

On Wednesday the xxiiii. of Aprill. 1555.

The tenth Sermon upon the first Chapter.

42 And the Lord, etc.

43 I tolde you of it: but you woulde not heare mee, but rebelled against the commaundement of the Lord, and were presumptuous, and went up the hill.

44 Then the Amorrhite which dwelt in that hill, came out against you and chased you, as bees doe, and smote you in Seir even unto Horma.

45 And when ye were come backe againe, ye wept before the Lorde: but the Lord heard not your voyce, ne inclined his eares unto you.

46 So you abode a long time at Cades barne, as the dayes doe shewe which you have taryed there.



we sawe yesterday howe it is not lawfull for us to put foorth our selves, except GOD call us and shewe us the way: and that although the thing which wee take in hande, bee never so allowable in respect of men, yet is it nothing woorth unlesse God bee our guide, and that wee bee sure that wee adventure uppon nothing but by his will. Therewithall wee sawe also that we have too ticklish a nature, insomuch that when any thing is to be done [that lyketh our selves,] wee bee but to forewarde, and wee cannot tarie till GOD shewe us his will. And that on the contrarie part, wee see what unlustnesse is in us when God commaundeth us any thing: for then wee bee so lasie as is pitie to see, it seemeth that our legges are broken: and to bee short, wee bee starke lame. Nay (which worse is) when wee weene to doe well, wee marre all by our rashnesse. And this is confirmed yet better by that which Moses addeth. For he

rehearseth what GOD had injoynd him. Thou shalt say unto them, *Goe not up, ne fight not, for I am not with you* (sayeth the Lorde,) *and therefore ye shall bee overcome.* In this sentence wee see how it belongeth to God to say, *Goe:* and likewise to bidde us *tarrie*, when he thinketh good. And if wee have not that voyce to guide us: we may well seeke all manner of furniture, and wee may be well ynough armed to the fight of the world: but yet shall there bee nothing but confusion in our case. Then like as wee must simply obey the thing that GOD commaundeth, and hast forward with all speede when wee see it is his pleasure that wee should *goe:* so on the contrarie part, when he will have us to sit still, let his forbidding suffice us, assuring our selves that he will turne all thinges upside downe, if wee thinke to further the matter by thrusting our selves forward. To be short, we must yeeld God no lesse honour and reverence, in forbearing to do things when he forbiddeth them: than in

dooing and executing the things that he liketh.

And he sheweth expressly, that it shall not boote us to do any thing unlesse God command it, according as it hath bene declared heretofore how it belongeth to him to fight. True it is that he will have the faithfull to inforce themselves, but yet in so dooing wee must attribute all unto him. Therefore if he be on our side we shall bee sure of the victorie: but if he shrinke from us, we shall have the foyle though all the world helped us. Then is there but this one onely respect that may give us courage: which is, that God bee at hand with us to succour us, so as wee bee sure of his assistance, and rest wholly thereupon. Neverthesse it is not for men to beare themselves in hand that God will aide them, further than he hath assured us by his promise. But it is certeine that God makes no promise to any, but to such as walke in obedience. Whosoever then flingeth over the fieldes, that is to say, whosoever gaddeth here and there, and resteth not simply upon Gods word, doeth utterly refuse the benefite that God had promised him, and bereaveth himselfe thereof wilfully. For the receiving of Gods word to the end we may know what to do, and be ruled by his mouth: and to trust in him, so as we be grounded upon his grace, and resort to him for succour at our neede, are things inseparable. He therefore that will needes dally upon his owne head, and trust to his owne foolish imaginations without submitting himself to God: may well say, I hope God will helpe me: but his hope hath no resemblance to the hope of the faithfull. So then, seeing we perceive what our owne imaginations are: let us looke what things God giveth us leave to do, and what is lawfull for us to do by his word. And therewithall, let us be foreward in doing that which he biddeth us, waiting for his blessing wherby he will make all to prosper. For although we see the contrarie to our

understanding: yet shall we overcome all impediments by his helpe.

But howsoever the case stande, let us beare this lesson in minde, that GOD, if wee desire to bee his, doeth binde us by his infinite goodnesse to be guided by him: and that as we would bee shielded by his mightie power, so likewise wee must quietly suffer him to rule us as his lambes and sheepe, and not followe every man his owne fansie. And if this ought to bee observed in the thinges that concerne this present life: howe much more ought it to be so in going to the kingdome of heaven? I say that even in all our worldly affayres, we ought to doe God so much honour, as not to take too much upon us, nor to raunge here and there, without having first asked counsell at his mouth, (as he saieth by his Prophet Esay¹;) and untill he have ordered al our devises by his holy spirite. When we have any businesse to doe, although it bee not of any great importaunce: yet ought wee to call upon God with all lowelinesse, and not to do any thing till our conscience bee thoroughly settled and resolved that he alloweth our doings. Now if God looke to be obeyed in small things, and which are as good as nothing: what will he doe when the matter concerneth his service? and when the case concerneth so excellent a thing as is the salvation of our soules? Therefore we see herein, howe sore the wretched world is blinded, seeing they give themselves to their owne follies and to mens traditions, and thinke not at all upon the things that God hath ordained: No: that shall be the last thing that they will doe. And therefore it standeth us so much the more on hand to studie well this lesson of Moses, That God will not bee with us. except we come neere unto him, and be diligent to hearken what he will say unto us, and followe it when we have done, without adding anything to it, or diminishing any thing from it. And thus ye

¹ Isaiah 30:2

see in effect, what we have to gather upon this streine.

Now herewithall Moses threateneth them, *That they shall bee overcome of their enemies, and fall before them.* Whereby we be done to understand, that if God bee once gone away from us, wee must needs perish, yea and our enemies must needs have the upperhand of us, according as wee see in another place², that God leadeth us [into adversitie,] and holdeth us as it were fettered in it. And when our foes have such power over us, it is because wee bee Gods prisoners. True it is that men advance themselves ynough in their presumption, but yet for all that, God daunteth their courage when it commeth to the pinche, and holdeth their hands fast tyed, so as they cannot stirre one finger. Let us marke well therefore, that wee must needs fall before our enemies, if wee bee not uphelde by Gods hand. For there lyeth all our strength. Nay moreover, though no man followe us, yet must wee fall before our owne shadowes, and be overcome without any man pursuing of us³. For Gods wrath of it selfe without any other helpe or meane, is able ynough to confound us. Neverthesse the divell ceaseth not to practise to destroy us, and we be assailed on all sides: therefore what woulde become of us, if God were not our wall and bulwarke? Then if we consider well the state of our life, there is none other way for us, but to walke in feare and to be watchfull, that we happen not to play the loose coltes. As I saide even now, ye see that the divell ceaseth not, and he hath innumerable wyles to oppresse us withall: we knowe what force he is of, and he is not without cause termed the Prince of the world⁴. He commeth with so great crueltie, as passeth al the force of our fleshly enemies. On the other side, this worlde is

full of Ambushes against us. To bee short, when wee have bethought us never so well of the enemies whom wee see: there are an infinite multitude of enemies [whom wee see not,] which seeke nothing but to overthrow us when we should do good. Therefore let us sit stil in humilitie, to the end that being shrowded under the shadow of God, wee may be upheld and maintained by him. Let us looke well to it then that wee followe not what every of us thinketh good in himselfe: but submit our selves to Gods good will, as I have shewed afore.

Nowe it followeth, *That Moses spake unto the people, and that the people would not followe his advise, but were disobedient to the mouth of God.* This manner of speach hath bin expounded already heretofore. But here wee see yet more clearly, the prooffe of that which hath bin said afore: that is to wit, that God is despised not only when he speaketh from heaven, but also when folke make none account of his word that is preached by men. It is said expresly *That the people were disobedient to the mouth of God.* And how? It is not said that God appeared in visible shape, or that there was any voyce heard from heaven: but it was Moses that spake: it is a man that saith that the people resisted the mouth of God. Now then we see that God will have his word received with like humilitie when he sendeth men to declare his commandement, as if he him selfe were among them. The doctrine that is set forth in the name of God, ought to be of as much authoritie [in the mouth of a man,] as if all the Angels of heaven came downe to us, or as if God shewed his Majestie presently before our eyes: yea and it is the thing wherein he will trie the obedience of our faith. True it is that wee ought to use good discretion when men speake. For if wee should receive all that is put to us: there should be no difference betweene the lyers and false prophets that seduce our soules, and the true ministers of God. But if we

² Deuteronomy 32:30

³ Leviticus 26:17-30

⁴ John 12:31; 14:30; 15:11; Ephesians 6:12

have sure warrant that the thing which is brought us, proceedeth of God: (as if it should be shewed us by the holy scripture, that men should not invent any thing of their own heads, but hold themselves to the pure simplicitie of the Law and the Gospel:) it is certaine that whosoever maketh any resistance in that case, doeth not make warre against a creature, but manifestly withstand God, who will be heard when he speaketh so by men, and serveth his turne by them as by his instruments. Therefore let us beare well in minde this order of Moses saying, which is , that he himself is the speaker, and yet notwithstanding, that the people in disobeying him disobeyed God. For why? Moses had not forged any thing of his owne braine, but shewed unto them how it was God that had sent him. And therefore it is no straunge case that God should finde himselfe grieved, and that his Majestie should be offended, and take the outrage to be done as to himselfe, when the message that he had sent by Moses was not received. In likewise is it at this day. And for the same cause doeth our Lorde Jesus Christ avow⁵, that if men refuse to heare the Ministers of the Gospel, he will take that wrong to be done to himselfe. Therefore let not men make a jest of it, when GOD causeth his worke to be preached nowe adayes, and stirreth up men to publishe it abroad: If any man thinke to escape by saying, they be but men with whom wee have to doe, and therewithall despise the doctrine: they shall knowe in the end, that it came from heaven, and that they set themselves against God and not against mortall creatures: for he will have his Majestie to be knowne there. Then if men take him for their sovereigne Lorde, let them stoope unto him, and doe him homage in his doctrine. For he hath Printed his marke in such wise there, that if any man incounter the things that are conteyned in it, it is all

one as if hee would put his truth under foot, wherein he hath shewed himselfe openly as in his lively image. Looke what wee beare that poynt well in minde. For if earthly Princes revenge the despite that is done to their cotearmours, and thinke themselves to bee misused therein: I pray you is it not much more rightfull reason that God should doe so, when men make no reckening of his worde? [Yes verily.] For this case concerneth not some painted picture or blasing of armes: but it is the image of God which appeared to us in substance, yea even with such power as we ought to be transfigured into it, as saith S. Paul⁶. That is the thing which we have to marke.

And therefore let such as have the office of preaching Gods worde looke well to themselves that they goe soberly to worke, and that they may alwayes be able to protest, that the things which they teache are put into their mouthes by God. When they be once sure that it is so: let them labour to make al their hearers to feele Gods power which is after a sort inclosed in his worde, that it may be received as it deserveth, and everie man submit himselfe to it, and God by that meanes be worshipped of all men, and served with one accord. And therewithal let them defie al rebels and despisers. When they see the heathenish sort fall to scoffing at the doctrine which they beare abroad: let them assure themselves that the things which they have uttered, shall suffice to send all these to the bottome of Hell, which do so set themselves against them, according to this saying of Saint Paul⁷, that the Preachers of Gods word are armed with such a sword, as is able to confound all such as will not obey the doctrine. And herewithall likewise let everie man have an eye to himselfe, and when he commeth hither to be taught in the name of God, let him be prepared with such

⁵ Matthew 10:14,40

⁶ 2 Corinthians 3:18

⁷ 2 Corinthians 10:4

lowelines and modestie, as he may perceive that it is God which speaketh, and be moved to bow downe his necke, to receive his yoke patiently. And as for those that will needs play the wild beastes: let them understand that here is sentence given upon them, so as they may well plead against it, but they shall win nothing by their shiftes, bicause it is said that all such as obeyed not Moses, were disobedient to Gods owne mouth.

And nowe Moses addeth expressly, *That the people were presumptuous*, in that they woulde not bee at rest. And this importeth very much. For it doeth us to understand, that there was never yet any unbeliefe or stubbornnesse in men, but it was matched with lostinesse, and pride, which puffed them up in such wise, and made them so farre out of patience with themselves, as they fell to checking against GOD, and to give themselves to all evill. And that is the cause why unbeliefe is so behated afore God. Someeimes it will seeme to us to bee over great rigour, when God punisheth them so sore which cannot [finde in their hearts to] hearken to his word. For we excuse them by ignoraunce, forasmuch as they were not well assured that it was God that spake: and in the meane time wee looke not to the evill that lurketh in covert, which God perceiveth and judgeth: that is to wit, that men are inwardly as full of poison as toads, and that they bee stuffed with pride, which maketh them to mount up in such wise, as in effect they refuse to obey God, forasmuch as they vouchsafe not to yelde all superioritie to him. That is the cause why pride or presumption, is matched in this place with unbeliefe. And it is the same thing which I have declared afore, namely that the true hardiness must bee grounded in God, so as men must not attempt anything upon opinion of their owne power, nor perswade themselves that they have this or that: but onely stand unto that which God promiseth us. If it be not so with us: then will our hardinesse be turned

into presumptuousnesse. And in this respect ought wee to condemne mens rashnesse when they advance themselves too much: and to commende their invincible constancie, when they submit themselves out of hand to Gods woorde, so that having once his promise, they rest upon it as uppon a rocke despising all stumbling blockes and keepe on their pace stil, notwithstanding any trouble or storme that can be stirred up against them, or anie threatening or menacing of them. It will be sayd divers times, that Gods servantes are willfull: because they will not swarve for any thing, not for al the worldly reasons that can bee alledged. This and that shall be brought in, and wee knowe that nothing is easier than to strike sayle at every blast of winde as they say. But wee see that such as purpose to serve God, doe shut their eyes against al daungers, insomuch that although all should goe to havocke, yet will they not cease to doe the thing that is commaunded them. Lo here a willfulness: yea verily, according to the opinion of the flesh: but yet in very deede it is the true hardinesse. Why so? Because it hath the good foundation. Heaven and earth are of great weight: and yet is all that houg building grounded uppon the onely worde of God. In what good plight then shall a particular thing be, when it is founded uppon the same? Thus yee see what wee have to gather upon this text, that the people was presumptuous in that they yelded not to God, when hee commaunded them to sit still.

Now, to the ende wee may know that when God hath once spoken, they be no threatnings to scarre babes withall as they say: he addeth for a conclusion, *You went up, and behold, the Amorrhite that dwelt on the hill came out before you, and chased you as waspes or Bees doe, insomuch that they smote you in mount Seir even unto Horma*. Hereby Moses sheweth that the people were taught after the maner of

fooles, that is to say, by their owne harme. And good reason it is that when we will not beleve Gods single word, we should pay very deere for our experience, and be made to knowe in spite of our teeth, that he will be stedfast in his purpose, and bring the thing to passe that he hath spoken. And hereby wee bee warned not to provoke Gods wrath, nor to tempt him. So soone then as he speaketh, let us stand in awe: for it is a part of fayth as is shewed by the example of Noe in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrewes⁸. It is sayd there, that Noe beheld the flud at such time as men made great chere in the world. How so? for God had told him that the world whould perish, and hee contented himselfe therewith. And therefore let us not tary till God arme himselfe and utter his power against us: but as soone as he hath spoken, let us be afraide, that we may prevent his wrath: and then shall we be taught as wee ought to be, to our welfare. But if we bee hardheaded, and thinke that all that ever is sayde is but a mockerie: wee shall finde to our confusion, that God hath an effectuall worde, and that his hand and his tongue goe together, so as all that ever commeth from him shall be found to bee certaine and infallible.

Also wee have to marke this similitude that Moses setteth downe here: namely that the *Ammorrhites came out lyke Bees*. For wee knowe that when Bees are angrye, they sting men: and they regard not whether men be too strong for them, but the fly upon them with such choler and furie, as they cannot but be astonished. The seke to stintheir eyes: so as there is not the hardest of them, but he is put to his shiftes, and is faine to runne away from those little pretie fowles. Moses then hath used this similitude, to shewe that the enemies had Lyons hearts, because God had encouraged them. For it belongeth to him onely to strengthen men. When it pleaseth him to

defend us, though our enemies were as mad as might be, yet should they shrink away, and be dismayed at a thing of nothing. But else. if there were but little children against us, GOD would so strengthen them, as we should not know where to become, but bee discomfited before them. Therefore let us not have an eye to the strength of men, nor to their furniture. For our Lord will stirre up folke against us, that coulde doe nothing afore, and in whom there was no lykelyhoode at all: and wee shallbe so combred to withstand them, that to our seeming, all the world is against us: and moreover wee shall be so dismayed, and GOD shall so bereave us of all sense and reason, that even a visor shall be enough to scarre us out of our wittes. Thus yee see what wee have to consider in this similitude which Moses hath set downe here in the text.

Finally he sayth *that the people being so discomfited, fell to weeping, but God heard not their cry, and so they taryed in Cades Barne according to the time that they abode there*. Some supply it here with these wordes, *according to the time that you abode in other places*, and they say that they abode there nyneteene yeeres. But that cannot be proved by the holy scripture, and the makers of that glose were the Jewes, who have turned all the holy scripture topsitervie, with their dreames and dotages. The meaning of Moses is farre otherwise. For his intent is to put the people in minde of their long abiding at Cades Barne, because God helde them there as it were at a baye: and to make them cal to remembrance and consider the better that his pulling down of their pride after that maner, and his causing of them to feele that they ought not to raunge abroad at randon when God shutteth the gate against them by forbidding them, was a just punishment from heaven. Moses then intendeth here to stablish the people the better in the knowledge which they ought to have had

⁸ Hebrews 11:7

long agoe concerning Gods justice, to the ende that the same may humble them, and touche them the better with repentance,. That is the playne meaning of the text.

Now wee see here first of all, that men recoyle a hundred paces backe, when they weene to goe forewarde but one, at leastwise beyonde the will of God. This people was neere their enemies, they did but put themselves in a readinesse, and as soone as they were armed, they gave charge upon them. They needed not to retyre for the matter, that is to say, they needed not to remove: for wee see how they be chased, and not onely beaten downe there in the same place: but that God also dryveth them before the winde, as chaffe or dust is driven. Ye see then here is a fayre lookingglasse to shewe us that when men presume to make themselves redoubted, they doe no sooner set one foote forward, but God plucketh them an hundred leagues backe, and that to their great confusion. What is to be done then? Obedience must alwayes be as a cresset unto us to shew us the way, so as we may first and foremeost knowe what God hath appointed, and thereupon take courage to goe, when we be sure that he guideth our footestepes. For thereupon wee may boldly conclude, that the ende thereof shall bee good, and that there shall followe nothing of it but prosperitie. But contrariwise, if wee will needes be leaping out, when God will have us sit still at home: it will coste us very deare. Thus yee see what wee have to remember upon this text of Moses, where hee sayth expressly thhat the people were chased even unto Horma, and that they came unto Cades.

As touching the weeping that is spoken of here, it should seeme that there was some repentance in them before, and that now the same was doubled: and yet notwithstanding it is said that is was but lost time. and that the peoples weeping booted them not at all. This at the first blushe might seeme contrary to other texts

of the holy scripture⁹. For it is sayd that as soone as sinners acknowledge their faultes and doe but sigh for them, God receiveth them to mercie, yea and even preventeth them. It is sayd that hee taryeth not till wee cry, but that he preventeth our crying: or at leastwise that whensoever wee pray, he is ready to heare us. But here it seemeth that the people repented, and yet that God letteth them alone, so as they languishe still without faring any whitte the better for their repentance. As touching the thing that wee have seene, it was set downe to shewe us that the people had a false repentance, as men commonly have, soothing themselves through hipocrysie, and bearing themselves on hand that they bee well sorie for their sinnes, when there is still some backe nooke behinde, so as they consider not the mischiefe so deeply as it were meete to be searched. True it is, that God will not suffer us to be plunged in [sorrowe for] our sinnes, so wee bethinke us of them earnestly: but all our seeking is to cover them, and to forget them quite by our good will. Now then, wee have so much the more neede to pray God to worke so in us, as wee may not bee double hearted to flatter our selves. And for the same cause the holy scripture telleth us¹⁰, that he which knoweth not how hard it is to come to repentance, deceiveth himselfe.

The Papistes imagine, that they can helpe themselves and further themselves to repentance by their owne freewill. Loe what their overweening is. But let us understand that it is a singular woorking of the holy ghost, when it pleaseth him to leade us to repentance. For what else is it than a renewing of the man? Is it in any mans power to create himselfe? No: but God fashioneth us newe againe, and therefore that prayse is to be given unto him. Againe, our wittes are utterly dulled or rather starke

⁹ 2 Chronicles 6:24; Isaiah 65:23

¹⁰ Jeremiah 13:23; Romans 2:5

blinde. God must be faine to inlighten them. And is that in our power? Whereas there is nothing but corruption in our hartes: whereas there is nothing but secrete rebelliousnesse and malice: God must be faine to rid and clense away every whit of it.

And therefore let us marke well that there was no repentance in this people, although they were touched before. It might well bee a signe that God had compassion of them: but true repentance requireth not onely an acknowledgement of our faultes, but also that wee shoulde be sorye for them and that uppon the feeling of our owne evill, wee should goe unto GOD, referring our selves wholly unto him, and seeking nothing but to bee governed thencefoorth by him, forasmuch as we have nothing but frowardnesse in our selves. But the people were not yet come to this poynt: and so wee see they were not ripe to repentance. And as touching their weeping, true it is that they had some feeling and understanding: but that was not enough yet.

Furthermore let us marke well, that Gods refusing to heare the cry of the children of Israel, was not to shake them off utterly. And there is not a text better worthie to be noted than this. For it importeth great instruction for all our whole lyfe. I say then that God harkened not to the peoples weeping, and yet notwithstanding that he did not utterly shake them off, nor was altogether deafe to their request. And how may that be? For sometimes God heareth us not to outward appearance, and yet howsoever the case stande our prayers are not unavaileable, but doe us good.

As for example: When a man hath played the unthrift, GOD plucketh him backe, (there are examples enowe to be seene thereof commonly:) and when another hath bin given to gluttonie and excesse: another hath bin a whormonger or a drunkard, and another hath bin a blasphemmer: very wel, God seeing men

become such beastes, subdueth them by force, hee sendeth them afflictions which laste not for a day or a moneth only, but linger upon them a long time: whereupon the one sorte take the bridle in their teeth, and chawe uppon it with fretting and chafing against God, continue still sturdy and stubborne in their sinnes: the other sorte graunt that they have offended, and are sorie for it before God, beseching him to vouchsafe to moderate his rigor, and to asswage the paines which they indure. And yet in the meane while, their miserie abateth not, but they continew at the same stay that they were at before. It should seeme then that their prayers are lost, and that God gave deafe eare unto them. Now although such folke pray hartily: yet let us marke that Gods hearing of them is not to outward appearance. And why? Because he knoweth that it is good for them to be so under his rod still. Even so was it with this people: it was to their benefite for them to be put in minde of their lewde dealings every minute of an houre. But yet for all that, he fayleth not to have compassion of them: for he giveth them patience, and afterwarde maketh their afflictions to doe them good: insomuch that although they were irksome to them yet did they stand them in stead of medicines. Ye see then that God doth sometimes heare us, and yet notwithstanding it appeareth not so to any mans thinking, yea and even wee our selves may suppose that wee have lost our time. True it is that God will surely reject the yellings of the wicked when they cry out unto him, and that he will laugh at their weepings: and it is not to bee marveled at. And yet in so doing he fayleth not to accomlishe his promise, which is, that he will heare all them that cry unto him¹¹. And why? For this promise belongeth to none but such as cry unto God rightly, and come not to him with windlasses and feining,

¹¹ Exodus 22:27; 2 Chronicles 7:14

according to this expresse saying of the psalme¹², that God is neere to all such as call upon him, yea, as call upon him in trueth. Then if wee will be heard at Gods hand, wee must first and formost have our affections censed. And therefore his rejecting of the hipocrites when they cry unto him, is no counterworking against his promise: For they bee uncleane. In deede the houle, and they will not stick to say, alas my God, they will make lamentation enough: but forasmuch as they seeke not God of a desire to come unto him. but in stead of comming to him, would recoyle backe from him if it were possible: their crying out, my God, is as though they were upon the racke. Now then, this howling of theirs is brutish, and hath no affinitie with faith to doe them good withall. But the thing that I tolde you of even now, hath another maner of thing in it: that is to wit, that [divers times] God will not heare us to deliver us from the bodily punishmentes that he sendeth us: and yet in the meane while he ceaseth not to be mercifull and well minded towards us. And therefore let us beare in minde, that when our Lord sendeth us anie diseases, so as one is striken with povertie, another is smitten after another fashion, and every man hath his griefe: if we pray unto him, and the miserie is as though it were tyed to our shoulders, and he maketh no countenance to heare us: it is not to be sayd therefore that God letteth us alone therin, to drive us to despaire. But if wee beare the adversitie patiently which hee sendeth, let us looke to be delivered of it in the ende: and in the meane while let it suffice us to be comforted by his holy spirit, and let us hope that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we be able to beare¹³. Thus ye see how God heard not the peoples cry, and yet that they which have sought him with a true

and rightmeaning heart, have not lost their labor. God shewed not by outward deed that he heard them, and yet in the meane while he made their bodily punishment to serve to the welfare of their soules: insomuch that albeit they lingered there by the space of fortie yeeres: yet were they not disinherited of the kingdom of heaven. Whereas they were disappointed of the land that was promised them: therein they felt Gods wrath: but yet did they overcome that temptation through fayth: I meane them that came againe into the right way, and grew not hard heard as the most part did, which did nothing else but chafe upon the bit, as we have seene afore. And herein wee see, that if we have true repentance of our sinnes, we shall finde that God is not unmindefull of our requestes, though he heare us not so soone as wee would: and that yet notwithstanding our repentance must keepe us still under, so as although that (to our seeming) the gate unto Gods goodnesse is shut against us, and he will not admit us in: yet neverthesse, our prayers shall not be in vaine. For God will shewe in the end, that he was not deaf to our requests, but that he heard them to give us such asswagement of our afflictions, as he knew to be meete and expedient for our welfare.

And finally let us marke wel that if God have punished us, yea and that the affliction hath indured a long time: the remembrance therof must bee well printed in our mindes, that we become not lyke those which forget Gods chastisements within a day or twaine. And that is the cause why Moses sayth to the people, *According to the dayes which you have taryed there.* As if he should say, yee ought to beare it well in remembrance. For it seemed to you that ye should never have come soone enough into the lande of blessing: but God made you to retyre from it, and it ought to have bin yet longer time ere ye had come there. Thinke upon it, and consider how it

¹² Psalm 145:18

¹³ 2 Corinthians 10:13

was Gods had that held yee there as it were shut up in close prison. Now then, although God have delivered you from it: yet must you beare it in mind stil, according as we see how king Ezechias speaketh thereof in his song¹⁴, saying that he will bethinke him of the yeeres past with heavinesse and grieffe of heart, and call to minde the chastisements that he had received at Gods hand, thereby to holde himselfe in awe, that hee fall not backe againe into the same faultes for which he had bin punished. Thus ye se how wee ought to thinke uppon the corrections that God shall have sent us, that we may profite our selves by them. And therefore let us not resemble this people that are spoken of here: but whensoever we be chastised at Gods hand, let our sorrowing be in such sorte, as we may have wherewith to comfort our selves in his grace. And therewithall let us holde our selves thenceforth in his obedience, never to provoke him as we had done before.

Now let us kneele downe in the presence of our good God with acknowledgement of our faultes, praying him to vouchsafe to touch us with them more and more, in such wise as wee may not only aske him forgiveness for our transgressing of his commaundementes so many wayes: but also desire to be reformed by his holy spirit, that by his power wee may fight against al our owne lusts, and against al the temptations of the world, and quietly goe through with our calling, untill such time as being delivered from all fighting, wee be received into the heavenly rest that is promised us. And so let us al say, Almighty God heavenly father, etc.

¹⁴ Isaiah 38:15