

On Tewuesday the xxiii. of April. 1555.

The ninth Sermon upon the first Chapter.

37.38.39.40. Also the Lord etc.

41 Then answered you and saide unto me: We have sinned against the Lorde. We will goe up and fight as the Lorde our God hath commaunded us. And you armed you selves every one with harnesse of warre, and were readie to goe up into the hill.

42 And the Lord said unto me, warne them that they goe not up, ne fight not, for I am not among you: least you be vanquished of your enimies.



W e began yesterday to see howe hard it is to abstaine from sinning when a man is in evil companie, specially if hee have the charge of government. For seeing it was Moses hap to be shaken downe: Howe shall they do which are farre weaker than he was? Wee knowe that God had made him to excell all men, we see also how he served his turne by him, and what record hee hath given of him. And yet for all that, behold here a fal which God mislyketh of so greatly, that he disappointeth him of entring into the lande for it: and such dishonour and reproch was done unto him, that hee might not possesse the inheritance that had beene promised, as well to him as to all the people. Therefore we had neede to call upon God when we be mingled with such as are able to corrupt us and to thrust us out of the way, so as we be hemmed it rounde about with evill examples. But yet they which have the charge of government, ought to stande in greater feare and dreade, and to call upon God to strengthen them, and to give them such constancie as they may not swarve any whit at all.

But Before we goe any further, we must mark that where as Moses reporteth that God was angrie with him for the peoples sakes: hee doth it not to excuse himselfe that he had not done amisse: for then should he replie against God who had given sentence upon him. In the twentieth Chapter of the booke of Numbers¹ it is sayde expresly, thou shalt not enter into the lande, because that thou and Aaron have not glorified the Lord before the people of Israel. So then we see that God chargeth not Moses with the sinne of the poeple, as who shoulde say that he himselfe had beene giltlesse: but his meaning is that hee fell not to evill of his owne accorde and moving, but was driven to it as by a storme, when he saw such uprore and hurlyburly among the people, that he was at his wits ende and wist not what to doe, by meanes whereof he had not a present faith to give glorie unto God. The intent of Moses then is not to wash his hands, as though hee were not blame woorthy at all: but to doe the people to understand to understande that the verie mischiefe sprang of them. Nevertheles it may be thought straunge howe Moses

¹ Numbers 20:12

shoulde offende, seeing it appeareth not in all the rehersall of the storie. It is saide that the people grudged against God², because they wanted drinke in the wilderness, saying: Had it not beene better for us that God had killed us in Egypt? Must hee needes bring us into this drie and barren place, that we might die heere for thirst? It appeareth well that hee hateth us, and that his intent is to make us to linger heere in tormentes: and in the meane while wee bee past all hope of doing well. After this manner did the people murmure. On the contrarie part Moses weepeth and resorteth unto God, saying: Alas Lorde, oughtest thou to have so slender a reward for thy delivering of this people through thine owne goodnes, as to have thy holy name blasphemed by them? What coulde Moses have done better than this? For he is so farre off from consenting to the wickednesse of the people, to bee any companion with them: that hee weepeth to see the offence committed against God. And David likewise sheweth an excellent and wonderfull weldisposed minde, in saying that hee wore sackloth for their sakes that blasphemed God³. Moses did as much. It shoulde not seeme then that there is any fault in all this. For God commaunded him to take his staffe, and to strike upon a rocke, and to make water to come out of it before the people. Hee obeyed. Wee see not there any replying at al: nay we see not that Moses did so much as once doubt. Moreover when hee speaketh to the people, hee saith⁴: Come on yee rebelles, must God be faine to make water to come out of this rocke, which you see nowe so harde and drie? Yee see hee rebuketh the people sharpely, and a man woulde thinke hee coulde not glorifie God better. And yet for all this, it is saide unto him, Thou hast not

given unto mee the honour that belonged to mee, and therefore thou shalt bee banished out of the lande that belonged by inheritance unto thee. And did hee sinne then? As I saide afore, if we judge after our owne fancie, it will seeme to us that Moses discharged himselfe well in all pointes, so as hee offended not, ne had any spot or blemish in him. But what for that? Heereby wee see that it belongeth onely unto God to judge, and that wee may bee deceived at all turnes, in following our owne witte and reason. Wherefore let us keepe this rule which is verie needefull: that is to wit, that wee bee farre unable to discerne good and evill alwayes by eye sight, for as is said in the sixteenth of Saint Luke⁵, the thing that is highly esteemed among men, shall be abhominable before God. When we have sifted a thing never so well, and settled all our wittes to utter it well: yet shall it seeme to us cleane contrarie to that it is indeede. Nowe then, let us cast downe our eyes and acknowledge that none but onely God is the competent judge.

True it is that wee have the lawe, whereby wee may assuredly say, this is good and that is evill: and our yeelding unto that which is shewed us there, is not to make us judges: for wee take no authoritie to our selves, but onely yelde to the things that God setteth forth. And besides this, wee must not onely judge our neighbours doings by the lawe, but also examine our owne lives by it. And when wee finde our selves to have swarved from Gods commaundementes, we must willingly condemne our selves, and allowe no further of our owne doings, that they agree with Gods will. Although they seeme good to our selves, yet let us not stande uppon that. For our eyes are so troubled and weake, that oftentimes one sinne escapeth us and a hundred followe out after it: and that is because we be not sharpesighted ynough, to

² Numbers 20:2

³ Psalm 69:12

⁴ Numbers 30:10

⁵ Luke 16:5

spie out the thinges that God perceiveth, and which are hid from us. And that is the cause why saint Paul saieth⁶, that although he had walked purely in his office: yet was he not justified for all that. For God requireth another manner of perfection than wee can see. So then, seeing wee have so weake and dimme a sight, let us learne to referre our selves unto God: and let everie of us put that thing in ure in himselfe, which is shewed us by David when he saith, Who is he that knoweth his falts⁷? Lord forgive me the evill which I perceive not. We must not onely ask God forgiveness of the sinnes that sting us, and whereof we have prooffe in our selves: but we must also acknowledge that we have manie sinnes which wee knowe not of. Marke that for one point.

Furthermore, proceeding still herewith, let us not be hastie in judging, to acquite one and to condemne another: but let us reserve unto God that which is his, for as I have said afore, if God had not pronounced that sentence uppon Moses, every man would canonize him, and say hee did the best that coulde be devised. But what for that? Seeing hee is condemned by the heavenly judge, we must bridle our selves, and not fall to incountring against God. For wee shall winne nothing by it. And for the same cause also S. Paul intending to exhort us to modestie in the 14. to the Romanes⁸, alledgeth that wee must all come before the judgement seate of our Lorde Jesus Christ, where we shall not allowe what we thinke good, nor reject what we mislike in our own fancie: for that authoritie belongeth to the onely son of God. Seeing it is so my brethren (saith he) wee must absteine from foolish overweening. Thus much concerning that which is reported of the sinne of Moses.

Nowe let us come againe to the matter that wee were in hande with: Which is, that Moses meaneth not to excuse himselfe: he seeketh no startinghole to lessen his fault: but the thing that he alledgeth is reasonable, he setteth foorth the heynousnesse of the peoples offence, shewing that their sedition was so forcible, that even he himselfe also was overthrowen with it. The meaning then of Moses was as if he should have said thus: Beholde yee wretches, God hath chosen me to supply his place among you, and he hath governed me in such wise by his holy spirit, that I have had as it were his image printed in me: and yet notwithstanding I have done amisse, I have offended. And what is the cause of it? I excuse not myselfe: but yet are you giltie before God, of corrupting me, your murmuring hath overthrowen me, for by reason thereof I have forgotten my duetie, and not yeilded God such glorie as was due unto him. Seeing it is so: [I may well say] it is not long of you, that you bereft mee not of all the grace that I had received at Gods hande: for where as he made me your heade to guide you: you have done ynough to carie mee away to Satan through your naughtinesse and rebellion.

Nowe then acknowledge the sinne that you have committed, for God hath brought me low, and it is his will to shewe you in my person, that you bee well worthie to perish everiechone of you. Therefore besides the thing that I have touched already, (which is, that we must not like the better of ourselves when our faults are unknowen [to our selves,] or when we can cover them, for Gods eies are not blendfolded for al that, and the thinges that scape men are inrolled before him): wee must marke moreover, that if we give anie man an occasion [of stumbling or offending], although hee on his parte is not thereby discharged, yet must our offence needs be the more grievous and heavie, according as it is in very deede. Wherefore let every man so

⁶ I Corinthians 4:4

⁷ Psalm 19:13

⁸ Romans 14:10

behave himselfe, as hee give not his neighbours any occasion of stumbling. For if any man sinne under pretence of mee, if hee be misseled by my lewde conversation, if he take ill example by my vices: all the shole mischiefe shalbe laide in my necke before God, I shalbe discharged, wo shalbe unto mee as saith our Lord Jesus Christ⁹, and it were better for mee that I were cast into the middes of the sea with a milstone about my necke, than to have given my neighbour any cause of misbehaviour. And therefore let us live in such sorte, as it may not bee cast in our teeth before GOD, that wee have beene the cause of other mens ruine and destruction. For it will cost us very deare, if the sillie soules whom God hath created after his owne image, and whom Jesus Christ hath so deerely redeemed, be lost through our fault and wickednesse. Thus we see in effect what we have to note upon this sentence, where Moses saith, that GOD was angrie with him by meanes of the people.

And furthermore we have to mark here, that Gods laying of his temporall chastisements upon his faithfull ones, is not to drive them to despayre, but to humble them for a time: for in the ende all turneth to their benefite, and therefore they must not bee out of heart for it. It was a verie harde and bitter punishment unto Moses, to bee banished out of the lande that had beene promised him.

The time is come that the people shoulde bee delivered out of the thraldome of Egypte, to bee conveyed into the Lande of promise: Moses is chosen to bee their guide, so as hee supplyeth Gods office in delivering them: and yet notwithstanding this shame is done unto him, that GOD shutteth the gappe against him and saieth, thou shalt not come there. Yee see then howe Moses is (as yee woulde say) bronned with a marke of reproch before God. Nowe had hee taken

it in despyte: it had beene ynough to have plunged him into some blasphemie. But hee bare this correction patiently, knowing that it shoulde bee to his benefite, because it was but temporall. And therefore let us marke this saying of Saint Paul¹⁰, that Gods punishing of us is to the intent we shoulde not perish with the worlde. Seeing then that GOD procureth our welfare thereby, and his mortifying of us for a time as in respect of the fleshe: and his condemning of us in such wise as we be ashamed afore men, is to the intent that our soules should be saved at the latter day¹¹, and wee live in his presence: seeing that that is the end and butte that he shooteth at: let not us on our part be so headstrong, as to chafe or fume at his corrections, but rather follow the example of Moses, who (as wee see) did make no wordes against God. It might seeme hee had some occasion to say, howe falles this out, that I am driven out of the lande of promise? What shall a man say to it? For thou hast ordeyned mee to be as a redeemer in thy stede: and nowe must I tarie heere still. It was thy will that I should serve in this office, to put the people in possession of the promised lande: and why shall I not be partaker of the benefite that thou hast purchased them by my hande? What though there have beene some little distrust in mee, which continued not the turning of a hande? Is the offence so heynous, that I must bee so grievously punished for that? Moses then might have helde such plea with God: but hee holdeth his peace, and yeeldeth to the sentence of condemnation willingly. Therefore let us followe that which is shewed us here by example: and (as I said afore) when GOD is so gracious to us, that in steede of casting of us away (as he might justly doe) he doth no nore byt chastise us as in repect of the flesh, and shame us before men, to the ende to bring

⁹ Matthew 18:6, Mark 9:42, and Luke 17:2

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 11:32

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 5:5

us to repentance, and to humble us: let us bee quiet, and let it not cast us into sorrowe, but let us plucke up a good heart to follow our vocation. This is the thing wee have to remember. For if hee spared not Moses, what will he doe to us? Ought wee to challenge greater priviledge than he?

But heerewithall let us marke, that Moses ceased not to bee an heire still of the heavenly kingdome, though hee were bereft of the outwarde signe of it. And thereby wee be warned, that if God make us not to feele his favour and love in this worlde so fully as wee woulde wish, it must not make us to bee out of patience. For it may happe that we shall take our selves to bee miserable, yea and that when wee looke uppon our owne state, we shall deeme it had bin much better for us to have gone astray with the world: But what for that? Of al that time we have a life that lyeth hid in God¹². Therefore it is no hurt at all to us, though God cut off the blessings of this present life from us. For he knoweth to what end he doeth it: and it is good for us to be so exercised. Thus yee see that the thing which wee have to beare in minde, is that God doeth divers times hide the signes of his love from us, as in respect of the worlde: but hee loveth us never a whit the lesse, as we see how it happened unto Moses.

As touching that which is saide of Josua: it is one notable point more. For beholde, hee is appointed to succede in Moses roome, yea, and yet was he but his servaunt. And afterward Moses is commaunded to encourage him. Heere we see that God will take the thinges that are not greatly esteemed among men, yea and exalt them above our opinion, as we see he hath used to doe at all times: and not without cause: for thereby he intendeth to pull downe all pride according to this saying of Saint Paul¹³, that hee chooseth the weake thinges,

yea even to the end that men shoulde not glorie in their owne strength: and hee chooseth the foolish thinges, to the ende that men shoulde not glorie in their wisdom: and when he taketh the things that are despised, it is to the end that men should not trust in their owne credit, nor bee puffed up with their owne worthinesse. And it is verie requisite that it shoulde be so: for we see howe every man seekes to advaunce himselfe, and wee leave nothing to God as neere as we can. Nay rather if wee doe but yeelde him the tytles that belong unto him, it is but in way of daliance: and in the meane while we would that all shoulde be in our own persons. Now forasmuch as men have this pride rooted in them: God must be fain to shew them by experience, that all of it is but vanitie: and so doth hee, by choosing the things that are not regarded, and by serving his turne with such as are not esteemed to be of any great renowne. If we looke howe God chooseth men somtimes, to set them in preheminance: wee will say, who woulde have looked for this? And God worketh after that manner, to the intent that those by whom he serveth his turne, shoulde learne to acknowledge themselves beholden to him for their dignitie wherein he hath set them, and understande that they obtained it not by their own power and policie, but that it is God which hath placed them in that degree. For if they thinke they have ought of their owne purchasing: God will shewe them the contrarie. That then is the thing which we have to marke, when it is heere declared that God preferred Josua before Moses insomuch that although Moses had now of long time beene cladde with the grace of the holy Ghost: although hee had beene chosen to bee the Redeemer [or Ransommer] of the people: although God had set his mark uppon him: although that in executing his office, it was well seene that hee was a newe creature, and there appeared in him a majestie surmounting the nature of man:

¹² Colossians 3:3

¹³ 1 Corinthians 27-29

and there withall although hee had done so many deedes worthy of memorie, as might astonishe all them that hearde speaking of them: yet notwithstanding, in the ende God ordeyned his servaunt insteede, to leade the people into the lande of Chanaan, and to put them in possession of their promised heritage, and Moses himselfe is not worthy to come there. So far off is hee from coming there even as a common member shuffeled in among the rest of the body: that God driveth him from it: and behold, God reacheth his hand to Josua, who had never looked for it.

But now besides that which I have said, (that is to wit, that we be warned to forbear all presumption, and to lay downe all pride): let us bee wel assured, that it belongeth to God to advance us and to make us of estimation, through his mere grace: and that when we shal have heaped up all that ever we can together, all is nothing. Then, besides that we have a good warning to humble our selves: it is shewed us therewithall, that wee must not envie those by whom God serveth his turne. And that is another good lesson. For wee see howe every of us repyneth, when God hath advanced any man, specially beyonde all worldly hope. Where as we should consider thus, beholde God serveth his turne by such a one, everie man commendeth him, and there appeare manifest gifts of grace in him: when we see those things, we be so malicious, that we grudge and repine at it. But contrariwise wee ought to marke, that shen we be so pricked with spite and envie, it is an advancing of our selves against God and not against mortall creatures. Therefore let us learne to honour God wheresoever hee sheweth himself, and to be glad when he vouchsafeth to extend his grace to our neighbours: for if we do so, all shall fall out to our welfare. If another man have mo gracious gifts than I: I am rich in his person. For when we confesse the communion of saints: it is to shew, that

whatsoever God giveth to one man or to another, the same redoundeth to the benefite of all. True it is that we perceive it not at the first push: but yet doth such diversitie serve for the whole bodie of the Church. The members of a bodie have not all one operation¹⁴: the eyes execute not the office of the legges, nor the hands the office of the feete: and yet notwithstanding the body is so knit together in one, that whatsoever is given to any one member, doeth benefite al the rest. Now the let us understand, that when God bestoweth the gifts of his holie spirit more largely upon some one man than upon others, he ceaseth not therefore to have pitie upon us: For we also must be edified therby. Yea surely, so we be not unthankfull, and that we take no pritch at it whe hee listeth to holde us lowe and to exalt our neighbours. To bee short, wee make warre against God when we cannot abide that he shoulde keepe the order which hee hath determind: that is to wit, to pul down the things that are great to the worldward, and to advance and exalt the things that are base and despised.

Moreover we see that Moses is commaunded to strengthen Josua. So little ought Moses to be greeved at the preferring of his servaunt before himselfe, that hee must instruct him and harden him. As if hee shoulde say, I see nowe it is Gods will to honour thee by dishonoring mee. I am worthie of it, and I must be faine to beare it, and therewithall also to prepare thee to thine office. Although thou take my place: yet will I not set my selfe against thee, but (which more is) I will helpe thee to the uttermost of my power. Nowe am I become thy servaunt. Whereas God had erst advanced mee: I must nowe give up this prehimence, and thou must take my roome: and I must indever as much as I can, that the benefite which Gods will is to bestow upon thee, may avayle in thee. So

¹⁴ Romans 12:4

then, if it please God to take any man to serve him, let us streyne our selves to helpe him, and let us not bee ashamed to put our shoulders under him to heave him up. Let us not have any of these wicked respects, to say, O ho, truely as for mee, if God were so gracious to mee as to advance me as wel as such a one, I woulde bestirre mee. But forasmuch as hee holdeth mee downe to the grounde, I will not meddle with other men. Let us beware of such churlishnesse. Nay rather when we see that God hath chosen a man: [let us reason thus with our selves.] I see that God hath chosen such a man, indeede hee is not the ablest that coulde bee devised, but yet is it Gods will to bee served by him, and wee see hee hath a good will: therefore let us helpe him, let everie of us reach him his hande, and let everie of us consider wherin hee may succour him to his furtherance. Yee see then that the thing which wee have to marke heere, is that although our working beare no great outward shewe, and that the thinges which we doe have no great glosse to commend them to the worlde: yet wee must not therefore cease to serve God according to our power, and to linke in with those by whom it is Gods will to bee served, and not to imagine any thing that may foreslowe us, or make s say, At whose whose hande shall I bee recompensed? That which I have done is as good as lost, men make none account of it. It shall well ynough come in account before God. And therefore let it suffice us to be allowed at his hand. These are the things that we have to note upon this, that Moses was commaunded to strengthen Josua.

Nowe finally it is saide, that the people perceiving their sinne, answered: *Wee have offended the Lorde, and therefore wee bee nowe readie to goe up.* And they not onely used those wordes: *but also everie man prepared and armed himselfe, and so they went up to encounter with their enemies.* Heere wee see the nature of men. When GOD biddeth them be stil, they be too too

forward, and they be as hot as fire to doe the thing that is forbidden them. But when they were bidden goe, then their legges were broken. And yet notwithstanding it is saide, that the people acknowledged their sinne, when they had beene so disobedient against GOD. Whereby it appeareth that there is such a corruptnesse in our nature, that even in minding to doe good we doe evill, and offende God, and overshoot our selves without reason or measure. Heere is then a faire lookinglasse for us to discern our owne vices by: yea verily, so wee consider in the person of the Jewes, that not only they themselves are condemned, but also that God purposeth to give a generall lesson, whereby all men may fare the better. Nowe I tolde you first of all, that when God soundeth his trumpet and commaundeth us to march, we stir not a whit: and that although wee have some good liking of the matter, yet we bee so colde and slowe, as is pitie to see. And on the contrarie part, that if hee say, Tary still, wee bee lustie, and moreover so hot and hastie, that wee desire nothing but to occupie both our armes and our legs too. When it was saide to the people, Go, for your God is among you, bee not afraide so long as yee have such a power to defende you: the people replied againe on the other side, nay marie, howe shall wee goe up? They bee Gyants, they wil devour us with their lookes, wee shalbe undone at the first chop, it were better yet to returne into Egypt. When the people had replied so, and it was tolde them againe, What meane you thus to distrust your God? He hath given us this lande, wee have his promise of it: and besides that, you have had proofe of his helpe alreadie many wayes, and he offereth it you still: howe thinke you of it, you faithlesse and rebellious people? When the people were thus laide at: did thy yet returne to their right wits? Yea, for yee see they repented. What for that? It is but a false repentance. Goe to (say they) sith it is so, we will goe and march against our

enemies, seeing it is Gods pleasure. Nay, yee see heere, that God ment to trie their faith and obedience another way, that is to wit, by their forbearing to doe any thing at all. Because hee sawe they had not obeyed him at the first: nowe he will have them ashamed of it, and to tarie his leisure till hee have pitie of them. And forasmuch as hee had sworne that they shoulde not come there: his will was that they shoulde (after the example of Moses) have suffered themselves to bee bereft of that honour as they were worthie. Wee see then that men have but too greate frowardnesse when GOD commaundeth them to sit at rest: and contrariwise that they bee but too colde, when he would have them to goe forwarde: nay they will rather creepe into cranies, than goe forth when God biddeth them.

Howbeit, for the better understanding of this matter, let us marke that this people offended in preacing forward without promise. For as I have saide afore, we must not be hardie any further than God biddeth us. Therefore when wee have but a worde of his mouth, we must take courage, and put all lettes under foote that may turne us away. For the thing wherein God will bee glorified, is that hee commaunde us nothing in vaine. And speciallie when hee promiseth us good successe to our matters, and to prosper our doings: then must we rest therupon, assuring our selves that hee will give us good dispatch. Nevertheless when God had sworne, that the people should not come there: then woulde they needes goe up against their enemies, not considering that in so doing they resisted GOD, and avauced themselves against him. True it is that if a man had asked them, whether they minded to resist God or no, and to doe cleane contrarie to his will, or whether they minded to have him to bee their adversarie: they woulde have aunswered, No: Wee beleve that God will helpe us. For why? Hee hath delivered us out of Egypt, he hath promised our father Abraham to give this

land in possession to his linage, and the time is nowe come. Yea but there is no promise [to you,] and therefore it is but fonde presumption or rather starke madnesse, when men take a toye in their heades, and adventure to doe this or that, when in the meane while God hath not promised any such thing. So then let us marke well, that wee must not be bolde upon our owne heade, but hearken till God speake: and when wee have his promise, wee must rule our selves thereby, and not passe the boundes thereof. For else it may happen unto us, as Moses reporteth here that it happened to this people: that is to witte that wee shall doe all thinges arsiversie, and so offende God. In so much that when wee weene to doe well, wee shall dubble our faultes: when GOD commaundeth us to go, wee shall bee as though our legges were broken: and when he commandeth us to tarie, we shall run too swift: and so, all our whole life shall be out of order.

Furthermore let us beare in minde, that (as I have sayde alreadie) if GOD list to chastice us as in repect of the fleshe, we must not bee too much grieved thereat: for it is for our benefite and welfare. If this people had beene well advised, they woulde have thought thus: bicause wee have offended God by our disobedience, hee will not have us to enter into the land: but yet for all that he bereaveth us not of the hope of salvation, let us content our selves with that, and wander foorth in this worlde till he take us hence. So likewise let us learne to wander on, if wee minde to come to the heavenly life. And if God doe nowe and then cast us downe, let us consider that that casting downe, will make us to go much more swifflie towards the marke of the heavenly kingdome that is set before us, than if we had runned never so fast, and had never left galloping all the way. Thus ye see what we had to mmarke more, upon

this saying, that the people would needes goe up to discomfit their enemies.

Now Moses addeth, that *They made themselves readie with their armour and weapons*. Yea forsooth, but it is all one as if ye shoulde put an armour uppon a scarecrowes backe, and take him a sworde in his fiste: surely he were substantially well armed: but in deede all were to no purpose. Even so is it with us: If wee were furnished with all the helpes of man and with al inferiour meanes, and in the meane whyle were not strengthened in our heartes, but were full of foolish selfeweening, and as it were drunkenesse, by presuming uppon our owne power: all the braverie that wee can make, is but winde and smoke, bicause wee have not an eye unto God, but are rebellious against him. Wherefore let us learne to leave the arming of our selves, and to seeke strength and courage at Gods hand, and then let us take armour and weapon as at his appointment. If we go that way to worke, God will prosper the helpes that he hath given us: for he will blesse them, bicause we sought them at his hand. Besides this, he himself will stand by us though all other meanes faile us. For divers times he wil perchaunce suffer us to bee made naked, and let the world mock us, as though we were undone aforehand: but yet will he provide wel ynough for all, at leastwise so that afore all things wee be furnished with his inward vertue. This is the thing that we had to marke, yet further upon this text.

And here Moses sheweth that God meant not to destroy the people, when he commaunded them to turne backe. *Turne ye backe againe* saith he. Here wee see Gods wonderfull goodnesse, and that the threate which he spake off yesterday, was not to the end that God woulde pursue the iniquitie of the people without having any pitie upon them: but to make them feele their owne evill. For notwithstanding all that, yet doeth he use compassion and

kindnesse towards them in forbidding them to incounter with their enemies. For although that at the first sight a man would say that God rejected them, and cursed them: yet notwithstanding, in so dooing he sheweth them a signe of his mercie. For had he said never a worde, what a thing had that bin? In deede the people increased their offence yet more by being disobedient to the warning that he gave them. But whatsoever they did, wee must consider what God intended when he saide, *Goe not up: for I will not bee with you, neither will I helpe you*. Wee see that when the people had once bin brought lowe, they perceived and acknowledged a wonderfull goodnesse in God, and therewithall became the better diposed to profit themnselves by the correction that was sent them. Let us marke well therefore, that when our Lord uttereth any token of his grace and goodnesse towards us: therein he sheweth more apparantly howe much he loveth us, than if he made no countenance of any thing, but helde his mouth shut, and suffered us to do what we listed. Why? For alas, we should but throwe our selves headlong into destruction, if we followed every man his owne fansie. Seeing it is so then, whensoever God setteth himselfe against us, whensoever he rebuketh us, and whensoever he sheweth us our follie, yea though it be with such roughnesse as it amaseth us: yet is it to our benefite, and therefore let us learne to beare his yoke.

Moreover let this bee our rule to discerne good and evill by: namely to depend wholly upon Gods mouth, and not to bee wise in our owne conceits, but to suffer him to be our guide, and not to fall to gambolding at our owne pleasure and fansie, but to followe the way quietly which he sheweth us. And then will he give us armes and legs, and guide all our steppes in such sort, as he will make us to goe still forward, and cause us to arrive at the good haven. But on the contrarie part, if wee will

needes bee fantastically, and doe thinges uppon our owne head and uppon our owne liking, and thereupon fall also to foolish practises: God must needes bee against us: And then albeit that all thinges goe well forewarde with us to our seeming, and fall out according to our minde: yet will God turne all upside downe, and overthrowe us when we be at the highest. Those are the things which wee have to note. And therefore let us set all our whole mindes to obey God: And for the bringing thereof to passe, let us beseech him to give us the true understanding of his worde, and to keepe us from being froward and stubborne against him, as wee see by the example that is shewed us here, which I pray God wee may eschew.

And now let us kneele downe in the presence of our good God with acknowledgement of our faultes, praying him so to touche us with them, as wee may profite more and more in faith and repentaunce, even untill he have utterly chaunged us: and not suffer us to stand against his holy commaundementes, nor to dubble our misdoings when wee have offended him: but to reforme us in such sort, that being rid of all fleshly glory, wee may seeke nothing but to bee mortified by him, to the end that he may so frame us to his righteousnesse, as our whole indeavour may be to rule all our thoughtes wordes and deedes thereby. That it may please him to graunt this grace, not onely to us, but also, etc.