new wine. Now they could not be said then to see visions and dream dreams; but the words set out the excellent gifts of the Spirit in the new testament. But if you would more particularly know why the Spirit of God should use these words of prophecy, visions, and dreams; that sons and daughters should prophesy, &c., I answer then, By prophecy you may understand the gifts of illumination; by vision, gifts of consolation; and by dreams, the gifts of sanctification.

1. By prophecy, the gifts of illumination, or a clear understanding of God's will in Christ, which should be in the new testament above the old testament—'Your sons and daughters shall prophesy;' that is, the little boy and girl shall be able to understand the mysteries of salvation in scripture; they need not run to the prophet for the meaning of such a ceremony and rite.

2. Then by vision understand a more intimate apprehension of the truth, or a manifestation of things to the conscience, gifts of consolation. We have a kind of vision here, when we have a lively sense of divine grace: here we see as in a glass; hereafter we shall see face to face.

3. Then by dreams you may understand the more inward instincts and motions of the Holy Ghost, by which the soul, being severed from worldly desires and objects, is raised to the contemplation of heaven and spiritual things; as dreams are the thoughts and commotions of the soul, which are framed when the outward senses are shut up. When a man neither seeth, heareth, smelleth, toucheth, nor tasteth, then the soul worketh on things at the greatest distance; so, possibly, it signifies those spiritual instincts, those sanctifying motions, by which the soul is raised up to the contemplation of heavenly mysteries: then there is such a distribution of the persons to amplify the clause that went before —'I will pour my Spirit upon all flesh.' 'Old men,' to show that no condition is excluded from the communion of the Spirit, your 'sons and daughters,' that is, your children, they shall have their memory sanctified to retain prophecy; your 'young men' shall have visions, their consciences sanctified, to feel the force of what is in their heads; and your 'old men' shall dream dreams; they who are deadened to the world shall have their affections raised to heaven, and God will clearly manifest himself to them.

SERMON XXXVI.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet.—HEB. xi. 7.

FOURTHLY, I observe that this warning was of a judgment to come—'Being warned of things not seen as yet;' that is, of the horror of the flood. From whence I note that the threatening as well as the promise is the object of faith; not only the mercy of God in the promise, but the judgment of God in the threatening, is to be applied by faith. I shall confirm the doctrine in hand with some reasons.

1. Because every part of divine truth is worthy of belief and reverence, because it is the word of the same God; and that is the reason why we read of faith in the promises, faith in the command, faith in the threatening. There is faith in the promises: Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope;' there is faith in the commandment: Ps. cxix. 66, 'Teach me good judgment and knowledge; for I have believed thy commandments;' that is, I have believed them to be of divine authority, and to be just, equal, and good; and there is faith in the threatening, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God,' &c. It is true, belief in the threatening is not so much pressed in scripture, because guilty nature of itself is presagious of evil: Rom. i. 31, 'Knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.'

2. Because faith is but a loose presumption, if it be not carried out to the threatenings as well as the promises. In all right belief there is mixture. Men that look altogether to be honeyed and oiled with grace, to be fed with the promises and feasted with love, they mistake the nature of God and the state of his economy, and the manner of his dealing with the world; they mistake the nature of God, for God is just as well as merciful. And in such a mixed dispensation hath he revealed himself to the creature: Ps. cxvi. 5, 'Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful;' gracious, and yet righteous. And they mistake the ordinances of God and the state of his dispensations; for he will be known in his judgments, as well as in his mercies. God hath always delighted to deal with men in the way of a covenant. Now the right covenant form is a precept invested with a promise and a threatening; therefore we are bound to believe that God will condemn the obstinate as well as save the penitent. In the covenant which God made with man in innocency, it is notable the only memorial we have is of the curse; nothing but that is mentioned: Gen. ii. 17, 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death.' The promise is but implied; if thou forbearest eating, thou shalt live; but the threatening is expressed, What was the reason? Partly because the effect of that covenant was only to oblige the guilty creature to death; and partly because God would show us that man's nature doth always need a bridle. In the state of innocency, when we were most holy, as there was use of a law for the exercise of obedience, so there was use of a threatening to keep him from sin, because of the changeableness of his nature; therefore it is much more needful now in our degenerate estate. Though the new nature needs no other argument but love and sweetness, yet the old nature needs a curb and restraint. Therefore men that would only hear of promises and arguments of grace, sin against God's ordination and the wisdom by which he will govern the world; they would have God yield to them and speak them fair, else they will be none of his; so that the faith they cry up is rather a fond delicacy, or carnal presumption, than a serious respect to God.

3. Because it is necessary and profitable. There is no part of scripture without use and profit. Man may write a book, but there may be a great deal of waste in it; but when God hath written a volume or book, there is nothing in it but what is of profit: Rom. xv.

4, 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.' It is true, it is the aim of the whole scripture to beget hope; ay, but there are some things, in order to hope, that are first to work upon fear; something to bridle the flesh as well as to comfort the spirit, though all endeth in hope. There is nothing in the word of God superfluous, and the threatenings are a considerable part of the word.

But more particularly I shall show you how the threatenings are necessary.

[1.] To beget humiliation for sins past. In the threatenings we see the desert of sin, therefore after grievous offences it is good to wound the heart this way with the more remorse. Josiah's heart was tender and made soft—by what? by the threatening: 2 Kings xxii. 19, 'Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse,' &c. Certainly there is great advantage by the commination. You will never understand how displeasing things are to God till you look upon the flying roll, and read the curses; then the soul will say, Oh, what have I done? I have done that which makes me guilty of all the curses of the law; and this will make you earnest after pardon, nay, it will make the pardon more welcome when it comes; We have deserved to be cast into hell, but grace hath saved us. Then will your hearts be enlarged in praises and thanksgivings to God, and you will exalt him to the highest heaven who hath delivered you from the lowest hell. Daniel, when he was in the den, had more cause to bless God than if he had been kept out of the den; to be in the midst of lions, and to see their mouths muzzled. So when we think of the evil of sin, and the terrible consequents of sin, and all this taken away by Christ, how will this commend our portion? how will we bless God for Jesus Christ? This is the fruit of sin, but 'there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Rom. viii. 1.

[2.] The consideration of the threatening will be an advantage to us to make us vigilant and watchful; when we see the danger we shall not be so secure. This is the argument by which Christ himself would convert Paul: Acts ix. 5, 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' It is a metaphor taken from a husbandman's goad or prick; wanton oxen, when they run against the goad, they do not hurt the goad, but themselves. So it will be dangerous for you, God's wrath will gore the soul. We should have this goad and prick before our eyes; and this will make us watchful. Solomon saith, Prov. i. 17, 'Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.' Birds, when they see the snare, will not venture upon the bait; and so, when we see the danger and consider the sad consequences of sin, it will make the soul to be the more careful; we will not dally with sin, and grow so bold with God and his cause.

[3.] It is an excellent means to strengthen us against carnal fear. The fear of man is apt to prove a snare, Prov. xxv. 24. Solomon spake it, and many of the servants of God have found it so. It was fear that made Abraham deny his wife, and it was fear that made

Peter deny his master. Now there is no way to cure the fear of man but by presenting the fear of God. Look, as Aaron's rod devoured the rods of the magicians, and as the stronger nail drives out the weaker, so doth the fear of God drive out the fear of man. What is the ground of all carnal compliance? We fear man's power, and presume of God's mercy; a slight belief is given to the threatenings of God, and we think the wrath of man is more to be feared than the wrath of God. The only cure will be to consider that there are no terrors to those which faith represents; therefore holy persons always used this remedy to drive out the fear of man by the fear of God. It is said 'The midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them,' Exod. i. 17; and the Holy Ghost prescribeth this remedy, Isa. viii. 12. 13, 'Fear not their fear, nor be afraid, but sanctify the Lord God of hosts in your hearts, and make him your fear and your dread.' The prophet speaks against those that would cry up a confederacy with them that cry up a confederacy: that would yoke themselves in combination with the public enemies of God. Oh, think of the terrors of the Lord, and that will quell and allay all the terrors of men. So our Saviour: Luke xii. 4, 'Be not afraid of them that can but kill the body. But I will warn you whom you should fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell.' The terrors of the Lord, and the threatenings of the Lord, they are the cure against the terrors of men. Better all the world your enemy than God. We live longer with God than we do with men; he can kill body and soul.

[4.] The threatenings of the word are necessary to be propounded to our faith, to check indulgence to carnal pleasure. Pleasure and delight are dear bought if they cannot be compassed but with the danger of our souls; and therefore there is no way to counterbalance delight but by fear, to consider the wrath of God that shall come upon every sinner: 2 Peter ii. 10, 'But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness.' Whoever escape they are sure to be punished; there is bitter judgment for these sweet pleasures.

Use 1. Here is counsel to the children of God, not only to take a view of the land of promise, but it is good sometimes to take a view of the land of darkness; they should not only reflect upon the promises, but the threatening; it is profitable, though less pleasing.

Quest. Here ariseth a case, Whether or no the children of God, those especially that have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, and have a sense of the favour of God, whether they may make use of the threatening and terrors of the Lord or no? I answer to this affirmatively; they may, and they must, and shall prove it by several reasons.

1. It is a part of the Spirit's discipline, necessary because of the remainders of corruption, and the Holy Ghost makes use of every advantage. There are some corruptions that will bear down all milder arguments, that will not be restrained by any calm motives. You had as good discourse with the rough wind as hope to charm the rage of lusts with the soft and comfortable words of the grace, mercy, and kindness of God; therefore it is good to propound terrors. The apostle Paul, though he were a sanctified and chosen vessel, yet he saw a need of making use of the terrors of the Lord. It is true, he saith, 2 Cor. v. 14, the love of Christ constrained him. The great motive of

obedience was the love of God. But he makes use of the other argument: ver. 10, 'Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.' It was the terror of the Lord which made him so faithful in his work against all the disadvantages he met withal in the world. Sometimes it is necessary we should stand in the way of a furious lust with a flaming sword. The children of God find all methods little enough to break the force of a boisterous inclination.

2. Because the wrath of God is the proper object of fear, yea, the highest object. The wrath of man is the object of fear; therefore much more the wrath of God. The apostle saith, Rom. xiii. 3, 'That rulers are a terror to evil-doers;' much more should the wrath of God and destruction from the Almighty be a terror to them; Ps. xc. 11, 'Who knows the power of thine anger? according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.' Affections may lawfully be exercised about their proper objects without sin. Fear was planted in us for this very purpose; and grace doth not abolish nature, but regulate it; as Joshua made the Gibeonites to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, so grace serves our natural affections. Indignation and fear are good for the uses of the sanctuary, for the expulsion and extermination of sin; indignation against ourselves for sins committed, and fear for the prevention of sin.

3. We may make use of the Spirit's argument without sin. Usually men, instead of being over-spiritual, grow over-carnal. Terrors and threatenings are propounded to us to drive us from sin, even to men that are assured of God's love. Though we have an indefeasible right in the great inheritance, yet we must look upon the Lord 'as a consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29. The Lord would help our infirmity this way. This argument is of most force, because the Spirit of God argues and discourseth in the heart of believers just as he argues in the scripture; now, thus the Spirit argues in the scripture, and therefore the word of God is called 'The sword of the Spirit,' Eph. vi. 17. In all your inward combats, or the civil wars of the soul, the renewed heart makes use of scripture arguments; and in scripture, as God encourageth with love, so he aweth with threatening.

4. The threatenings are a part of the object of faith, and therefore they may be used. They are propounded to be believed as well as the promises; and you should as surely consider God will condemn the wicked and impenitent as save them that believe and repent; and as there should be a closing with and loving the promise, so a trembling at the threatening; it is a note of God's children, Isa. lxvi. 2, 'They tremble at his word.'

5. I prove it from the example of the saints; and surely they were not under a lower dispensation than we are. Job bridled and curbed the excesses of his power and greatness hereby, for saith he, Job xxxi. 23, 'Destruction from God was a terror to me.' Men in great places have shrewd temptations to oppress: Oh, but, saith he, I dare not, because of God's terrors. So Noah was warned by God, and out of fear of the threatening prepared the ark. So Paul, he mortified and kept down his body, 'Lest,' saith he, 'I should be a cast-away,' 1 Cor. ix. 27. We cannot pretend to a higher dispensation than Job, Paul, and other holy persons, as if they were but novices in the school of Christ. Your undaunted courage is to be suspected. Sin is not less

rooted in us than it was in Paul, or less dangerous to us; neither are we more skilful than holy Paul: the devil is as subtle and our corruptions are as strong as ever.

6. The promises will be the better relished when we reflect upon the threatening; the bitterness of the threatening makes us to relish the sweetness of the promise. God is therefore the most desirable friend, because he is the most dreadful adversary. Look, as the sight of the Red Sea and the floating Egyptians, when they were drowned there, moved the Israelites to praise God; so when we consider the curse wherewith wicked men are overwhelmed, it is a great argument to quicken and stir us up to praise. Solomon would have us view the field of the sluggard. The brambles and briers that grow in the sluggard's field commend diligence; and so look upon the portion of wicked men—the snares, and brimstone, and horrible tempest, which is the portion of their cup: this commends our portion in Christ, and makes the promises more sweet.

Use 2. Direction how we are to use the threatening.

1. When you consider the threatening, let the punishment of loss be more terrible to you than the pain; I mean, let separation from God work more upon you, than your own misery and distress: 'Depart from me' is worse than 'eternal fire.' It is the greatest evil that can fall upon creatures to be separated for ever from the chiefest good. I press this, partly because nature will reflect upon its own pain, but grace counts the loss of God the chiefest misery. The wicked will think this no punishment to depart from God; they excommunicate, and cast God out of their company now—'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,' Job xxi. 14. And partly, because such considerations will be of great use; they that prize communion with God will be afraid to lose him by their sins; for they thus argue, this will work a divorce between me and my God. Look upon the privative part of the threatening rather than the positive part of it; 1 Cor. ix. 27, 'I keep under my body,' saith the apostle 'lest I be a castaway.' The main thing he feared was to be cast out of the favour of God, and lose the fellowship of God.

2. Consider the threatening, so as to weaken security, not to weaken faith. There is a great deal of difference between these two; we are not to weaken the certainty of faith, but the security of the flesh. It is good for christians to observe what is the issue and result of their fear, and of their reflections upon the threatenings, torment, or caution: 1 John iv. 18, 'Fear hath torment in it;' that is, slavish fear; but godly fear makes us more wary in our walking with God; it makes us more circumspect, but not less comfortable. Though there may be assurance to escape damnation, yet still there is care to avoid sin: this is the godly fear. Now to do that, you must consider God's ordination of punishment is with a supposition; that is, if I go on in a carnal course, then my end will be death, and I shall be undone for ever. It is with an 'if,' propounded to the children of God: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' If it be possible that a man in Christ could live after the flesh, it is as possible and safe to conclude he should die for ever. So the apostle, Gal. vi. 8, 'If ye sow to the flesh, ye shall of the flesh reap corruption.' Where there is sin in the

seed, there will be a curse in the crop; not as if the children of God were actually to expect eternal death, but to look upon it as the proper demerit of sin, and so to depart from it.

3. The children of God should reflect upon the sad consequences of sin in the present life: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.' God hath still a bridle upon them. Though you are exempted from eternal death, yet your pilgrimage may be made very uncomfortable; you may feel the anguish of conscience, and be humbled by spiritual desertion, and lose and forfeit the sense of your joys and spiritual consolation; you may stand under a spiritual excommunication; that is, by being separated from the comfort of the covenant, and cast out of the actual fruition of God's favour, and be under much anguish of conscience, which is a spiritual part of discipline. A disobedient child may be whipped, though he be sure not to be disinherited; so God hath sore and bitter afflictions to lay upon you; he hath other evils besides damnation to bring on you.

4. The times when you should use this argument are these. When lusts are boisterous, it is good to oppose these stronger and more terrible motives of the terrors of the Lord; and when you are slack and remiss in the work of the Lord. When oxen do not labour, the husbandman useth the goad; when you begin to wax wanton and careless, it is good to use this spur—when we begin to grow deaf, slack, and cold in the work of God. So in the time of special temptation, when the fear of man is like to prove a snare, as Solomon saith, Prov. xxix. 25, say, I know the terrors of the Lord, and what a dangerous thing it is to please men, and to engage omnipotency against me. So after grievous offences, the children of God, when they foully sin, do not only lose their peace but their tenderness; therefore this will enforce them to run for their pardon.

Secondly, I come to the strength and force of Noah's faith, intimated in these words—'Of things not seen as yet—περὶ τῶν μηδέπω βλεπομένων—of things that by no means could be seen; not any way liable to the judgment of sense; by which the apostle means the tidings of the deluge and the manner of his own preservation in the ark, which were things strange, full of difficulty to be done, and likely to be entertained with the scoff and opposition of the world; yet he prepared an ark. To instance, either in the flood or ark. For the flood: never such a thing had been before, therefore it was more difficult to be believed, there being no precedent; for the world was but newly created, and it seemed unlikely to the men of that age that God would destroy it presently; besides, this judgment was to come after many years. By the grant of God himself they had the respite of a hundred and twenty years, and all others besides Noah were utterly secure; yet, though he had but the naked word of God, he believed. Then for his own gracious preservation, the means was by an ark, which was an improbable and incredible way of safety, as the flood was of the world's ruin: for the ark was made like a grave, or coffin, or sepulchre, wherein Noah for some months was to be buried, rather than preserved, without the comfort of light or fresh air; there was he with the cattle and all kinds of living creatures for many days. And besides, it was of

that vast frame, that it was one hundred and twenty years a preparing, as appears by that of the apostle, 1 Peter iii. 20, 'The long-suffering of God waited all the while that the ark was a preparing.' Certainly a work of so great receipt must needs be of vast expense and charge, and take up a great deal of time to fit the matter, and to gather together all the species and kinds of living creatures. And it was a work that was like to meet with many mocks and scoffs in the world. Noah seemed to them, as one of our chronicles tells us, of one that out of a dread of a great flood built a house upon a high hill; so the wicked of that age, they looked upon Noah as a vain person, mocked and laughed at the design every day; he had a thousand discouragements, yet, being moved with fear, he prepared an ark. Now these things being so remote from sense, and only certain in God's word, it shows the great force and virtue of his faith, to be persuaded of the world's ruin, and his own preservation.

Doct. That it is the property of faith to be moved by such things as are not liable to sense.

The reasons are these—

1. Because when things are seen and known, there is no room for faith: Rom. viii. 24, 'Hope that is seen is not hope.' Hope there is put for the object—things hoped for; they are no more objects of hope when seen. Faith giveth over its work when we once come to fruition and view. When the sun is up, we feel the warm influences of it; we cannot be said so properly to believe it, as to feel it and know it. If we were in a dungeon we might believe one that tells us the sun shines, but when we see the glittering light it is otherwise. The elect, after the resurrection, cannot properly be said to believe the articles of faith, because faith and hope then ceaseth, and love only remains. Faith and sense are opposed, 2 Cor. v. 7, 'We walk by faith, not by sight.' Here things that are propounded to us, the glory of God in heaven and the reigning of the saints, they are not matters of sight and present sense and apprehension. In heaven it is quite contrary; there we have sight, but no faith; but here we walk by faith, and not by sight.

2. There is no trial in things that are seen, for all objects of sense force an impression upon us; we cannot choose but fear; when sense feels wrath, it is a judicial impression. There is none fears more than wicked men when wrath comes; they fear not wrath in the word, and wrath in the threatening, but wrath in the providence makes them to tremble: Isa. xxxiii. 14, 'The sinners in Sion are afraid; fearfulness surpriseth the hypocrite.' It is no exercise of faith, but a judicial impression. So the apostle saith—'The devils believe and tremble,' James ii. 19; because they are under their actual punishment, they cannot do otherwise. This is the difference between the godly and the wicked; the one trembles at the judgment, the other trembles at the threatenings—'He trembles at the word,' Isa. lxvi. 2. Wicked men do not consider the threatening, till, by all circumstances of providence, it is ready to be accomplished. The wicked tremble in hell, or at the hour of death; but the godly tremble in the church at the word of God. So did those in Noah's time, when they ran from the bottom of houses to the top, from thence to trees, from trees to mountains, but Noah trembled when God did but speak of these things. Feeling is left for the next life.