

is a cleaving to the Lord, as wood-ben or ivy cleaves to an oak, because its life depends upon it: And, Deut. xxx. and Josh. xxiv. it is called a *choosing of the Lord*, and that upon deliberation, as knowing that we have need of him, that he is a Saviour suited compleatly to all the necessities of our souls, and that we are warranted to believe on him; it is the native act and exercise of faith to choose Christ among all the wooers that are courting the soul: So likewise it is set out under *trusting and committing*, Psal. xxxvii. *Commit thy way to the Lord, trust in him; I know*, saith Paul, 2 Tim. i. 12. *he is able to keep that which I have committed to him*: it is to give Christ the credit of your salvation; it is one thing to give a man the credit that he is true, and another thing to con-credit him with our greatest concerns; we will credit many, whom we will not thus con-credit ourselves to, nor commit our concerns to; the former (when these are applied to God) is historical faith, when we dare trust and lippen ourselves to him, and to his word; and we think this expression holds forth as much of the nature of saving faith as any of the former, if we could take it up, when we dare con-credit ourselves to him, because he hath said the word. Thus also, to act and exercise faith on him, for temporal, or

for spiritual things, it is to expect the event from God, but so, as we expect and look for it on this ground, that Christ hath purchased it, and we have accepted him on his offer, which gives us a right to these things needful for us, and purchased by him: It is said, Matth. xxii. 5. when the invitation comes, that *some made light of it*: but faith, on the contrary, is a laying weight on it, and con-crediting of ourselves to God on that ground: it is called, Rom. vi. *A delivering up of ourselves to the word*, and to him in it; it is even to put a blank in Christ's hand, to be filled up as he pleases.

Ye see then what ye are called to, it is to open to Christ, to come to him, to marry him, to roll yourselves to him, to give him credit, &c. And is there any of these unreasonable or prejudicial to you? And if they be very reasonable and advantageous, (as indeed they are) we would exhort you to come to him, to receive him, to apprehend him, to flee to him, to take hold of him, to marry him, &c. Believe on him, and by believing, be united to him, and get a right to him, and to all his purchase; give him the credit of saving your souls. This we call for from you; and if ye do it not, the complaint in the text will stand against you; *Who hath believed our report?*

S E R M O N V.

ISAIAH liii. 1. *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*

IT is a great matter once to get the gospel brought amongst a people, and such messengers, as may make the favourable report of Jesus Christ unto them; yet this is not all, there is a great work behind, and that is, to get Christ believed on, and to get the report concerning him received by the people to whom it is made; this being the greatest and gravest work of the prophets, and of the ministers of the gospel, and the most eminent, not so much to get a word to say, as

to get the word believed; and this is Isaiah's complaint, that though he himself brought the report concerning Christ, and foresaw many more would bring it, yet, that the exercise of faith in these who should hear it would be very rare.

We spoke of the great thing called for from a people, to whom this gospel comes, and the report of Christ is made; and that is, to believe on him, to receive and rest on him, of whom the report is made; except this

this be, though there were never so many preachers, and encouragements to preach, though ye should flock to the ordinances every day, the ground of complaint will still remain, if there be not saving faith in Jesus Christ, which is the substance of the gospel.

After confirmation of this point, we shew what faith is, from the several names the scripture giveth it; and wherein the exercise of saving faith is holden out; All which imply these three. 1. A great hazard and danger that the hearers of the gospel are in, whether they be sensible of it in such a measure at least or not, we speak not now, yet they are so really: so much *fleeing, coming, laying hold, apprehending, &c.* insinuate. 2. A fulness and sufficiency in Christ Jesus, holden forth to them, as the object of their faith, as one that can deliver out of that danger, and can right whatever is wrong. 3. An act, wherein mainly the exercise of faith is holden forth; and it is the act of the soul under that danger and distress, be-taking itself to Christ's fulness for help: it is a fleeing from the curse of the law to him, as to the city of refuge; so every name that faith gets, sets out a man acting and moving some way for Christ's remedying the evil and removing the hazard he is in.

Having spoken a little to this, that faith is the main duty that is called for, we may now follow the exhortation to press you to it; it being no purpose to speak of Christ, and of faith in him, except he be received. This is the end of the word written and taught, John xx. at the close, even to believe in the name of the Son of God, and by believing to receive life in and through him.

And therefore, *adly*, Seeing this is the main duty called for by the gospel, that by faith ye should receive it, and Christ offered in it; we earnestly exhort you to it. It is not so much to this or that particular duty, though these be implied; it is not so much to attendance on ordinances, nor to submission to discipline and censures, though these also be duties that we exhort you to; but it is to obedience to the great command of faith even to believe on him whom the Father hath sent and sealed: It is to re-

ceive this gospel, to submit to the righteousness of faith, to open to him that is knocking at the door, to yield to him, and to give him the hand, that bygone quarrels may be removed, and taken out of the way: except this be, we profess to you in his name, that ye bring not forth the fruit that this gospel calleth for from you, and that no less will be acceptable to God, nor taken off your hand by him.

And to add here the *third* branch of the doctrine, we say, That no less will do your turn, as a necessary mean for attaining the promise, and that which is promised: 1. Look to all the promises, whether of pardon of sin, or of peace with God, of joy in the Holy Ghost, of holiness and conformity to God; there is no access to these, or any of them, but by faith: this is the very proper condition of the covenant of grace, and the door whereby we step in to it; and if ye think pardon of sin, peace with God, and holiness to be necessary, then this great gospel-duty of believing is no less necessary; for the Lord saith, John iii. 36. *He that believeth not is condemned already.* 2. Look to the performance of any duty, or mortification of any lust or idol, and faith is necessary to that, 1 John iii. 3. *It is by faith we obtain victory over the world:* it was by faith (Heb. xi.) that all the worthies, spoken of there, wrought righteousness, &c. 3. When any duty is done, of whatsoever nature it be, there is no acceptation of it without faith; it is not our praying, or coming to the church, that will make duty to be accepted, but it is faith; *The word professed them not,* saith the apostle, Heb. iv. 2. *because it was not mixed with faith.* And that, for making the duty acceptable, faith is necessarily requisite, we may clearly see, Heb. xi. 6. where it is expressly said, that *without faith it is impossible to please God;* and how is it that Abel offers a more excellent sacrifice than Cain? it was nothing sure in Cain's sacrifice itself that made it be casten, nor any thing in Abel's that made it be received or acceptable, but faith in the Messiah to come, that was found to be in the one, and was missing in the other. Is there not reason then to press this duty on you,

and to exhort you not to think this a common and easy thing, though the most part think it to be so? If we look to the benefits of it, to the difficulty of it, and to the rarity of it in the world, there is no duty had need more to be pressed than this, even that Christ Jesus should get the burden of your immortal souls cast on him by his saving faith. I shall therefore in the further prosecution of this, 1. Shew what mainly you would eschew and avoid, as that wherewith folk more ordinarily stumble. 2. What it is we would press to, and on what grounds.

For the *first*, I know the deceits and mistakes in men about the exercise of faith are so many, that they are more than can well or easily be reckoned up; yet we shall in some generals, spoken of before, hint at a few of them: for, so long as ye continue in the same snares, they must still be pointed out to you, and endeavours still used to undeceive and extract you out of them; and therefore, 1. Beware of a doctrinal faith, which before I called *historical*. We know it is hard to convince some that they want faith, yet we would have you to consider, that it is not every kind of faith, but saving faith, that will do your turn; it is the want of that which the prophet complains of: and therefore to open this a little, ye would consider, that there may be really such a faith, as is an assent to the truth of the word, in a natural man, yea, in a reprobate; but that faith will never unite to Christ, nor be waited with the pardon of sin.

(1.) I do not say, that every one that is in the visible church hath his doctrinal faith, to believe a heaven and a hell, that the scripture is the word of God, and that all that believe in Christ shall get pardon of sin, and life; the carriage, alas! of many testifies they have not this much: whatever fleeting notions they may have of these things, or whatever esteem they may seem to put on the gospel, and whatever profession they may make, that they believe the truth of it, yet in their deeds they deny it; for, if there were a fixedness in the doctrinal faith of the gospel in men, they durst not for their souls live as they do.

Neither yet, (2.) Do we say, that all they that have this doctrinal faith of the gospel, or somewhat of it, do believe every passage in it alike, but often as they please them, they believe them: hence, many believe what the word speaks of mercy, and of pardon of sin, and will not question that; but what it speaks of holiness and of the severity of God's reckoning with men for sin, they do not so credit that part of the word: it is true, where the faith of the one is, the faith of the other will some way be; but because the one agrees better with their corruption than the other, therefore the one is not received as the other: and it is very frequent with such, to be found diminishing from one place, and adding to another, of the word of God. Nor, (3.) Do we say, that all men do, in a like and equal degree, believe the truth of the word; there is in some more knowledge, in some less, in some more convictions, in some fewer; and though we preach to you all, yet there are some that believe not this to be God's ordinance, albeit there are many who will not be saved, that take this word to be the word of God, and believe what is the meaning of it, because the word itself says it is so: and the reason of this is, 1. Because there is nothing that is not saving, but a natural man may have it; now, this doctrinal faith is not saving, and so a natural man may have it, yea, the devils believe and tremble; and James does not dispute with these to whom he writes, on this account, that they believe not this, but tells them, that historical faith was not enough; and we think a man in nature may have a great persuasion of the truth of the word of God, and that which it says will come to pass, and yet still continue but a natural man. A 2d reason is, because the scripture speaks so often of so many sorts of faith that are not saving, as Exod. xiv. at the close, it is said, *The people believed the Lord*; and Psal. cvi. 12. *Then they believed his word, and sang his praise*; and John ii. 23. *Many believed on Christ, to whom he did not commit himself*; there was faith in them which his signs and miracles extorted from them, which was not saving;

saving; and Mat. xiii. two or three such acts of faith are spoken of in the parable of the sower that were not saving, however sound they might be in their own kind; and, 1 Cor. xiii. we have such a faith spoken of, as a man dare not deny the truth of the word, though he should bring his body to be burnt by his avouching of the same. A 3^d reason is, because as much credit may be given to the word, as is given to any other history that is creditably believed; and it is on this ground that we believe there were such men as Cesar, Pompey, Wallace, &c. and it being certain, that there may be impressions on the consciences of hearers, that this is God's work, backed with some common work of the Spirit, and that is generally received to be the word of God in the part of the world we live in; what wonder is it, that folk believe thus, and drink in this historical or doctrinal faith of the word, so as they may even dare to suffer death for it? and yet, in the mean time, may want saving faith; the devils being as sure as any natural man is, that God is true, and that his word will be performed; and therefore they say to Christ, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* The pangs of a natural conscience in men will assure them of a judgment coming, though they tremble to think on it.

And therefore, ere we proceed further, take a word of *use* from this, and it may let you see the great and very general mistake of the most part of the bearers of the gospel, in resting on this doctrinal faith. If ye tell them that they have no faith, they will not by any means take with that; they believe there is a Saviour, and that he is God and Man, and that such as believe on him shall be saved; and on this they rest: it is such as these, who think they have believed all their days, since ever they had any knowledge; because the word was always, or very long since, received in the place where they lived, for the word of God; and they believe it to be so also, and know no difference betwixt believing the word, and believing on Christ holden out in it; though, alas! many of you believe not this much; for if ye were among

the Jews, ye might be soon brought to question the truth of the gospel: but though ye had the real faith of the truth of the word, take not that for saving faith; for as there is a real sorrow, that is not the saving grace of repentance unto life, so there is a sort of real faith, that hath a real being in the judgment, which yet is not a real closing with Christ, and so not saving faith: as, suppose a man pursued by his enemy, should see a strong castle-door standing open, or one in hazard at sea, should see dry land, if he should stand still while the enemy were pursuing him, or abide still in the sinking vessel, the sight of the castle-door open, or of the dry land, would not save him; so it is not the believing that there is a Saviour come into the world to save sinners, that will save, except there be a resting on him, as he is holden out in the word of the gospel. Historical faith is only, as it were, a looking on the Saviour; but saving faith grips to him; and rests on him: historical faith looks on Christ, but acts not on him, closes not with him; and therefore such as have it only, and no more, sink and perish without getting good of him. We would think it a great matter to get many of you as far on in believing as the Devil is, who believes and trembles; the little trembling that is, shews that there is but little of this historical faith: yet, as I have often said, this is not all, ye may have this; and yet, if ye halt there, ye will certainly perish, if ye were never so confident to be saved; the apostle doth well distinguish these, Heb. xi. 6. *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him:* where these two are presupposed, 1. Believing that God is, or hath a being: and, 2. Believing that his promise is sure and sicker; that he is faithful that hath promised, and will make his word good. And then, 3. On both these follows a coming to him, as a rewarder of diligent seekers of him. The first two take in historical faith: for to believe that God is, is natural; and to believe that God is faithful in his promise, may be in natural men: but to come to him, to get the hazard that the soul is in, removed, through Jesus

Jesus Christ, is a thing few do attain. This then is the *first* thing we would be aware of, not aware to believe the truth of the word, but to be aware of resting on it as saving faith: it is not enough to look on Christ, and to grant that it is he, but the man must never be satisfied till he get himself rolled on Christ, and the weight of his salvation and peace laid on him in his own way.

The *second* thing ye would beware of is some common and quickly transient work on the affections, that may accompany historical faith; whether the affection of grief, or the affection of joy be stirred thereby, both are unsafe to be rested on, when we cannot prove our resting on Christ, or where there is no relevant ground to prove it by. Though ye should tremble as Felix did, and be under alarming convictions of conscience and fears of your hazard; or though ye should be affected with joy, as the temporary believer may be, and sometimes is, what will that profit you? It is a great mistake to take some small work on the affections, which at the best is but an effect of historical faith, for a saving work of the Spirit. Or, 2. If it be not an effect of historical faith, it is an effect of a challenge of conscience, and smiting of the heart, as in Saul, who could say to David. *Thou art more righteous than I, my Son David.* Or, 3. It is some common work of the Spirit, such as was in Simon Magus, of whom it is said, *He believed,* and who could say, *Pray for me:* for folks to conclude on this ground, that they are brought out of nature into a state of grace, is to build upon a sandy foundation. The apostle speaketh, 2 Cor. vii. 10. of worldly sorrow, as well as of godly sorrow; and as there may be a worldly sorrow, so there may be a carnal joy; a piece of fainness, to speak so, in prayer, or at hearing of a preaching, or at a communion, which is not saving faith: some hear the word with joy, Mat. xiii. who yet *endure not*; and John Baptist's hearers rejoiced in his light for a season; even as a sick man, who hearing, as we hinted before, that a physician, who is skilful and able to cure him, is come to town, he grows

fain in the contemplation of a cure of his disease; but here is the sick, when the physician tells the man that he must be so and so abstemious, and keep himself under such a strict diet, he dow not abide that, and so all his joy vanishes: there is something like this in temporary faith, where some remote expectation of salvation will cause a carnal joy and fainness: but when it comes to this, that a man is called to quit his lusts, or his estate, or in the world to undergo trouble and persecution for the gospel, *by and bye he is offended*; he thinks, to say so, *A fowl in his hand is worth two flying*; and therefore, when the storm blows in his teeth, he turns his back, and runs away; especially we will find this to be with men in sickness, they will have mists at seriousness, and sometimes flashes of sorrow under convictions and challenges, and sometimes flashes of joy, that will vanish when they come to health again. When we speak of some common work on the affections, we would take in liberty, and some warmth of spirit in prayer, which, no question, even unrenewed men may find more at one time than another; as when they are in some great hazard or strait, they will be more than ordinary serious in that duty, and yet that may be but an effect of nature: this proves a great stumbling and neck-break to many, that they think they are well enough, if now and then they get utterance in prayer, as sometimes they will get words beyond what they expected; and when, upon reflecting, they find that they have been in earnest, though it hath been with moral seriousness, that blows them up; so they put prayer in the place of saving faith, and when they pray with warmth, they trow they believe, when in the mean time they never knew what it was in good earnest to lay themselves over on Christ Jesus: therefore, when we invite you to believe, this is another thing we would bid you beware of, that ye put not a flash of sense in the room of faith.

3. There is yet a more subtle, though no less dangerous mistake, that ye would beware of, and that is, when faith is confounded with obedience,

dience, and is looked on in justification as a peace of new obedience, with love, repentance, and other duties of holiness: so some think they believe, because they have some natural awe of God in their walk, and some fear of sin, and do perform some duties of religion, and walk honestly, as they think, according to the rule, which is to confound the covenants of works and of grace, and to make the covenant of works a covenant of grace, or to run the covenant of grace into a covenant of works; only with this difference, that though their works be not perfect, but defective, yet wherein they are defective they think there is worth in their faith to make up that want, and to supply the defect; and so, by faith they think they will obtain the acceptation of their works, and of their persons on account of their works: they look upon their works as pleasing to God; but because they are not perfect, they will believe, or exercise faith, to make up their defects; to which the way of grace, is quite contrary, which makes the tree first good, and then the fruit. This way, that many take, is not to draw the evidences of believing from works of holiness, which is warrantable; but the founding of faith, or their hope of heaven, on works: and the use they make of their faith, is, to ward off challenges for the imperfection of their works, and to make faith procure acceptance, as I just now said, to their works, and acceptance to their person for their work's sake.

4. Beware of that which ye ordinarily call a certain assurance, or sure knowledge of your salvation, and that all the promises are yours, whereby ye think yourselves in no hazard; a hope and assurance of heaven that ye can give no ground for, nor proof of; only ye think ye are sure of pardon of sin, and coming to heaven, and that ye are obliged to maintain that groundless hope: but that is not saving faith, for it is a hope of heaven that can give you no right to Christ; there must first be a fleeing to him, and closing with him before ye can have any true and well-grounded hope of heaven: but your hope and confidence is, never to question

the matter; ye are like Laodicea, who thought herself rich, and to stand in need of nothing, when she was beggarly poor; or like these men, who, when God was threatening them with judgment, yet would needs presume to think they leaned on the Lord. I think, among all the persons that God hath indignation against, it is in a special manner against these who have this sort of hope, and to whom God discovereth the groundlessness of it, and yet they will still stoutly maintain, and stand fast by their hope: it is to these he speaks, Deut. xxvi. 16. who despise and tush at God's threatenings, and say, *We shall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our own hearts, and add drunkenness to thirst;* the Lord then pronounceth a curse, and to the curse addeth an oath, that he will not spare such persons, but will separate them for evil, and cause all the curses of the law to overtake them. Judge ye now, what a condition this is for persons to be in, to be believing that all the promises are theirs, and yet, instead of that, to be, in the mean time, liable to all the curses threatened in the word of God; it is this that we call *presumption*, and *hope of the hypocrite that will perish*, Job viii. 13. the confidence of such shall be rejected and swept away as a spider's web, and shall be rooted out of their tabernacles, and bring them to the king of terrors. They think they believe always; when they are not troubled nor disquieted, they never want faith, but have a great deal of it; which yet is but a guessing, which cannot support and uphold them when they come to a strait; when they are more secure, they believe very well, and they think when they are more wakened and disquieted, they believe less, and their fancied faith ebbereth quite on them: when they hear of any exercise of mind, or trouble of conscience in others, they wonder that they will not believe, and all this work is to maintain their deep security and strong delusion; this is then the *fourth* thing ye would beware of, for it is not the faith that will turn away the complaint, *Who hath believed our report?* and yet how many are there of this sort, who say they shall

shall have peace, and please themselves with this their good hope, say the word what it will. O! be persuaded, that this is nothing else but woful unbelief and presumption; and we preach to you terror and the curse of God, though ye cry peace to yourselves: the Lord complains of such persons, Jer. v. 12. saying, *They belied the Lord*: he sent his prophets to denounce judgments in the days of Josiah, when there was a fair profession of religion and reformation; yet they would believe and hope that no evil should overtake them.

That which we aim at in this part of the use is, to make way for what follows, even to give you a cleanly ground for exercising of faith on Jesus Christ, when all these stumblings and mistakes are rolled out of the way: we therefore exhort you, to lay your hand to your heart, and narrowly to try, if ye have called or accounted any of these to be saving faith, for there are hundreds, nay, thousands, that perish under these pretexts, deceiving themselves, and de- jecting others, with a faith they were born and brought up with, and they have no more but their groundless hope to prove their faith by, and that they will stick by it, be said to them what will; but be not deceived, for God will discover you; ye think a strong presumption is faith, and that ye can by such a faith, drink in the promises; but God will make you vomit them up, and ye shall be declared to be void of faith in the great-day: therefore be more jealous over your faith, and seek to have your grips of Christ sickered, which is done, when, from the belief of your hazard and self-emptiness, and of Christ's fulness, ye go to him, and close with him to make up all ye want in him; and this faith is especially qualified by the account on which we go to him, and rest on him: even as a conscientious duty is that which flows from a command, as obedience to it, so one of the main things that qualifies this faith is, a receiving Christ as Christ, or as he is holden out in the gospel: which is therefore well put in the description given of faith in the Catechism; and it is called *a believing on him whom the Fa-*

ther hath sent, which is not to believe on Christ simply, but as he is holden out in the word of the gospel. Presumption may look on Christ and his fulness, and few or none will readily dare to give him a direct and downright refusal, or to reject him professedly and avowedly, when they hear of such happiness that is to be had in him; but that which we say qualifies faith, is, to desire, receive and embrace him, according as he is holden out in the gospel, *for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, 2 Cor. i. 30. when he is listened to with an eye to the promise, and when that, which makes us rest on him, is the word of God: for, though Christ be the material object of faith, yet the word is the formal object whereby we get a right to him; and there is no gripping or getting hold of Christ, but in, and according to his word; and therefore the generality of people, (who, on the matter, take the Antinomian way) think they have no more to do, but to apply Christ, and to count him their own at the very first; but through their not exercising faith on the word of promise they miss him. This is, as I have said, a main qualification of saving faith, even to rest on Christ as he is holden out in the word, and by the word to take hold of him, and rest upon him: saving faith doth not simply rest on Christ because he is merciful, and hath all fulness in him, but it rests on him and his fulness, as received in the word, and offered by God in his word; faith takes God's faithfulness in his word, and lays hold on him by that: Christ is the thing that makes happy, but God's faithful promise is the right by which we get a title to that thing. We would never love nor like that faith, that knows not the use of the word; that betakes itself to Christ, or the thing in the word, but meddles not, nor hath any dealings with the word that holds them out; when as it is only this word that gives us warrant to expect that his fulness shall be made forth-coming for our up-making, and for the supply of all our needs. Many desire, and expect good of God, but get it not, because their expectation is not founded on his word,

word, and God's faithfulness in his word is not closed withal. In a word, I would have you to think, that faith is neither an easy, nor an insuperably difficult thing, but that it is easy to go wrong, and difficult to go right; and that, without God's special and powerful guiding, ye cannot believe, nor exercise faith, nor walk in the

way of believing in him, and dependence on him; that ye may be helped to make a right use of Christ, and to build upon him, that ye may not slip nor stumble, and fall on the stumbling-stone laid in Zion, on which for many fall every day, and break themselves to pieces.

S E R M O N VI.

ISAIAH liii. 1. *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*

IF it were not recorded in the infallible scriptures of truth, we would hardly believe that there could be so much powerful and sweet preaching of the most excellent instruments that ever were employed, and yet that there should be so little fruit following on it; who would believe that Isaiah, so excellent, so sweet, and so evangelic a prophet, should have preached so many pleasant, plain, and powerful sermons, to a people from the Lord, and yet that he should have so many sad complaints as he hath? chap. vi. xxviii; and lviii. that he should be forced to bring in the Lord, saying, *All the day long have I stretched out my hands to a rebellious people*, chap. lxv. and that here himself should have it to say, *Who hath believed our report?* it is scarce one man here or there that hath savingly believed on Christ. And this is the third thing in the words, that now we would speak to; and it is a very sad, though a very clear truth.

The doctrine is this, *That there may be much powerful preaching of the gospel, and yet unbelief generally among the hearers of it.* Or, take it with dependence on the former two, namely, 1. *That the great work of the ministry, is, to propose and make Christ known to a people.* 2. *That the great duty of a people, that have Christ proposed to them, is to believe on him.* Then this 3^d follows on the back of these, *That a people may have Christ proposed to them, brought to their heart and mouth; and though*

it be but believing that is called for from them, yet that cannot be obtained from most of them. This gospel-duty of believing is often slighted by the hearers of the gospel; this is clearly holden forth here, *Who hath believed our report?* we have called for faith, but it is a rare thing, among the multitude of hearers, to get one that believeth savingly.

To make out, and prove this a little further, we would consider this complaint, with these aggravations of it, which will make it the more clear, and so the more to be wondered at; as, 1st, These of whom the complaint is made; it is not heathens, but God's own people, as the Lord complains, Psal. lxxxix. 11. *My people would not hearken to my voice and Israel would have none of me*: our Lord Jesus complains of Jerusalem, Mat. xxiii. at the end, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee, and thou wouldst not*. That the Lord's own professing people should not believe, nor receive the report that is made of him, heightens the complaint, and aggravates their guilt exceedingly. 2^{dly}, It is not a complaint as to one sermon, or as to one time, but it is a complaint frequently repeated, as to many fruitless sermons, and as to many times, yea, generations: Isaiah preached long, in many kings reigns; and yet all along in his prophecy he complains of it, as chap. vi. 11. *How long Lord, shall their eyes be blind, and their ears heavy?* &c. and chap. xxviii. 9. *Whom shall*