

FAITH'S PLEA  
UPON  
GOD'S WORD.

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A  
SERMON

PREACHED

On a PREPARATION-DAY, before  
the *Sacrament* of the LORD'S SUPPER  
at *Burntisland*, upon 2 Sam. vii. 20.  
*Do as thou hast said.*

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By the Late Reverend

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Minister of the Gospel, in *Dunfermline*.

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# FAITH'S PLEA UPON GOD'S WORD.

II. SAMUEL vii. 25.

— DO AS THOU HAST SAID.

**D**AVID was a strong believer; and it were our great advantage to follow him in his faith: and in the word that I fix upon to speak a little to, there are two ways wherein his faith works, 1. By believing the divine word, *Thou hast said.* The object and ground of faith is the divine saying; and faith rests upon a *Thus saith the Lord*; it is not upon a *Thus saith a man*, or *thus saith a minister*; nay, nor *thus saith an angel.* — Divine faith can stand only upon a divine testimony, *Thus saith the Lord, thou hast said.* If you have faith, then you have received the word, *not as the word of man, but as it is indeed the word of God*, which effectually works in you that believe. Faith acts by taking God's  
word,

word, *Thou hast said, thou hast promised, thou hast spoken in thy holiness.*

2. Faith acts by pleading the accomplishment of the promise, *Do as thou hast said.* God is not a speaker only, but a doer; he is not a promiser, but a performer; and faith looks to a promising God, that he may be a performing God; and so puts him to his word.

OBSERV. *That it is the business of true faith to take God's word, and to put him to it.*

In the illustration of this doctrinal proposition, we would incline, through divine aid, to essay briefly the following things.

- I. To shew, That it is the business of faith to take God's word.
- II. That it is the business of faith to put him to his word.
- III. How faith takes the word of God.
- IV. How it pleads the accomplishment of the promise.
- V. Whence is this the business of faith to take God at his word, and to put him to his word.
- VI. Make application of the whole.
  - I. We are first to shew, That it is the business of faith to take God's word, or to take him at his word: this is plain,

because the word is the immediate object of faith. We have no other glass wherein to see God savingly but his word, particularly his word of grace and promise: "Say not, who shall ascend to heaven, that is, to bring Christ down from above: or who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; so then, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. Faith is a relative word, it relates to the faithfulness of the speaker: believing relates to a word to be believed. That it is the business of faith to trust in the word of God is evident from the whole scripture. How many times, Psal. cxix. doth the Psalmist speak of "trusting in his word, and hoping in his word, and rejoicing in his word," and so taking him at his word.

II. We come in the next place to shew, That it is the business of faith to put him to his word, or to plead the accomplishment of his word, that he would do as he had said: this is evident from Psalm cxix. 49. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." And how many times doth

doth he plead with God to do to him according to his word? "Quicken me according to thy word," ver. 25. Again and again we have this repeated, as ver. 107, 154. "Strengthen me according to thy word," ver. 28. "Save me according to thy word," ver. 28. "Save me according to thy word," ver. 41. "Be merciful to me, according to thy word," ver. 58. "Deal well with thy servant, according to thy word," ver. 65. "Let thy merciful kindness be my comfort, according to thy word," ver. 76. "Give me understanding according to thy word," ver. 169. "Deliver me, according to thy word," ver. 170.— All comes to this, *Do as thou hast said.*

III. We proceed now to show, or in what manner faith takes the word of God.

1. It takes it by an intelligent apprehension of it in the understanding. The man is taught of God, and gets his eyes opened to see the faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation; he sees it to be the word of God, and a word spoken in season to his weary soul. They will never take the word by faith that do not understand it. Philip saith unto the eunuch, *Understandest thou what thou read-*



est? So we may say, Understandest thou what thou hearest? Are your eyes opened to see the wonders of his law or doctrine; to see the glory of Christ held out to you in his word.

2. Faith takes the word of God by a particular application of it with the heart; insomuch that it is a cordial apprehension, or a cordial assent that is given to the word; *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.* Saving light goes to the heart. Many have only their heads enlightened, their judgments informed, but not their hearts engaged, nor their affections captivated. Faith is a cordial applying the word, and that particularly to the man's own benefit: whether we call it assurance or not, it comes to the same thing: as when in conviction the threatening is applied, the man trembles under the fear of hell and wrath, because he applies the law threatening to himself, saying, I'm the man to whom this threatening is spoken; so in the day of conversion or believing, the promise is applied, the man is relieved with the view of the grace and mercy of God in Christ, because he applies the gospel-promise to himself, saying, "I am the man to whom this promise

is spoken, and I receive and rest upon Christ for salvation, as he is promised or offered in this gospel: To me is this word of salvation." And if the man did not take it to himself, there would be no believing at all. But then,

IV. The fourth thing proposed, was, to shew how faith pleads the accomplishment of the promise.

1. It pleads upon the mercy that made the promise, that it is everlasting mercy, unchangeable mercy; *the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious.*

2. It pleads upon the truth that is to make out the promise; it is called, *The truth in Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham,* Mic. vii. 20, that his name is faithful and true.

3. It pleads upon the power of the promiser, being fully persuaded, that he that hath promised is able to perform; that he hath not out-promised his own promise, or said what he cannot do.

4. It pleads upon the blood of the covenant that seals all the promises thereof; hence they are *all yea and amen in Christ Jesus.*

5. It pleads upon the love of God to Christ; this is to pray in his name, that God, for the love he bears to Christ, would do as he hath said.

6. It pleads upon the unchangeableness of God and of his word: *that his word endureth for ever, and that he is God, and changes not, therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

7. In a word, it pleads upon his oath, Heb. vi. 17. “God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, hath confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”

8. And lastly, It pleads upon his name, *What wilt thou do for thy great name.*

V. The fifth thing proposed, was, To shew whence is this the business of faith to take God at his word, and to put him to his word. Why? — Because,

1. It is the end and design of God in giving his word; *These things are written, and spoken, that we may believe in the Son of God, and that believing we might have life in his name.* John xx. 31. The gospel is preached in vain, if men do not take God at his word, and then hang upon it.

2. Because



2. Because thus we glorify God; and the more we rest upon the divine word, the more we glorify him: *Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God.* We give him the honour of his truth, and other perfections this way.

3. Because thus we engage the honour of God upon our side: when we put him to his word, his honour is engaged, he cannot deny himself.

4. Because faith hath no other way of living but upon the word of God: "Man liveth not by bread alone, but every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Thy word was found of me, and I did eat it. This is my comfort in my affliction, thy word hath quickened me."

VI. The last thing proposed was the application of the subject, which indeed was the principal thing intended. Here is a fit exercise before the solemn communion-work, to go to God and say, *O do as thou hast said.* Consider what he hath said, and take him at his word, and put him to it, that he would do to him accordingly. Whatever your case be, surely there is some word relative to it.

Some may be thinking. Alas! God hath said nothing to me, that I may put him to his word. Why, man, if the gospel that is the Bible, be preached to you, and if there be any word of grace therein suitable to your case, then put not away the word from you, but take it, and plead upon it, that God would do as he hath said. If you can see any word of promise suited to your case, and to your need, then put to your hand by faith, and lay hold upon his word.

Oh! say you, is there any word from God about my case, who am a poor needy creature like to starve for want of a spiritual meal, and a hearty draught of the living waters that go out from Jerusalem. What hath God said, or hath he said any thing concerning me? Yea, he hath said, Isai. xli. 17, 18. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them, I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers in dry places, and fountains in the midst of the vallies. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water." — Hath he said so? Then  
take

take him at his word, put him to it, saying, Lord, *do as thou hast said.*

Oh! but is there any word from God for me, who have been long waiting for ordinances, and never yet seen his glory, as I would desire to see it? What hath he said concerning me? Why, he hath said, that he *waits that he may be gracious*, that he is *a God of judgment*, and *blessed are all they that wait for him*, Isai. xxx. 18. He hath said, “The vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it will speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, and not tarry, Hab. i. 3.—Hath he said so? Then take him at his word, and put him to it, saying, *Do as thou hast said.*

But is there any word from God concerning my case, that find my conscience challenging me for prodigious guilt? Hear what he saith, Heb. viii. 12. “I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, and your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more. Isai. xliii. 25: I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”—O then! take hold of his word, wherein he proclaims indemnity, and put him to it, saying, Lord, *do as thou hast said.*

But, says another, is there any word from God concerning me, that am compassed about with strong corruptions and conquering lusts, that sin gets the mastery over me? Would you be delivered? Hear what he saith, Mic. vii. 19. "He will subdue our iniquities, and will cast our sins into the depths of the sea. Rom. vi. 14. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace. Isai. lxiii. 4. The day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." — Hath he promised to take vengeance on your lusts? Then take him at his word, saying, *O do as thou hast said.*

But is there any word said to me that am such a filthy monster, such a polluted creature in heart and way, that am stinking, as it were, in the grave of sin? He hath said, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. Zech. xiii. 1. There is a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness. — Is there a promise of cleansing? Then take him at his word, and cry, **LORD,** *do as thou hast said.*

But



But is there any word to me a backslider, a grievous revolter, that many times after vows have made inquiry; my promises and resolutions have been but paper-walls before the fire of temptation? Are you afflicted with this, and would have relief? Behold he says, Jer. iii. 22. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." Hof. xiv. 4. I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely. I will be as the dew to Israel."—Hath he said so? Then let your heart say, LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

But what doth God say to me, that have no strength for my duty or difficulty, that am weak like water? Would you have relief in this case? God says, 2 Cor. xii. 9. "My grace shall be sufficient for thee; and my strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness. Isai. xl. 29. He giveth power to the faint, and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength."—Doth he say so? Then put him to his word, saying, LORD *do as thou hast said.*

But is there any word concerning me, that am brought to a great difficulty, and know not what to do, or what hand to turn to; I am straitened what course

to take: doth God say any thing to me? Yes, he doth: Isa. xliii. 16. "I will bring the blind by a way they know not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. Isaiah xxx. 22. Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it. I will guide thee by my counsel."—Doth he say so? Then put him to his word, saying, *do as thou hast said.*

But what says God to a poor soul that is harassed with the temptations of the devil, and ready to be destroyed with the fiery darts of the wicked one? God says, "I will bruise the head of the serpent. Rom. xvi. 10. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. For this cause was the Son of God manifested, to destroy the works of the devil."—Hath he begun to destroy him? and hath he said, "Thou shalt bruise him under thy feet?" Then put him to his word, saying, LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

Alas! But what says God to a poor destitute creature that hath nothing, no good, no strength? He says, Phil. iv. 19. "My God shall supply all your wants, according to his riches in glory,

by Christ Jesus. Psalm ix. 18. The needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. There is bread enough and to spare in your Father's house:"—Hath he said so? O then! put him to his word, saying, LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

But what says God to me, that am longing, earnestly longing for some taste of his goodness, some view of his beauty, some communion and fellowship with him? Why, God says to you, that he "will satisfy the longing soul, and fill the hungry soul with good things. Matth. v. 6. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."—Hath he said so? Then let your hearts say, LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

Oh! but is there any word for one that hath a quite other case to tell you of, that hath no longing desire, no hunger, no thirst, that hath as much need as any longing soul hath; but I have no spiritual longing, not so much as a desire, but like the parched earth, the dry ground, that can have no active thirst, but hath many a wide cleft? God says,  
Isai.

Isai. xlv. 3, 4. " I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; even my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. They shall grow up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses.--Have you no other thirst, but like that of the dry ground? and he hath promised a flood? Then, O put him to his word, LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

Oh! but is there any word for me, that am like the barren ground and unfruitful, that bears nothing but briars and thorns, and I find this ground is rejected, is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned? Is this your fear and concern? Hear that word, Isai. lv. 13. " Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier, the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, and for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. Hos. xiv. 8. I am like a green fir-tree, from me is thy fruit found.—Hath he said so? Then put him to his word, saying, LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

Alas! but is there any word for me, that have been a fool, a mocker, a scorner,  
that



that have laughed at all religion and godliness; is there any merciful words that I may take hold of? Yea, God saith, Prov. i. 22. “Ye scorers, that  
 “delight in scorning, and fools that hate  
 “knowledge, turn ye at my reproof;  
 “behold, I will pour out my Spirit un-  
 “to you, I will make known my word  
 “unto you.”—Doth he say so? Then put him to his word, saying, *O do as thou hast said.*

But what saith God to me that hath a plagued heart, a base heart, full of all manner of evils, and all the plagues of hell? Why, God saith, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. “A new heart will I give you, and  
 “a new spirit will I put within you;  
 “and I will take away the stoney heart  
 “out of your flesh. And I will put my  
 “Spirit within you, and cause you to  
 “walk in my statutes.” And, whatever be thy plague, he hath said, *I am the LORD that healeth thee.*—Hath he said so? Then, O put him to his word, saying, LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

Ah! But doth God say any thing to a stupid wretch, that only hears you, but is no more affected than the stones of the wall, and that is quite dead, and

can no more stir than a rock, and hath no more life than a dead corpse? God says, and O that he would say it with power, “Come from the four winds, “O breath, and breathe upon these slain, “that they may live. Ezek. xxxvii. “12. I will open your graves, and cause “you to come out of your graves, and “ye shall know that I am the LORD, “when I have opened your graves, and “shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall “live.” — Hath he said so? Then O put him to his word, saying, LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

But, Oh! is there any word that GOD saith concerning me, that have forfeited GOD’s favour, by heaping up great and insuperable mountains betwixt him and me, that I fear he will never come over? Why, he says, Zech. iv. 7. “Who art “thou, O great mountain, before our “Zerubabel? Thou shalt become a plain. “He shall bring forth the head-stone “with shouting, crying, Grace, grace “unto it.” He can make *the mountains skip like rams, and the little hills like lambs.* — Hath he said so? Then, O put him to his word, and say, LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

But

But is there any word for one that is filled with fear of heavy judgments coming upon the land, and upon an apostate church? Yes, he says, Isai. xxxii. 2. “ A man shall be a hiding place from  
 “ the storm, and a covert from the tem-  
 “ pest ; as rivers of water in a dry place,  
 “ as the shadow of a great rock in a wea-  
 “ ry land.” When you see matters run-  
 ning into confusion, church-members be-  
 traying the privileges of the church, and  
 the church of Scotland destroying herself  
 with her own hand, not only *boars out of  
 the forest* wasting her, and *wild beasts of  
 the forest* devouring her, but enemies  
 in the bosom of the church making them-  
 selves famous for *lifting up axes and ham-  
 mers, to break down the carved work* of  
 her doctrine, discipline, and government ;  
 remember the Lord hath said, that when  
 he *builds up Zion, he will appear in his  
 glory ; and that upon all the glory there  
 shall be a defence ; that at evening time it  
 shall be light ;* that the darkest part of  
 the night may usher in the morning-star  
 of a reformation in spite of hell : For I  
 would incline gladly to hope God will  
 not leave Scotland, though we have left  
 him. He took infestment by solemn

national covenant six times \* ; and he hath had martyrs for his kingly office, that have asserted his royal prerogative at the expence of their blood : therefore let us apply that word, *He will arise and have mercy on Zion.* — He hath said so ? Then, O take him at his word, saying, **LORD,** *do as thou hast said.*

But, is there any word for a poor creature that is in bondage through fear of death ? “ If I have run with foot-  
 “ men, and they have wearied me, then  
 “ how can I contend with horses ? And,  
 “ if in the land of peace, wherein I  
 “ I trusted, they wearied me, then what  
 “ will I do in the swelling of Jordan ? ”  
 I tremble to meet with the king of terrors ? Why, he hath said, *Hos. xiii. 14.*  
 “ I will ransom them from the power  
 “ of the grave ; I will redeem them  
 “ from death : O death ! I will be thy  
 “ plague ; O grave ! I will be thy de-  
 “ struction. Death shall be swallowed  
 “ up in victory.” Plead then that he  
 would *do as he hath said.*

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\* This was done at different periods betwixt the year 1580, and 1650.



But I want assurance of all these things, may one say, Well, what mean you by that, man, woman, that you want assurance? I suppose many do not understand themselves, when they say they want assurance; for, what better assurance would you have than the word? If you have his word, you need no better assurance. If a man of credit give you his word, you can depend upon it, and say you are assured of it. There is an assurance of sense, that is the assurance of the work, when you have got the thing that is promised; this is not properly assurance, it is enjoyment; but the assurance of faith is the assurance of a word. And though the assurance of sense be sweetest, yet the assurance of faith is the surest assurance; for, what you get in hand from God, you may soon lose the benefit and comfort of it; but what you have upon hand in the promise, is still to the fore. If you take God's promise, you have the best assurance in the world; but if you say you want faith, you cannot take his word, or trust his word, then this is plain dealing: I fear this, indeed, be the case of the most; then you want  
assurance

assurance indeed, because you want faith, and cannot take his word, nor give him so much credit. But, if any be saying, that is indeed my case; I cannot believe his word: doth GOD say nothing to me? Yes, there are promises of faith as well as to it: Zeph. iii. 12. “ I will leave  
 “ in the midst of them a poor and af-  
 “ flicted people, and they shall trust in  
 “ the name of the LORD. In him shall  
 “ the Gentiles trust.”—Hath the author of faith so promised? Then, O take him at his word; cry for faith, saying, LORD, *do, as thou hast said.*

But one may say, I would desire not only to have the word, but the accomplishment of the word: I would not only have the promise, but the performance; and there are some promises I have been looking to, some ten or twenty years; old promises, that I think I got the faith of; but alas! the accomplishment is not yet come; there are some prayers and petitions I have had long tabled upon the ground of the promise: What doth God say to one that hath never got these promises accomplished, nor these prayers answered? Why, man, be thankful, if you have  
 got

got grace to believe the promise; for so much faith as you have to take God's word, so much assurance you have that the word will be made out. If you be waiting upon a promising God, give him his time, and behold the womb of the promise will shortly open and bring forth; for it will not travel beyond its time: "Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of these things that were told her from the LORD."

Luke i. 45. And your fits and starts of unbelief, O believer, shall not hinder the performance of the promise you have once believed savingly; "If we not, he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself," 2 Tim. ii. 13. Will he deny his word? Will he deny his oath? No, no; he will have respect to his covenant, because he hath a respect to himself.

But, what says God of one that is afflicted and mourning for the desolation of Zion, and particularly for the sins and defections of the day we live in? I will tell you what he says, *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.* And though you have your mourning time for Zion, you shall also have your rejoicing times; "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem,"

"salem, and be glad with her, all ye  
 "that love her: rejoice for joy with  
 "her, all ye that mourn for her," Isai.  
 lxvi. 10. He says, that he will set "a  
 "mark upon the foreheads of them that  
 "sigh and cry for all the abominations  
 "that are done in the midst thereof,"  
 Ezek. ix. 4. "Blessed are they that  
 "mourn, for they shall be comforted,"  
 Matth. v. 4. — Why, then look to him  
 to *do as he hath said.*

But saith another, I am one that has  
 a family, and children that the LORD  
 hath given me, and it is my concern not  
 only that I may be blessed myself, but  
 that my seed and offspring may be blef-  
 sed: Is there any word for me in this  
 case? Yea, what think ye of that word,  
 Isai. xlv. 3. "I will pour my Spirit upon  
 "thy seed, and my blessing upon thine  
 "offspring?" What think ye of that  
 covenant made with Abraham, which  
 you are called to lay hold upon by fol-  
 lowing his faith! Gen. xvii. 7. "I will  
 "be thy God, and the God of thy  
 "seed." You have not only the cove-  
 nant of Abraham to look to, but the  
 same entail of the covenant to your po-  
 sterity



iterity to look to, Isaiah lix. 21. " This  
 " is my covenant with them, saith the  
 " LORD, My Spirit that is upon thee,  
 " and my words that I have put in thy  
 " mouth, shall not depart out of the  
 " mouth of thy seed, nor out of the  
 " mouth of thy seeds seed, saith the  
 " LORD, from henceforth and for ever."

He hath said, that *children are his heri-*  
*tage*, Psal. cxxvii. 3. ; and that his *right-*  
*eousness is unto childrens children*, ciii. 17. ;  
*The promise is unto you and to your children*,  
 Acts ii. 39. O take him at his word,  
 and cry, LORD, *da as thou hast said.*

But what do you say to one that finds  
 himself deserted of God, and that God  
 answers neither by Urim nor Thummin.  
 " I go forward, but he is not there ;  
 " backward, but I cannot perceive him :  
 " on the left hand, where he doth work,  
 " but I cannot see him, Job xxii. 8, 9.  
 " The comfort that could relieve my  
 " soul is far removed," Lam. i. 16. God  
 says, Isai. liv. 7, 8, 10. " For a small  
 " moment have I forsaken thee, but with  
 " great mercies will I gather thee ; in  
 " a little wrath I hid my face from  
 " thee for a moment, but with ever-  
 " lasting kindness will I have mercy on  
 E " thee.

“ thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.  
 “ For the mountains shall depart, and  
 “ the hills be removed, but my kindness  
 “ shall not depart from thee, neither  
 “ shall the covenant of my peace be  
 “ removed, saith the LORD, that hath  
 “ mercy on thee.” — Hath he said so?  
 Then, O take him at his word, saying,  
 LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

But, what doth God say to one that  
 is tossed with one wave of affliction upon  
 the back of another, “ deep calling unto  
 “ deep, at the noise of God’s water-  
 “ spouts ; all his waves and billows are  
 “ gone over me ? ” Psalm xci. 7. Why,  
 God saith Isai. liv. 11, 12, 13, 14. “ Oh  
 “ thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and  
 “ not comforted, behold, I will lay thy  
 “ stones with fair colours, and lay thy  
 “ foundations with sapphires ; and I will  
 “ make thy windows of agates, and thy  
 “ gates of carbuncles, and all thy bor-  
 “ ders of pleasant stones ; and all thy  
 “ children shall be taught of the LORD,  
 “ and great shall be the peace of thy  
 “ children : in righteousness shalt thou  
 “ be established.” Yea, he saith, Psal.  
 xci. 15. “ He shall call upon me, and  
 “ I will answer him : I will be with him  
 “ in

“ in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him.” Many such sweet words of grace he speaks: O then, take his word and plead, LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

But is there any word to one that is lost in the wilderness, and knows not where he is, so as to think it impossible that ministers can find him out? I think I am lost in a thicket, and it is impossible to find out my case, a nameless case. Why, may be, that word concerns you, Isai. lxii. 11. “ Behold thy salvation cometh; and thou shalt be called, Sought out, not forsaken.” And Hof. ii. 14. “ I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and there will I speak comfortably to her,” or, as the word is in the margin, *Speak to her* HEART. O comfortable, when God speaks not only to the ear, but to the heart. Well hath he said it? O then, take his word and plead, *Do as thou hast said.*

But is there any word to one that hath been incorrigible under correcting providences, and hath his corruptions irritated by the cross, and rebellion rather increased by rods, instead of being

reclaimed by word and rod? Is there any case like mine, or is there any word for me to lay hold upon? Yes, what think you of that word, *Isai. lvii. 17, 18.* “ For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: “ I hid me and was wroth, and he went “ on frowardly in the way of his heart.” Well, what follows? “ I have seen his “ ways and will heal him: I will lead “ him also, and restore comforts unto “ him, and to his mourners.”—O astonishing wonder of free grace! that it was not said, I have seen his ways and will damn him, but I have seen his ways and will save him. — Hath he said so? Then put in your petition, LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

But is there any word to such as are under the power of unbelief and impenitency? The gospel is preached to believers and penitents: O God forbid but it was preached to sinners that are both unbelieving and impenitent, in order to bring them to faith and repentance: Why, what faith God to such? He saith, that they ought to lay hold and plead upon *Psalms cx. 3.* “ Thy “ people shall be willing in the day of “ his



“ his power.” Acts v. 31. “ Christ is exalted at the right-hand of God to be “ a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness “ of sins.” Plead then that he may *do as thou hast said.*

But is it possible that God is speaking to one that hath been a notorious sinner? Perhaps all the country knows that I have been a scandalous debauchee, a lewd and wicked sinner, a profane graceless wretch. O! if such were charmed with the joyful sound of the gospel-grace to-day, he saith, Isai. i. 18. “ Come, now let us reason together, saith “ the LORD, though your sins be as “ scarlet, they shall be white as snow; “ though they be red like crimson, “ they shall be as wool.” Though you have sinned to the uttermost, I am able to save to the uttermost. Is your name wonderful, as a sinner? Behold his name is Wonderful, as a Saviour. O hath he said so? Well, go and plead his word, saying, LORD, *do as thou hast said.*

But is there any word from God for one that hath crucified so many convictions as I have done; yea, and virtually crucified the SON of GOD afresh, re-  
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jecting his calls, grieving his Spirit? Yea, we are called to preach the gospel to every creature, and even to the crucifiers of Christ; "Repentance and remission of sin must be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem," Luke xxiv 47. Why *beginning at Jerusalem*, among the crucifiers of Christ? Because they have most need of his blood to wash them; Christ came to save sinners—Hath he said so? Then put in your bill, Lord, *do as thou hast said.*

But will you tell me, is there any word for one that cannot think that it is as you are saying, that there is any merciful word in God's mouth, or any merciful thought in God's heart towards me, it cannot enter into my thought; I cannot let it light in my mind or heart? Why, God says Isaiah lv. 8, &c. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways; saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways, higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." You are not to measure his thoughts by yours, no more than you can measure these wide heavens with your arms; but God knows his own thoughts, and what says he of them, Jerem. xxix. 11. 12. 13, "I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me. and I will bearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart"—Hath he said so? Then go and plead his word, saying, Lord, *do as thou hast said.*

In a word do you want his presence? He hath said, "Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee?" Are you afraid of hell and damnation? He hath said. "Deliver his soul from going down to the pit; I have found out a ransom"—O what encouragement

encouragement is here to go and pray and plead, saying, Lord, *do as thou hast said.*

O Sirs, search the Scriptures, and study the word of God, consult and consider what he hath said; let there be no mouldy Bibles among you: let not the dust of your Bibles witness against you, for eternal salvation depends upon your believing what he hath said; therefore study the faith of what he hath said. The Spirit is promised, and the scriptures are written to work this faith: Christ is exalted, and the throne of grace is erected to give this faith, and this faith comes by hearing what he hath said; by hearing not what Plato hath said or Seneca hath said, what this or that man hath said, but what God hath said in his word, in this Bible, which is a book so prefaced, and so attested, as never any other book as the Old Testament is prefaced by all the miracles wrought by Moses, the New Testament, by all the miracles wrought by Christ. And as Moses miracles were wrought before the Old Testament was written, so Christ's miracles were wrought before the New Testament was written: never a book was so attested as this, even by a cloud of witnesses, a cloud of miracles, a cloud of martyrs, who sealed with their blood the truth contained in it. God, in the New Testament, exactly fulfils what he hath said in the old; yea, the present state of all the world is a visible performing of scripture prophecies.—Are not the Jews at this day a *scattered and despised* people, as the scripture said they should be? Hath not God done as he hath said? Is not antichrist the *long lived man of sin*, and the cruel man of blood, as the scripture told he should be? Thus it is done as he hath said—Are not the Pagan parts of the earth the *dark places and habitations of cruelty*, as the scripture says they should be? Thus it is as he hath said. Do not the seven churches of Asia lie desolate,

as they were threatened, unless they repented? Thus it is as he hath said.—Is not mahomet, the false prophet, and his followers, like the waters of the great river Euphrates, to which they are compared in scripture?—And thus it is as he hath said, Does not the *whole world ly in wickedness*, as the word of God thews?—And so it is as he hath said, Is not every *saint as a brand plucked out of the burning*, as the scripture speaks?—And it is as he hath said.—Are not deists and scoffers walking after their own lusts, and ridiculing the promise of Christ's coming, as the scripture speaks?—And so it is as he hath said.—Are not all the black marks of *perilous times in the last days* upon us, as the scripture speaks?—And so it is as he hath said.—Are not the foolish virgins as many, yea, and more than the wise, and *all slumbering and sleeping*, and all according as he hath said?—Doth not the Spirit speak expressly, that *in the latter times some shall depart from the faith*?—Accordingly it is as he hath said.—Is not the gospel a favour of life to some, and a favour of death to others?—Is not Christ *precious* to some, and a *stone of stumbling and a rock of offence* to others, as the scripture speaks?—and so it is as he hath said. Look about you, and see if any thing that falls out be not an accomplishment of the word: and, O how should you value this word! not a jot or tittle of it shall fall to the ground.

Walk to this garden of the scripture, and pluck up the flowers of gospel-promises and put them in your bosom; live by faith upon the promises, and be persuaded, whosoever stands in the way, that he will do as he hath said. He will do so, for what he hath said he hath written, what he hath said he hath sealed, what he hath said he hath sworn, what he hath said he will never unsay; therefore, take hold of the word of grace, and hold him at his word in life and at death, saying, *Do as thou hast said.*