

On Munday the xxii. of Aprill. 1555.

The eight Sermon upon the first Chapter.

34 Then the Lord heard the voyce of your wordes, and was angrie, and sware, saying:

35 None of the men of this wicked generation, shall see the good land that I have sworne to give to their fathers,

36 Saving Caleb the sonne of Jephone, who shall see it: and I will give him the ground whereupon he hath troden, and unto his children, bicause he hath followed the Lord throughly.

37 Also the Lord was angrie with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not goe in thither:

38 But Joshua the sonne of Nun, which standeth with thee, shall goe in thither. Strengthen thou him: for he shall put Israel in possession thereof.

39 Your little children which ye said should be a pray, and your sonnes which at this day knowe neither good nor evill, shall go in thither, and I will give them the land, and they shall possesse it.

40 But as for you, turne ye backe againe, and get ye into the wilderness by the way of the red sea.



fter that Moses hath rehearsed the peoples sinne: now he putteth them in remembrance of the punishment that followed upon it, that they might be

better advised thenceforth, and not provoke God to wrath after that fashion. For whensoever God punisheth men for any offences, the same ought to serve them for a warning, and other men for an example, to beware that they doe no more so. True it is that they which had murmured after that sort against God, were already dead: but yet was it expedient that their children should have it printed in their mindes, that God had not left such unbelieve and disobedience unpunished. And so wee see

the intent of Moses. Wherefore let us note, that if God have shewed us that he cannot away with some offence: his intent is that we should thinke upon it, and that the chastisements which he layeth upon us should turne to our profite, and that they should serve us for the time to come, so as wee should not looke to have him to stretch out his hand against us: for it is good for us to bee taught at other mens cost as the proverb saieth. But wee must marke, that Moses rehearseth here briefly, the things that are declared more largely in the fourteenth Chapter of the Book of Numbers¹, where God is so wroth with the people, that he would have destroyed them

¹ Numbers 14:11

utterly. He saith there to Moses, passe not thou for it: I can give thee a greater and excellenter people than this: but as for these wicked folke, they must needes bee rooted out, I cannot suffer them any more. Hereupon Moses maketh intercession for them and saith: Not so Lord: for if it should be heard in Egypt, that it were so come to passe, thy name should be blasphemed, and the wicked would make a scoffing at it, saying: bicause God could not performe his promise, therefore hath he slaine this people, and so hath he beguiled them and betrayed them. Lord, wilt thou suffer thy name to be slaundered after that sort? Thereupon God telleth him that he will not execute his vengeance upon any other than such as had murmured, and yet notwithstanding that he would therewithall reserve a seede, on whom to perfourme the thing that he had promised to his servant Abraham.

By the way, the threate that is contened here, importeth not that God was not determined in his owne purpose what he would doe: for if wee should thinke that he altered his mind upon the advertisement that Moses gave him: it could by no meanes agree [with his nature.] Should a mortall man have more discretion and forecast than the living God? No: and on the otherside wee knowe that God doeth in no wise chaunge his purpose. Neverthelesse, divers times he uttereth somewhat rough threatnings, to drive us to humble our selves before him, and to make us feele what wee have deserved. God then in telling Moses that he would utterly roote out that people, so as there should not one of them bee left alive, meant not that he was determined so to doe: but sheweth that the people was worthy to have bene quite and cleane destroyed. And in deede there was just cause why, to the intent that every of them should be smitten downe and subdued on his owne behalfe, and that Moses should pray after that maner. And

yet for all that, God found the meanes to make good his promise, notwithstanding the wilfull frowardnes that was in the people. And this is a point well worthie to be marked among others: that when God hath chosen any people, although his grace bee despised, so as all they whom he had called become unworthie of such a benefite, and banish themselves out of his house by rejecting the promise that was offered them: yet will God finde the meanes to chastise them in such wise, as his Church shall not utterly perish, yea and he will even overcome mens frowardnesse with his goodnesse. I say it is well worthie to bee marked. For wee see that on the one side, the hypocrites, under colour that God hath manifested himselfe unto them, and promised to bee their Saviour: doe surmise that they have him bound, and thereupon take leave to doe evill: and if a man shewe them their sinnes, they harden themselves against it, there is nothing but pride in them, and they arme themselves with Gods name, to fight against his Prophets. And this have they done in all ages. When the Jewes were rebuked for their wicked life, and for their turning away from God: they were inflamed with such rage against the Prophets, as to say, How nowe? To whom speake ye²? Are not wee the Church? Are not wee Gods inheritance? Hath he not set his covenant among us? Have not wee the signe of Circumcision? Have not wee the temple where he is worshipped? Wee see then that the Jewes did falsely abuse Gods name, to advaunce themselves against him and his word. And this is reported of the Jewes: but yet wee may see the like in our selves. For all they to whom God hath done so much honour as to give them his word and to manifest himselfe unto them, doe imagin that they have him as it were in their sleeve: and yet for all that, in stead of profiting themselves by Gods so gentle

² Jeremiah 7:4

alluring of them unto him, they set themselves against all good doctrine, they cannot finde in their heartes to beare any yoke, they will needes bee as wilde beastes, and yet in the meane while they will needes have God to avow them to be of his flocke. But here we see, that although God had as then set up his seat among the Jewes, and made a covenant with them to bee their Saviour unto the ende: yet when he sawe they were not meete to have him, but that they drew cleane backe, and ceassed not to spite him: he found the meanes to punishe them, yea and that in such sort, as all those things went to nought, and yet he himself abode soothfast, notwithstanding their destruction. And therefore let us not deceive our selves. When God hath once taken us to him to be of his houshold, and adopted us to be his children: let us not sooth our selves in our vices, but consider how it standeth us on hand to walke so much the more awefully, when God hath shewed himselfe so bountifull towards us, and that forasmuch as he hath uttred his goodnes in such wise, it is good reason that wee on our part being so much beholden unto him, should looke well about us and indeavour to give our selves wholly to his service, and be so loth to offend him, as we may also be afraide to be bereft of the grace that he hath once bestowed upon us. Marke that for one point.

And therewithall let us marke also, that God in punishing the hypocrites and all such as abuse the goodnesse that he hath done towards them, ceaseth not for all that, to continue faithfull stil, For if he should destroy the whole world and leave no afterspring to call upon him, it might bee said, in deede God hath just cause to punish men after that maner: but in the meane time where is his promise? He hath saide that his Church shall continue for ever³, and that his name shall bee called upon here

beneath, as long as there is eyther Sunne or Moone in the skie: but nowe is all dispatched quite and cleane, the remembrance of salvation is utterly buried among men. Although then that God should doe justly in punishing such as had done amisse: yet should his promise bee vaine and voide, if he perfourmed not the thing that he promised, and so would men blame him of unfaithfulnesse But (as I saide) he findeth meanes to punish them that deserve it, and yet notwithstanding reserveth and keepeth still a people to himselfe, and suffereth not his trueth to fall to the ground, or to die without effect. And hereof we have a notable example in this place. For wee see that God had made a covenant with Abraham, and had promised him to give the land of Chanaan for an heritage to his ofspring. As soone as the time came, the promise was performed. Yea verily: but all the posteritie of Abraham refused and rejected the promise, whereby they disanulled it as much as lay in them. Thus you see they bee deprived of it through their owne unthankfulnesse. But yet to the intent that God be not accused of leaving his promise unperformed: it behoved him in punishing the fathers to preserve their race. They that come up afterward are also the ofspring of Abraham, and they possesse the land that was promised: by meanes whereof the covaunt that Good had made abode sure and fast settled to the end. And for the same cause it is said that God reserved the yong children to himselfe. Now then, as many as had murmured and were above the age of twentie yeeres, are cast off and banished from the good turne that was readie for them: but they that were under that age are preserved still, and God is glorified in them. And albeit that the accomplishment of his promise was delayed by the space of fortie yeeres: yet notwithstanding he shewed himselfe faithfull in the end. This is the matter wich we have to beare away.

³ Psalm 72:17

So nowe likewise, when wee see the world so farre out of order that al is mard, and it seemeth that all men will needes spite GOD, and shut themselves out of all hope of salvation, by driving away the light of the Gospell that is given them: let us looke for some vengeaunce at hand. For though God bee patient: yet must hee bee faine in the ende to stretch out his arme to bee revenged of such malice and contempt. On the one side, they to whom the Gospell is preached, doe growe altogether heathenish, and it is seene that a number waxe worse and worse, and wickednesse becomes more excessive than it was in the time of the abominations of the Popedome, so that (to speake properly) it should seeme that men become divilles after their hearing of the Godpell. What is it I pray you, that a man shall see, yea and that commonly? That there is now no more love of God, no nor countenance of loving him, that Religion is let alone colde and dead, and that there is no more zeale in us than in a temberlogge. It is apparant then that Gods word is now adayes stained and defyled with our iniquities, in so much that whereas wee should bee as burning Lampes to give light to the sillie ignorany soules, wee give them occasion of stumbling. Againe on the other side, we see how the faithlesse doe fight against God, seeking nothing else dayly but to overthrow his trueth, and to cause it to be quenched out, that it might never be spoken off more. Seeing then that the whole world is so malicious, and that as well the one sort as the other doe make open warre against God, continuing still in their stubbornnesse which increaseth from day to day: must not God (after he hath waited for some conversion and amendment) execute his vengeaunce upon us as wee deserve? Ye see then after what manner it behoveth us to prepare our selves, considering that wickednesse is so great nowe adayes, and so farre past hope of recoverie. But yet therewithall let us

comfort our selves, and looke also that in punishing the offenders God will not fayle to keepe still some seed to himselfe, so as he wil alwaies have some little flock to cal upon him and to worship him. Let us not doubt then but that our Lorde will alwayes maintaine his churche, to the intent to shewe himselfe soothfast. Although all thinges seeme forlorne and brought to confusion: yet will God worke after such a fashion, as wee shall see in the ende, that he hath had a regard of his promise, and that he will shew himselfe faithfull and prove himselfe so in deede.

But let us marke well, that the Church shall not alwayes be visible so as wee shall perceive it. It shall seeme [nowe and then] that all is come to nought: Like as when God made the people to turne backe againe, he said unto them, *Get ye into the wilderness towards the red Sea*, as though they should have returned againe into Egypt. Here is such a great confusion, as it might well seeme that he minded not any more that the land of Chanaan shoulde bee given for an heritage unto those to whom it was promised. Ye see then that for a time it seemed that God had falsified his promise, and that there was not any more hope that the children of Abraham should have entered into the place that was promised them. Even so shall it fall out with us, as in deede it is come to passe. For when God withdraweth his light out of the worlde: it will seeme that there is no more any Church at all. If a man looke round about him, he shall see that all is gone to havocke. And in good faith, what desolation was there in the time of Poperie? Yea and even still at this day, a man myght thinke that all shoulde goe to ruine and decaye. But let us marke, that it is all one as if God shoulde cause those to goe backe againe which are not woorthie to goe forward: and that yet notwithstanding, he ceaseth not to holde on in such wise, as his Church shall still bee maintained and preserved.

Howbeit, not that the same can be discerned with the eye, or perceived by man: but wee must shut our eyes, until our Lord doe worke after his owne maner, that is to say wonderfully beyond all our expectation, and beyond all that we be able to conceive. Thus you see howe wee may comfort our selves in this, that although wee see it is not possible but that God must not cast some horrible punishment, in these dayes uppon mens wickednesse: yet neverthesse hee will alwayes reserve some people to himselfe, so as the thing that he speaketh by his Prophet Joel⁴ shalbe seene continually. Though heaven and earth (saith he) do goe together, though the sunne be darkened, though the moone drop bloude, though the starres lose their light, and though the earth remove: yet for all that whosoever calleth uppon the name of the Lorde, shalbe saved: GOD will preserve them whom he hath chosen to call uppon him: and albeit that their life bee hidde, yet will not God faile to heare them in the end, and to shewe them that hee never was unmindefull of his promise, but that he had a regarde of him selfe, notwithstanding that men were not worthy to have any one drop of goodnes and mercy offered unto them. This is the matter in effect which we have to remember in this first place.

But herewithall we must marke the othe that God made against the Jewes⁵, as it is set downe in the Psalme, and afterwarde applyed unto us by the Apostle, saying: Today, if ye wil heare his voyce, harden not your hearts as your fathers did in the wilderness, unto shom I sware in my wrath, that they should not enter into the land that was my rest. We see how it was the wil of the holy Ghost, that the Jewes should in al ages be mindful of this disobedience that had bin committed: and that thereupon they should remember that

for the same, their fathers were bereft of the benefit that had beene promised them, and shutte out from Gods rest. For (as I saide afore) this served not for the Jewes only, but the Apostle applieth it also to our time. God then directeth his speech to us at this day. Therefore wee must have our eares open to hearken unto him: wee must not drive of from morrowe to morrowe: wee must seeke no delay: as soone as God speaketh wee must be readie to learne, and not harden our heartes against him. Whereby wee bee put in minde, that there is nothing which hindereth our obedience unto God, but our own resisting of him through a certaine wilful frowardnes. For he for his part applieth himselfe in such wise unto us: as hee beareth with our rudenesse and infirmitie. So then, all they that are taught by the Gospell, shall obey God without gainesaying, if they poyson not themselves through a certaine wilful frowardnesse to withstande God, and to drive backe his grace. That is the cause why we be expresly warned, not to harden our heartes. Yea verily: for wee must not think that God will suffer his grace to bee so scorned, and dalyed with, and set light by. If he were inflamed with anger against the Jewes for refusing to enter into the Land of Chanaan: if we nowadayes doe playe the restie iades and fall to kicking, let us not thinke that such unthankfulnesse shall scape unpunished. And in good sooth, if the Jewes were so punished at that time, that all the sorte of them came to nought, wandering in the wilderness by the space of fortie yeeres: God shewed yet more harde and rigorous vengeance uppon them afterwarde, in the thraldome of Babylon and other miseries that happened unto them: for the thraldome of Babylon lasted threescore and ten yeeres. And at their returne, although he shewed great and wonderfull power: yet were they but a handfull which were saved, according to

⁴ Joel 2:30

⁵ Psalm 95:7; Hebrews 3:7 and 4:7

this saying of the Prophet Esay⁶, though thy people were as the sande of the sea, yet shoulde but a small remnant of them be saved. And in another place hee saith⁷, we had beene as Sodome and Gomorre, if God had not reserved a little seede, yea even a verie little one. Wee see then that God increased his wrath against such as amended not at the example of their fathers. And why? Because they were the lesse to bee excused, for they ought to have taken warning by the punishmentes that wer prepared for them. Therefore did they double their offence. And what thinke we of the desolation that hath happened since the [first] preaching of the Gospell, [for the refusal wherof] the wretched world hath wandred so astray, as all things have bin corrupted in the Church, so that in steede of Gods service ther hath beene nothing but abominations, instead of truth there hath beene nothing but divelish lyes an errours, and all thinges have beene put out of order there, and that the same confusion hath lasted nowe so long time? [All these thinges doe put us in minde] that Gods voyce ought to sounde shirler nowadayes in the Gospell, than it did in the Lawe. For as is saide by the Prophet Aggeus⁸, God maketh heaven and earth to quake nowadayes, when the Gospel is preached. And besides that, wee have all the thinges that befell to the people of olde time, which serve us as a lively picture. There must wee beholde Gods wrath, to restrayne our selves from doing evil, as Saint Paul sheweth us in the tenth of the first to the Corinthians⁹. But if wee make no reckening therof: is it not reason that God shoulde punish us sorer than hee did the Jewes?

Let us learne then to hearken to Gods voyce while it soundeth in our eares, and let us beware that wee harden not our heartes,

least God sweare in his wrath. For it is saide expresly that God sware. And whie? Because men thinke his threatnes to be vaine, if hee make them not to perceiue that hee speaketh in good earnest. And of a trueth we see dayly, that when Gods threatnings are uttered unto us, a great many of us do but shake our eares at them, and the number of those that are touched with them, is verie smal. Therefore the othe that GOD sweareth is no more than needeth, even in respect of the blockishnesse that is in men, forasmuch as they bee so foolish as to make but a mocke of everie thing that is tolde them. And like as God to helpe the weakenesse of our faith, useth an othe when hee confirmeth his promises: so on the contrarie part, hee useth to sweare when hee threateneth to punish us. And why? To the ende that being afraide and abashed at it, wee shoulde come to repentance. For if wee bee not made to stoope that wee may take holde of Gods justice: our faultes will never mislike us.

Gods justice then must become as a thunder or lightning, and we must bee abashed before him, that we may no more bee so drunken in our sins as wee were. And therefore whensoever Gods threatnings do not dismay us sufficiently: let us cal to minde the oth that Moses speakes of here, and let us assure our selves that it is we whom the same pointeth at, according to that which I have alledged alreadie both out of the Psalme, and out of the record of the Apostle.

And therewithall let us also marke well the words that are set downe heere by Moses. *None of this cursed and wicked generation* (saith hee) *shall see the good land that I have promised*. Heere GOD maketh a comparison betweene lande and the people. This lande then was a singular gift, in token wherof hee calleth it his rest: meaning thereby that hee calleth it his rest: meaning therby that he had chosen that lande be bee as a dwelling place and

⁶ Isaiah 10:22

⁷ Isaiah 1:9

⁸ Haggai 2:7

⁹ 1 Corinthians 10:18

everlasting inheritance for the people to rest in under his protection. For there is no certaintie in this worlde, and if wee bee lodged in any place, wee may bee put out of our nest againe to day or to morrowe. But God tolde them that hee had assigned the lande of Chanaan for an everlasting possession to the children of Abraham, to mainteine them and keepe them safe there, so as no man shoulde trouble them, nor ever drive them out againe. Yee see then that the lande was not a common gift, but a gift that deseved to be esteemed as most excellent above al others. But behold, the people on the otherside, are malicious and froward. Therefore it is al one as if our Lorde shoulde say, I see wel ynough howe the worlde goes, I shall sooner make fire and water to agree, than cause this people to like of my benefites. For in my benefites there is nothing but meere goodnesse, and in this people there in nothing but meere naughtinesse.

Let us marke well then, that to injoy Gods benefites, wee must frame our selves to his will and righteousnesse: for our naughtinesse and Gods goodnesse can never match together, insomuch that if wee will needes followe our owne nature, God must needes withdrawe his goodnesse away from us. True it is that God looketh not for any worthinesse at our hands why hee shoulde doe us good: nay rather, hee fighteth dayly against our sinnes, and useth mercie where as hee might lawfully use rigour against us. But yet for all that, if hee see that we continue in our naughtinesse, hee can no longer continue in doing us good. Yee see then that the doctrine which we have to gather upon this consideration: is that there must bee as it were an accorde and melodie betweene God and us, and that when hee imparteth his benefites unto us, we must make such estimation of them, as wee indever to serve and honour him for them, and consider that he calleth us to him, to plucke us backe from our sinnes. If

wee doe so, the good that he hath done us whalbe confirmed more and more. Otherwise, it must needes bee that our naughtinesse shall cut off the course of his goodnesse. Why so? For (as I have said already) when God offreth men his benefites, and they refuse them of a wilfull frowardnesse: it is as if fire and water should meete together.

But besides this, wee must also marke Gods upbrayding of the people, with their saying that their yong children shoulde be a pray to their enemies. *They* (saith he) *shall possesse the lande*, yea even to the intent that you may be proved lyers. Heere it behoveth us to marke well, that when men will needes doubt of Gods trueth, they must in the ende be founde lyers, and Gods trueth shine forth the brighter to their shame. Nowe hereby wee bee warned to receive simplie the promises that GOD offereth us. And although is seeme at the first blush that they shold never be accomplished, and that there be a number of impediments to hinder them: yet must we doe him the honour to beleve that he is faithfull, and to abide patiently for the convenient time of his performance of the thing that hee hath said. For if we gainesay his truth, and murmure, and fall to questioning and disputing, with howe can this be? is it possible? God seemeth to mocke us: I say, if we go that way to worke: Well may hee performe his promise for all that: but it shalbe to our shame, so as wee shall alwayes bee founde lyers. Wee may well triumph for a time, as we see the unbelievers doe, which malapertly despise God, spewing out their blasphemies against him: but yet in the ende God shall continue faithfull, and his trewnesse shalbe knowne spite of our teeth, and therewithall we shalbee put to shame. And therefore let us beware of it, and that wee may beware of it, let us marke well howe the Jewes are upbrayded with it here. Yee have saide that your children shall bee made a pray: but

they shall enjoy the land and you shalbe set beside it.

Moreover the example of Caleb the sonne of Jephone is verie notable, and so is also the example of Josua the sonne of Nun. These two are reserved of a great multitude. And why? Because they had gone through stoutly. For this recorde is yelded to Caleb, *that he had persisted* [or continued] *in following the Lorde*. Whenas God exempteth here but two men of an infinite multitude: therein wee see howe it is a folly to looke what other men doe. For had Caleb and Josua done so: what had come of it? They had gone to destruction with the rest. But they suffered not themselves to bee caryed away by that horrible tempest. When they sawe so straunge a turning backe in the whole people: yet did they confirme themselves in the power of God and although the people woulde have stoned them, (as is declared in the booke of numbers¹⁰, and as shalbe touched againe anon): yet did they ther duetie. So then, seeing that God alloweth the constancie of Caleb and Josua, for that they did shut their eyes when they sawe the people so excessively set uppon mischiefe, and exhorted them to obey God: let us note well that although thinges be out of order in the worlde, and we see stumblingblockes to overthrowe us, and vices rage like a waterfloud: yet is it no sufficient cause to suffer our selves to bee caryed away, or to make us followe the common traine, for it shall not abate our condemnation before God. We may well say, all the worlde doth so: for all the worlde shall perish, and thou with it, which speakest so in contempt of thy God. What a thing is it, that men wil needs abolish Gods justice, and give no more eare unto him when they give themselves to all naughtinesse, but shut him up in heaven, and suffer him to have no more authoritie heere beneath? Whereto

tendeth this? And yet for all that, wee see noweadayes that when the ignorant intende to shrowde themselves, the greatest sheelde that they is to alledge, Howe so? I see that all the worlde behave themselves contrariwise. And in the meane season what becomes of God? God must bee faine to bee thrust under foote, and men must runne leaping and frisking at their pleasure. Yea and even among our selves, if a man tell one or other of their faults: [their answer is,] I see others are as bad as my selfe. Wee beare our selves on hande, that our condemning of our neighbours will goe for good payment, and that we shal scape Gods hand by that meane. Therefore let us thinke continually upon the example of Caleb and Josua. And forasmuch as GOD sheweth that hee made more account of them though they were but two in all, than of all the other howge multitude which were about seven hundred thousande persons: forasmuch (say I) as we see that God giveth such sentence of them: let us learne to submit our selves to him, and to regarde nothing but that which he commaundeth. And though the world runne gadding here and there in the meane while, let us followe the way that God hath shewed us by his pure word.

Moreover, let us wey this speech where it is saide, *that Caleb held out in following the Lorde*. For it is not ynough for us to beginne well, but wee must also sticke to God through stitch, yea even without any feining or starting, and without fainting or giving over in the mids of our way. And in good sooth, it is not for nought that this recorde is given to Caleb. For (as I have touched heretofore) the people were in such an uprore, as they would have stoned him and Josua too. Insomuch that if God had not taken them away, and his glorie appeared uppon the tabernacle: they had loste their lives for it. Yet for all this, they ceased not to doe their duetie still, but cryed out against the people and rent their

¹⁰ Numbers 14:10

clothes. And after that manner strove they against those which woulde not injoy Gods blessing. Wee see then how there was a marveilous power in Caleb and in Josua. And therefore we bee warned by their example, not onely to enter into the way, but also to goe forwarde and forward stil, assuring our selves that we cannot holde out to the ende in serving God, but by bearing out of many harde brunts and temptations, [and therefore we have neede] to strengthen our heartes in such wise, as nothing may be able to make us to fleete. Thus ye see whereto our Lord and his holy spirite exhort us.

Where as he praiseth here the constancie of Caleb and Josua: it is to the end (say I) that their example should serve to our instruction. For although the memoriall of the roghteous be blessed before God: yet is it declared for our profite. Therefore let us not have such a zeale as shall waxe colde when it commeth to the following of God: but let us determine fully with our selves to holde out with it, whatsoever the divell practise, or howsoever the world set it selfe against us: like as at this day wee see many resistances, and many occasions, that might make us start away: but yet for all that, we must holde on our journey, not for two or three dayes onely, but all our life long. Let us goe on therefore: and when there is any mention of *following God*: let us marke that it is to confirme the matter better which I have declared alreadie: that is to wit, that if we followe men, we shall runne astray. For why? what els are the wais of the world but straiings, so as every man gaddes in and out, when they once turne their backes upon God? What is to bee done then? So long as wee looke uppon men, it will be impossible for us to goe right: but we must followe God.

True it is that when God is so good unto us, as to give us men to accompanie us, yea and to goe before us and to reach us their

hande: it is a great helpe, and (as Paule telleth us¹¹) wee must looke wistly upon them: and when we have good servantes of God which teache us and leade us with good conscience, we must marke that, and fashion our selves like to them: and in so doing we shall not followe men: for in fashioning our selves like to them that follow God, we have his way for our way. We gronde not our selves one upon another, to say, Thus will I doe, for I see most men doe it. No: but forasmuch as God calleth us to him, it behoveth us to go, Yea though there were no mo but my selfe alone: yet ought I to follow my God. But if furthermore he beare with me so farre, as to give me companie: then must I goe to him with so much the better courage: and whatsoever come of it, I must not swarve from his pure worde. Thus yee see why it is saide here, that Caleb the sonne of Jephone followed the way of the Lord, and therefore was exempted from the common condemnation. Yea and it is saide that *he followed constantly*, that is to say, he continued throughout to the uttermost. And so wee see nowe in effect that all the people were condemned, and that onely two were acquit, because they had given glorie unto God.

But the circumstance that is added, namely, *that God spared not Moses because of the people*: increaseth yet more the thing that I have saide. In deede this cannot be dispatched all as nowe: but yet must I ad this point aforehande. For if God spared not Moses, (who notwithstanding had such recorde as wee knowe), but punished him because hee helde not out constantly to the uttermost in resisting the leawdnesse of the people: I pray you what shall become of us? Is it likelie that wee shall goe scotfree nowadayes, when everie man suffereth himselfe to be caried away because hee seeth that naughtinesse hath

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 4:16 and Hebrews 13:7

the upper hande? Then if wee happen to overshoot our selves so, thinke wee that God will let us alone? No no: For if such punishment as we heare of, was extended upon Moses: needes must wee feele farre sorer, when we intangle our selve in the common vices, and forsake God to followe the worlde. And let us marke well, that in swearing that the people should not enter into the land¹²: he sayth, ye shall reckon the yeres according to the number of the dayes wherein ye spied out the land. They that were sent to spy out the land taried forty daies: and so behoved it the people to wander up and downe by the space of fortie yeares. And so we see that when God hath used long patience towardes us, he maketh us to pay verie deere for our abusing of his goodnesse. Wherefore let us not measure Gods punishments after our owne fancie: for they be sorer than our wittes can conceave. But whensoever he threatneth us, let us tremble at his only speech, and make hast to follow it. And forasmuch as his speech is directed to us nowadaies, let us not drive off til to morow, but let us follow, and let everie man be going on his way. Againe forasmuch as we be fraile and have a rough and thornie way to goe, yea and there be many stoppes to barre us, so as it will seeme that there be great mountaines to make us turne backe againe: let us pray our God to give us strength to go on stil forward. For if he strengthened Caleb and Josua: let us assure our selves he will do the like to us. And therewithall if we see that the world hinder us, and that there is store of stumbling blockes on all sides: let us pray God that he suffer us not to be corrupted with others, but that we may beare him the honor to stick unto him, and to yeld our selves wholly to his word, giving them leave to perishe that needes will perish, and in the meane while staying our selves by the promise of salvation which he hath given

us, accordingly also as it is his will that wee shoulde attaine thereto by any such knowledge.

Now let us kneele down in the presence of our good God with acknowledgement of our faults, praying him to touch us better than we have bin: and that above al things we may bethinke us of the unthankfulnesse whereof we be giltie, in that we have not obeyed his word, nor bin so willing to followe the things that he hath declared unto us as was requisite. And therefore let us beseech him, not only to forgive us our faults past, but also to strengthen and governe us in such wise by his holie spirite, as wee may overcome al the temptations of Satan, and forsake all the lustes of our owne flesh, to the end we may obey the voyce of our God, and in such sort applie all our senses thereunto, as we may passe through all the distresses of this present world, untill he have gathered us together into his everlasting kingdom. That it may please him to graunt this grace, not only to us, but also to all people and nations of the earth, etc.

¹² Numbers 14:34