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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham  
at Galeed Chapel Brighton  
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ACTS 19 V 20

"So mightily grew the Word of God and  
prevailed"

By the space of two years the Apostle Paul preached in the city of Ephesus. On arriving there he found twelve men who had been baptised, but only to the baptism of John. Preaching Jesus Christ to them, they were convinced that their baptism was not right, and so they were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus. The preaching of the Apostle was so efficacious, so successful, under the blessing of God, that great disputes arose, and much disturbance. Luther used to say that if the preaching of the gospel did not cause trouble, it troubled him. If we were not so pleased with a respectable religion, if we were not so blighted by the absence of God, if the ministry were made more gracious, and God were more in it, signs would follow. The days are solemn in which we are living, and one of the most grievous signs of the times to me is this, the absence of God from the church, and the little efficacy that attends the ministry. But in Ephesus it was otherwise; God gave witness to the preaching of Jesus Christ, and His resurrection, and great grace rested upon the ministry, and great effects followed. Some were so powerfully dealt with that they were exceedingly like Paul himself in their singleness of heart, and desire. He tells us, of himself, that he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, and so did these Ephesians, these Ephesian Christians, for many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together and burnt them before all men, and they counted the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. They were not all ploughmen whom the Lord called then. There were evidently scholars, sorcerers, people who used witchcraft, who bewitched the people, and had various ways of obtaining wealth. But now Christ had come, and in them was exemplified the word of the Apostle in the second epistle to the Corinthians, where he says - "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds;

casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." They were Christians, every thought captivated and chained to Christ. How do we stand if we look at that, and test ourselves by that?

Then come the words of the text. "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed." I see in this word a line of truth, a great effect, an experience, and a result.

First of all there is an effect, namely that the Word of God grew and prevailed. Probably these Ephesians, until now, had never heard of the living God, that no part of the Holy Scripture had ever reached them. The "Word" here then means the preaching of the Apostle, who preached the Word of God, stated, declared the things respecting Deity, respecting His claims on man, respecting the fall of man, respecting the recovery of the church from the fall by Jesus Christ. This was the Word of God that these Ephesians listened to, the Word of God which entered powerfully into their hearts, which took possession of their consciences; a word of which they were not able to withstand, against which all the powers of intellect, of prejudice, of ignorance, of enmity, of false religion, of false worship, all the zeal of men in seeking to set up and maintain their gods of gold; against these things the Word of God came and was as a hammer to break these in pieces, as saith the Lord - Is not My Word like a hammer to break the rock in pieces? Is it not like a fire to burn up the rubbish of creature religion and goodness? This was a great truth, an indubitable effect in the hearts of these men that God's holy Word, preached by His anointed servant, the Apostle Paul, came and prevailed. Nothing could resist it, and no matter how covetous some of these men may have been, no matter how their eyes had looked on the wealth in those books, no matter how much they would wish to preserve that wealth in those books, the Word came against all, and they were willing to be made poor men in respect of their former wealth, for the Word of God had come and broken into shivers Diana of the Ephesians, and burnt to a cinder their own foolish, wicked religion, and had brought them as sinners, lost, and guilty, to the feet of the Lord Jesus, and they were clothed, and in their right mind. This is the effect in the text. And was it ever an effect

in you? Did ever the Word of God come down upon you like a hammer? Did it ever enter your hearts like a fire? the hammer to break, the fire to consume. O then you were brought to deal with God as the effect of His dealing with you. You were brought to feel the vanity of all created good, the wickedness of all natural religion, religion that takes the shape of idolatry, of criticism, of superstition, of spiritualism, and of all the systems of the whole world. They are all, to those who are born again, and to whom the Word of God comes, just wind, vanity, emptiness.

There is, in the second place, in the text an experience - not expressed, but we must infer this - an experience, as first, of the Word of God entering, and becoming spirit and life in these people. It turned them round. It made other men of them, gave them other views, new views of God, and also, and therefore, new views of themselves, of sin. It discovered sin to them. It brought them into what the Apostle speaks in the chapter which I just now read. For the Word of God is quick, living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul, and spirit, the joints, and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, in the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. And these Ephesians, and the sinners here who have had the same experience by the Word of God coming, entering into their hearts, felt they had to do with God. We have had to do with God. A very solemn thing. If a beggar were called to have personal dealings with the king of England, with the Emperor of India, what would he feel? But that would be only one creature having to deal with another creature. The difference would not be in nature, but situation. But here is a difference in nature; the holy God, and a creature, sinful. And the creature is summoned, he is summoned into the presence of God in his conscience. Summoned to the bar of God's justice to hear - O with what tingling ears does he listen to the indictment read out to him - he is fallen, he has enmity to God and goodness. He is an enemy, he is ignorant, he is an idolator. He is, in some ways, drunken, in some ways burnt with lust, in some ways puffed with pride. In all ways he is wrong, and he has to do with God. It is not whether he will or no. There it is, he has to do with God. He is brought face to face, if I may use such a word, with Deity - veiled in a cloud, it is true, for a

creature cannot see Him and live - yet face to face with God. A solemn experience this. The Word comes and lays hold of the conscience and, as it were, carries it into court. Comes and lays hold of the soul, and carries it before God. The sinner trembles, and fears exceedingly, because how can he deal with God? How can he think of dwelling with everlasting burnings? How can he come and reckon with God? His sins are innumerable, his guilt is deep, and black, he is dyed in it. He deserves hell; he feels it. I wish some of you might come into this experience. "So mightily grew the Word of God". Not in the number of letters, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. Not in so many syllables being multiplied, but in the Word of God affecting the conscience, being spirit and life, making the sinner know Christ's words when he meets with them - "The flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing, penetrating, pervading, all-pervading. Mercifully, we do not see all that is in our hearts. The hideous thing, a fallen human heart, is only opened by degrees. Some of us who are old, and have been in the ways of God some years, can say this, that what we knew at the beginning about sin is as nothing compared with what we know now. It has been so often - turn again, look deeper, dig deeper, think more, look more into what you are. The Word of God comes as life. This is vastly different from holding it in your hand and admiring it, or admiring it in its diction, and its noble sentiments, as men speak. It is finding it to be the very Word of God in you, talking to you, telling you things you must listen to, teaching you lessons you would fain not hear at all, nor learn, and which, when you have a little learnt you would like to forget after the flesh, but there it is, God is determined with His children and the Word brings them before Him. I wish those of you who are under this tuition may not be allowed to get away from it at all. The evil day is such that if you get away from this, though you may fear God, who can say how far your silly hearts will carry you in the ways of vanity.

Secondly, the experience is this, namely, that the Word comes as a word of light. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple." And it is a beautiful light. Men living in it come to say with Solomon - "Truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun", for the light

that comes is the light of life. It comes from the sun of righteousness; it is a directing light; it directs the feet into the way of peace. It tells the sinner that Christ is the Friend of sinners, that He is a High Priest in heaven interceding, that His blood can cleanse the blackest soul, and wash away each stain; that His righteousness can justify the ungodly that believeth in Jesus; that His intercession is prevalent with God, and all for whom He speaks a word of intercession must come well through their sinfulness, and their troubles, and all afflictions. It is a beautiful light; it penetrates - but not so fiercely as to frighten - it penetrates so gently that it is what God has expressed in other terms - "My doctrine shall drop as the rain and My speech shall distil as the dew". That is how it comes. It softly penetrates; it tells a sinner that, though he is vile, there is no cause of despair since Christ is the Friend of sinners. It tells him where to go in his troubles, on whom to cast his burden, to whom to direct his petitions, on whom to wait for mercy. You who have had this know how sweet it is, how timely, how wonderful, how effectual it is in the soul, and it prevails. As the hammer prevails against the rock, as the fire prevails against all that is combustible in a poor sinner, so this beautiful light prevails against the heavy fears, the dismay, the sinkings, the questioning whether such and such sins can be subdued, and forgiven. It comes and tells the sinner that Christ's precious blood can wash away each stain, and that a sinner in Christ is, as before the Lord, as Christ is. "As He is, so are we in this world" So that this light falls softly, and has the sweetest effect; the benefit of it can never be adequately expressed. And this brings a man away from empty notions about Christ, and carries him into a sacred knowledge of Christ. It brings him into a gracious communion with Christ, into intimacy with Christ, into a perception that however vile he is in himself, in Christ he is viewed as complete, and as without blame, or spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. So it tells him not to fear; it prevails against his fears; it prevails against his weakness. It prevails mightily; it grows in him. One word from heaven dropped into the heart is like a stone dropped into a river; the circle at first is small, but each circle widens, and widens until the banks are reached. So a word falling from God into the heart widens in itself. The influence increases in its sweetness, and it is efficacious, so that, for the time being, the sinner says, I am

completely blest. Christ is his Friend, his Elder Brother, his Lord, his God, his Saviour. He enters a little into the sweetness of the word - "Bringing into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ". He does not want another Lord. He can humbly say, and does say, "O, Lord, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us. They are dead" That is what he feels for the moment. "They are dead, they shall not rise." They are extinct, have no more power. And bless God for such an experience as that. The Word of God grew mightily. It put down Diana of the Ephesians. It showed to the people her hideousness, her falseness. It showed to them the wickedness of worshipping her. It brought them to worship the Lord Jesus, the Almighty God. You may have had your god in a safe. You may have had your god in your pleasures, in this, and in that, but Jesus Christ coming becomes your God, and these lose all their beauty for the time, and you worship Him. You are like the man whose eyes Jesus Christ opened and whom Jesus met after he was cast out of the synagogue, and said - "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Said he in reply - "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" and Christ said - "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee" and he fell down, and worshipped Him. And that is just what you will do when the word comes with power. "Our gospel came unto you not in word only but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." It prevails. O, it prevails against ignorance. As light entering this chapel scatters darkness, so Christ, the true light of life, coming into a sinner's heart scatters his ignorance. He may have said a minute before, who is the Lord Jesus? How shall I know Him? How shall I know that He is God? that He is Man? that these two are not two persons, but one Person? Know that His blood can cleanse the blackest soul, and know that His righteousness justifies, and beautifies? How shall I know these things? And the answer is in a moment in your soul. You can say

Yes, now I know 'tis He, 'tis He!  
'Tis Jesus, God's dear Son,  
Wrapt in humanity, to die  
For crimes that I had done! (950)

Is not it wonderful when the Lord speaks a living word, speaks the blessed gospel of the grace of God? It prevails against ignorance;

it prevails against all the prejudice that the heart had felt, and entertained against Christ, against an absolute justification without the works of the sinner, and the sinner now says, Why, I am thankful to be plunged into the debt of sovereign grace; thankful that the Lord has looked upon me, and I wonder that He should do so while He passes by so many. It prevails against worldliness. You will do with your worldliness sometimes in your heart what these men did with their valuable books - burn them - and you will say honestly in God's sight

Let worldly minds the world pursue,  
It has no charms for me;  
Once I admired its trifles too,  
But grace has set me free. (1100)

and you will have fellowship with that godly man and servant of God, the Apostle Paul, who, reckoning his privileges, both of birth, and education, and in religion, said he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He counted these but dung and dross that he might win Christ, and be found in Him, not having his own righteousness. You will go along with him, and when you know these things you will say with him, I have not attained. "Not as though I had already attained, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." That will be your spirit when the word of God prevails, and the pursuits that you have loved, the pursuits that have loved in your heart, and in which you have lived, and found pleasure; the things that you hugged and felt at one time you could not, would not, part with; they are gone. For the moment they are all gone, and you say, they are nothing to me. I have one better, and greater, and sweeter, and more delightful, and more beautiful, and wonderful than the whole world, and now may it be mine to live near to Him, to be intimate with Him, to receive communications from Him, and to walk with Him in white. May it be given to me not to defile my garments, not to disgrace His Name, not to bring dishonour upon the profession of religion that I make. The word prevails. It prevails against care, against drunkenness, and surfeiting of care. How free the mind is sometimes. How the eye is

taken from the barrel and the cruise. The barrel may be all but empty, the cruise all but dry, but the eye is taken from them both, and fixed on Him who multiplied the meal and the oil in them. Yes, Christ by Peter said - "Casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you". God said - Cast your care and your burden on the Lord: He shall sustain you. "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it". My doctrine shall be honey and the honeycomb to you, and My goodness, and My power, and My wisdom, these, these shall see to it that you do not lack any good thing. The light shows you a full God, and a full Christ, for all the emptiness that you have, either in your soul, or in your circumstances. A full Christ, full of wisdom, and therefore there can be no contingencies with Him. Full of power, therefore there can be no accidents and no mishaps with Him. Full of goodness, and therefore there can be no starving of His people. Full of love, so that He shall never cease to love the objects of His grace. What a God the word discovers sometimes. And then, when it is such a word to us, we do not look at the Scripture with the eye of a critic, but with the eye of faith, and so these are the very words of the living God, and this Scripture has been made good to us, spirit and life in us. It prevails against unbelief, little faith is encouraged, trembling feet, and feeble knees, and weak hands, are strengthened, and confirmed by the Word of God, and the sinner can say

March on my soul, march boldly on

Can say, I see the track, I see the path the Lord Jesus Himself went, and that path I, myself, desire to tread. It prevails, this blessed Word of God, against all the unbelief of the heart that would say, you will never get there.

It prevails against legality. Legality is a mighty enemy, and were not the Lord mightier what would become of us. Legality says, well you ought not to think of getting a blessing in this state. You ought not to think the Lord will do anything for you, seeing you are so hard, and so wicked. But says Christ, I am the Good Shepherd and I gave My life for the sheep. And says the Holy Ghost, by the Apostle Paul - "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus". This is the Scripture, and this is the word which, coming in the power of the Eternal Spirit, prevails against

legality, and tells a sinner that nothing, no, not one thread of human goodness shall ever be tacked on to the righteousness of Christ. That justification is an absolute, an eternal act of God, and is in, and by, the alone righteousness of Jesus Christ.

It prevails against guilty fears. When a poor backslider goes again to the throne of God's heavenly grace it prevails, because it tells him that there is a fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness, and that all the newly contracted guilt and defilement, whereby the sinner has been shut out for the time from the Lord's presence, shall be removed by that precious blood which the Lord Jesus so freely shed, and his fears of being cut off are graciously removed, and his soul walks at comfortable liberty with God.

It prevails against the prayerlessness that is so natural to us, that creeps over us sometimes. It calls us to the throne of grace. Yes, it says - "Open thy mouth wide", come with large petitions, bring your every case, your fears, your dismay, your sinkings, your frettings, your murmurings; bring them all, bring them all. And the word so effectually works that the sinner says - "I give myself unto prayer". He rejoices in the truth that prayer is neither local, nor vocal, that it is the Spirit's breathing in the heart, whereby petitions are born, and grow, and multiply, and ascend to heaven perfumed with the infinite incense, the infinitely meritorious death of the Lord Jesus, and the sinner sees that the sins of his prayers do not stand in the way of their acceptance with God. The sins of his petitions are removed because the Lord Jesus presents them in His Own infinite merit. Prayer is no task sometimes - I speak to some who know the truth of that - it is no task. It is not because conscience lashes you, and tells you to try, saying you have neglected the throne of grace - that is painfully true - it is not conscience saying, you will get nothing if you ask; not because God in the Covenant has said "For these things will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do them for them". No, it is not that. It is a heavenly attraction, a full Saviour attracting an empty sinner; a liberal God attracting a beggar; a merciful Lord drawing a miserable sinner to Himself, so if the sinner is on his bed, and the night watches are prevented, he is praying. If he is walking about he is praying. If he is sitting at table with his family, his heart is up to God. It is an influence, a

prevailing of the word, of the truth, of the gospel, and the opening out by the Spirit to the soul some of the beauties, and rays and suitableness, and greatness, and gentleness of the Lord Jesus, and it prevails. Prevails against inconsistencies at times. Every new-born soul has implanted within the clean fear of God, but sin is very mighty, and inconsistencies crop up. As in a field you may be walking through sometimes here and there is an outcrop of stone - you cannot prevent it - so there is suddenly an outcrop of some sin that you seem unable to resist, and even, through nature's vileness, for the moment unwilling to resist. And now the Lord comes with His word, and that precious thing, like those valuable books, has to be burnt, and you come, in the guiltiness of your soul, in the weakness of your resistance, and in your natural unwillingness to resist, you come in, and with them all, to the fountain of the Saviour's merit, and want again to be washed. You look sometimes with weeping eyes on your loose profession, on your poor, ragged condition. You are very much like the publican needing mercy, and like the prodigal coming with shame, and rags, and hunger, wondering what reception you will meet, and you are astonished to find that you are met with a kiss, that you are entertained with the fatted calf, that you are blessed with a change of raiment, and have the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace given to you, and a ring of assurance put on your finger, so that you say, this is my Father's house, and I will live here always. This is my Father's feast, and I would eat, and delight myself in fatness. This is my Father's love, and I revel in it. I would live here always. The word prevails, prevails against sin. It is a great mercy to be enabled to walk consistently, and to honour that profession we make of the living God.

It is sometimes a word of promise that comes, and a promise given out to a sinner is nothing less than God pledging Himself to that sinner. He pledges His fullness, He pledges His wisdom, He pledges His power, and His faithfulness is involved in a promise. O, if you have had but one promise out of this Book put into your heart in the light, and life, and power of the Holy Ghost, one blessed Scripture made yours, heaven is yours. God has wrapped up His character and connected it with you in that word. He said to Moses, when Israel greatly provoked Him, that He feared what the enemy would say if He destroyed that provoking nation. What would the enemy say if a saint

fell finally? What would the enemy say if some in this chapel did not reach heaven? Why, even some of you would be most woefully disappointed, would you not, for you have been made sure of it, as I hope I may say of myself. O, but what of God's character? Does not the word prevail sometimes, and say to you, you will go to heaven. And does it enable you to say

Yes, I to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given (340)

And has not your faith sometimes taken the token that God has bestowed upon you and said, Whose is this, Lord? Jacob did. He said to the Lord, in trouble, when his life was threatened, Thou didst say, I will be with thee; Lord, do come, for I am in trouble. Ah, a word of promise is a fortifying word to the mind, a strengthening word to faith, an enlightening, and enlivening word, when it comes in the sweetness of the Spirit. The sinner says, this is God's blessed word, a word to me. And I will say here that the word sometimes is like a beautiful prospect set before the view of faith, the eye of faith; a beautiful prospect. If you look to the earth it is just what Isaiah says; you see nothing but dimness, and darkness of anguish. Look at your circumstances; they are all change. Look at your substance; it may be made liquid tomorrow, and fly from you. Look at yourself, a dying creature. O, but when the Lord sets before you this prospect - "Where I am there shall My servant also be" - and you get a glimpse of the land that is very far off, and of the King in His beauty; you see the Lord Jesus in His two natures, and His complex Person; you see Him perhaps as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, whose merit makes you acceptable; as the Intercessor, whose intercession prevails; as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, whose power is engaged on your behalf; as the Wisdom of God, who therefore will guide you through all the mazes and difficulties of providence, and all your sinfulness; then you say, I would not live always. And if you are old, and grey-headed, and this prospect is set before you, you find it perhaps very difficult to repress the wish to go quickly and be where Jesus is, and where there is no sin, no foolishness, no hindering devil, no blighting corruption. Where He is with all His chosen ones; He, in the midst of them, giving them light, and glory, and satisfaction out of Himself. Where He is in the midst of the throne of

God. Where the Father is, and where the Seven Spirits of God are. Where the Trinity is. This is what the word does sometimes. It sets before the soul a beautiful prospect which is far from us. It is the land which is very far off. It is the land where the King is in His beauty. It prevails.

There are many ways in which the word comes and prevails in the Lord's people, but these are just the things that, for the moment, come to my mind, and which I speak to you in weakness. May the Lord raise them up in power in your hearts,

And this word may be made a very penetrating word, and certainly one would say it is the desire of all honest people to examine themselves and see whether they be in the faith, and ask themselves the important question - Did the word ever come and produce this experience? Did it ever say anything to me about God, and about myself? About my ruin, and about Christ as the Saviour?

Let us look now, very briefly, in the third place, at the effect. There is a result. Said the Lord, by Isaiah - The men who are Christ's are for signs and wonders (Isaiah 8 v 18). They are to be the sect everywhere spoken against (Acts 28 v 22). They are not of the world now; they are taken out of it. Though they are in it, they are taken out of it. "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world" If you make a profession of religion, and yet always live as you lived before you made a profession, what are you? A painted hypocrite. If the Lord has done something for you, if His word has been made effectual in you, then in some measure you answer to that word in the Hebrews - "Let us go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach". That is Christ, the Altar. "We have an altar", and, says Paul, let us go forth unto Christ who is that Altar whereof all believers have a right to eat, bearing His reproach. You will become then wondered at. Perhaps your family will wonder at you. You used to do so and so; you used to say such and such things; you used to follow this and that pleasure; why have you given all up? The word of God has done it in the power of the Eternal Spirit. You used to take pleasure in such and such pursuits. Why is your back turned on them now? The word of God has done it; it prevails. Nature says, I want my own way; I would like to go where I used to go, and to be what I used

to be. Nature - "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" and you will never make anything else of it. Do not try to mould nature into religion. Rather beg of God to subdue it, to subdue your iniquities, and to grant that the beauty of sovereign grace, the efficacy of the Spirit's work, and the blessedness of the word of God, may be reflected in your conversation, that you may answer to that word - "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall change our vile body, that it might be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." (Philippians 3 v 20/21) We read in the Romans that the Jews did not attain to the law of righteousness. "Wherefore?", asks the Apostle. Because they sought it, as it were, by works and not by faith. But the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. (Romans 9 v 30/31/32). And this, in the same Epistle is called, "submitting to the righteousness of Christ". And when one is brought to that, can he walk with darkness and with the world? What saith the Scripture to the saints? "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing". "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" What union is there between light and darkness? So if the word has come to us at all in its gracious power by the Holy Spirit, what unions it proclaims we shall have, what practices it enjoins we shall desire to be found in. What paths it opens up we shall wish our feet to be in. He is no Christian who walks altogether as the world walks. The world lieth in wickedness, and the world is the enemy of God. "Whosoever" says the Apostle John "will be a friend of this world is an enemy of God", and surely a gracious person says, Lord do not let me be one of Thy enemies. Make me a friend, and condescend to call me a friend and, being a friend of Thine, do communicate to me what a friend communicates to a friend. I speak the truth in this, for Christ said to His disciples - Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends, for all things whatsoever the Father has said unto Me I have made known unto you.

"So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed. How many of you have been taken hold of by the word, dealt with? Have been smitten as with a hammer, pierced as by a sword, burnt as with a fire, brought to the footstool of mercy, and had your very thoughts brought into

captivity to the obedience of Christ. These are a few of the lessons that we may derive by God's mercy from this important word. Try yourselves by it; measure yourselves by it; place yourselves by the side of it, and see if, in any degree, you can answer to it.

AMEN.