meet for that inheritance.

3. Nay, had it been perfect in this life, yet it could not have justified them, nor saved them from hell, (much less brought them to heaven) because it could not have paid off their old score, or satisfied divine justice for original and actual sins, or breach of the holy law of God. For if a man could live now such a holy life, as never to offend God in word, thought, or action ; yet his old sins (unless Christ's righteousness be imputed to him) will cast him into hell.

4. Because the righteousness of Christ is the righteousness of God, i. e., of him that is God and not man only ; it is not the righteousness of a mere creature, therefore that

righteousness being put upon the saints, they will shine more glorious in, than in any righteousness, though complete, of mere creatures.

And from hence the saints shall sing praises unto God and the Lamb for evermore, and say, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," Rev. v. 12. Then shall the righteous shine like the sun.

Doct. 1. The great glory of believers is reserved to that time ; now their life is a hidden life, and their glory is veiled.

"Now are we the sons of God, but it doth not appear what we shall be," 1 John. iii. 1 — 3, " For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," Col. iii. 3.

Observe this well, though believers have glory conferred upon them in this world, being now the sons of God, yet their glory doth not yet appear, it is not manifested, nor shall it be until then.

Doct. 2. When the end of the world comes, or at the day of the resurrection, the saints shall shine forth gloriously.

1. Because the saints being God's jewels, are then all made up, or completed every way, and shall shine before wicked men and devils, to the shame and confusion for ever of those wretches.

2. Moreover, as heirs, they shall come to a perfect age, and to possess the purchased inheritance, to the praise of God's grace and glory.

3. Then the marriage of the Lamb will be celebrated, and the bride be adorned in all her marriage-ropes and rich attire, Rev. xix. 7.

What heart can conceive, or tongue express, the glory of Christ's Marriage- day, or the glory every true believer shall shine more glorious than others ; for some shall " shine as the brightness of the sun-moment, and those who turn many to righteousness as the stars for evermore," Dan. xii. 3. Our Lord says, they shall shine as the sun, which is far more glorious than the stars ; all vessels shall be full, but some shall be greater bodies of light, and so shine brighter than others.

4. Because then the bodies and souls of all believers shall be reunited, both being made perfect ; a curious piece of work, whether a jewel or clockwork never appears so glorious until it is all joined together, and every way perfected ; so the glory of the saints will then every way be full and perfect, both in respect of soul and body too.

5. Because Christ then will appear ; " And when he appears we shall appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 4. " And we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 4. Then, and in that day, " Our vile body shall be changed, and made like unto his glorious

body," Phil. iii. 21, though not in respect of degree, but in quality and similitude. As a star in its quality is glorious, but in degree not so glorious, as the sun ; Christ is God, and in him shall the glory of the Father, nay, the glory of the whole Godhead

How we bodily, shine forth; also in him we shall see God, who is invisible to any material or created eyes, we shall see him as he is, we shall behold his glory, other world, and be with him where he is, as he hath asked it of God, so it is granted him, " Father, I will that those also that thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me," -John xvii. 24, &c.. that is, that they may partake of my glory. To behold the glory of God, is to be glorified, but all our glory certainly will reflect from the glory of Christ's person, whose glory will be astonishing.

6. Because then will be the time of " the manifestation of the sons of God," Bom. viii. 19. Then they shall be crowned with glory. Sirs, that will be the saints' coronation-day ; then shall the crown of life, the crown of glory, the crown that fadeth not away, be given to them. " Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge will give unto me at that day ; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearance," 2 Tim. iv. 8.

7. Then will be the time of the saints' reaping, as now is the time of their sowing ; and " they that sow in tears shall reap in joy," Psal. cxxvi. 5. They shall reap a full harvest not only of what they have sowed or suffered, but the fruit of that seed which Christ by his obedience and suffering hath sowed ; it will be the harvest (I say, or reaping-time) of Christ's sowing . the time when he shall have his full reward for all he hath wrought ; and not of his own glory, but what he hath wrought for his saints : also it will be the glory of a whole Christ ; not only Christ personally considered, but also Christ mystically considered : the body of Christ then shall be perfect, no one member shall be wanting; so that then will be the time of Christ and his church's perfection ; and as all the whole body will be complete or perfect, so shall every particular saint arrive to a complete perfection also, both in knowledge, love, beauty, and glory ; and hence it is that they shall shine so gloriously. Christ shall be in the top of his glory, and believers in the top of their glory also.

"Shine as the sun," &c. This denotes the greatness of the glory of the saints. What creature is so glorious as the sun ? Gloria quasi clara, saith Aquinas, because glory is the bright shining forth of excellency. The glory, excellency, and splendour of believers in that day will be amazing. A little to open this, consider,

I. The sun is the greatest glory of this world, or far excels in glory all glory of the other things.

So the saints shall shine forth in the greatest glory, beyond the glory of the glory of Solomon, Or all earthly potentates whatsoever.

II. When the sun shines forth in his full strength, all dark clouds and mists are vanquished, and driven away. So when the saints shall shine in their greatest glory, all

dark mists of ignorance, and clouds of sin and corruption, shall be expelled from them for ever — no more unbelief nor dark day for ever.

III. The sun is a singular light, and shines with a singular glory, sol qnia solus ; there are many stars, but one sun ; so the glory of the saints shall be a singular glory ; no glory like that glory, or to be compared to it.

IV. The sun is a pure, bright, and spotless creature, far brighter than the moon or stars. So the glory of the saints will be a pure, bright, and spotless glory ; not like the glory of this world, nor like to the glory which attends the saints while they are here in this mortal body.

V. The glory of the sun is an unchangeable glory ; he alters not, changes not in his glory as the moon doth.

So the glory of the saints in that day will ever abide the same, and never change or be less, because they then shall arrive to a full perfection of glory ; nay, it shall exceed that of the sun, because, (1.) The sun goes out of our sight but the saints' sun shall never go down, their glory never sets. "Thy sun shall no more go down by day," &c., Isa. ix. 20. [2.] The sun is sometimes clouded, its glory appears not, but the glory of the saints shall never be clouded any more, as it was in this world. (3.) The sun shall then be ashamed. " The sun shall be ashamed when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Slount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously," Isa. xxiv. 23. That is, the glory of the saints shall so far excel the glory of the sun, that the sun shall, as it were, be ashamed (as such are said to be, when they are outshined) or outdone by others. (4.) The sun is sometimes eclipsed by the gross body of the moon interposing betwixt us and it ; but the glory of the saints shall by no dark body of sin, corruption, or of this world, be eclipsed any more for ever.

VI. The sun is so glorious, that mortals cannot behold it, but their eyes will dazzle. So the glory of the saints will be too great for sinners to behold, it would even put out their eyes, or confound them. happy believers !

" In the kingdom of the Father." Our Lord here gives us to understand that his mediatorial kingdom shall have an end, and God shall be all in all ; and then also it is said, " The Son shall be subject unto him that put all things under him," 1 Cor. xv. 28. Yet this doth not signify that there is any inequality of essence or power in the Son with the Father ; no, nor that the glory of the Son shall not shine to eternity ; but it only signifies, that as Christ, considered as Mediator did receive his commission and authority from the Father, and so acted all he did in his Father's name. Even so when all his elect are gathered, and his whole work and office in his mediatorial kingdoms is finished, then the sun will yield up that commission, that power and authority to God the Father, by which he acted as Mediator ; and then comes in that kingdom which is called the kingdom of the Father, and so God shall be all in all ; i. e., there will be a present and immediate communication of God to his saints, different from those mediums by which he manifested himself to them in the mediatorial kingdom of Jesus Christ. This will be

the last act (as I may say) of the Son's obedience and subjection to the Father. As he is God's servant he hereby intimates, that as Mediator he will not fail in his subjection to the Father, even to the last minute or moment of time. But this is so far from lessening the honour of the Son, that it rather tends to magnify his glory, he being no longer then in the state or capacity of a servant, having finished all his work committed unto him to do as Mediator. From hence I might note, that the chiefest glory of the saints will be in the kingdom of the Father, or when the mediatorial kingdom of Christ shall cease, or be ended.

APPLICATION.

1. We may infer from hence how vain and foolish a thing it is for any to hide their sin, or cover their iniquities. The day will come that shall discover what men are, and all the thoughts of their hearts, and all their deeds of darkness, shall then be laid open ; for " God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil," Eccl. xii. 14.

2. It may tend to terrify and awaken all hypocrites, for they shall, when the harvest comes, not only be severed from the wheat, but also be cast into hell, or into a furnace of fire, together with all profane and abominable idolaters, blasphemers, murderers, and adulterers. They might as well be openly profane, as secretly wicked ; for hypocrites and unbelievers shall have their portion together, with the abominable and profane persons and devils.

3. This may provoke every one of us to examine and try ourselves, judge ourselves, since the time will come which will try every person : "if we judge ourselves we shall not be judged, nor be condemned with the world," 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

O then let us be exhorted to this great work and duty ! Is it not better to examine our own hearts and ways now ; and if sin be in us, or if our hearts are not right with God, to see to it, and judge and condemn ourselves, and fly to Jesus Christ ? For there is mercy in him for hypocrites as well as for others, though it be so great a sin in his sight ; and no sin more hateful to him.

But what comfort and consolation may this be also to all sincere Christians ?

Let such lift up their hearts with joy ! what a blessed and happy condition are they in now ! But what will their state be when this life is ended ? Such need not to fear death ; for, as their souls go then to Christ, so when Christ comes, he will bring them with him ; " they shall appear with him in glory." What a harvest of joy, (Col. iii. 4.) shall we, if we are some of Christ's wheat, or true believers, reap at that day ! Moreover, it may stir us up to long for this harvest, or to pray for the end of the world. These things being considered, certainly there is nothing may cause greater joy to sincere Christians ; the thoughts of this harvest-day may cause us to leap for joy ; how doth the husbandman long for harvest, when he reaps the fruits of all his cost and pains ! The signs of Christ's coming, and of the end of the world, are certainly upon us : it is now but a short time to

harvest ; pray for the latter rain, which will ripen both the wheat and tares for this great harvest-day.

4. And lastly, labour for patience : " Behold the husbandman waiteth for the fruits of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early, and latter rain ; be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth near," Jam. v. 7, 8. And thus I shall close with this parable.