The Works of Thomas Manton, D.D. Vol. XX.

by

Thomas Manton

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THE

WORKS OF THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

VOL. XX.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

VOLUME XX.

CONTAINING

SERMONS ON SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

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1874.

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SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS III. 7-21.

SERMON I.

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.—PHIL. iii. 7.

THE apostle having shown that he had greater cause of confidence and glorying in the flesh than any of the pretenders among the Judaising brethren, at least was not any whit inferior to them in outward privileges; here he showeth that since he had attained to the knowledge of Christ, he accounted these things not only unprofitable, but hurtful, ‘But what things were gain to me, those I accounted loss for Christ.

In the words we have a comparison of his judgment before his knowledge of Christ and after his knowledge of Christ.

1. Before his knowledge of Christ, gains, κέρδη, expressed plurally.

2. Loss afterwards.

Doct. That when the Spirit of God changeth a man’s judgment, those things which before conversion seemed to be gain to him will then be accounted loss.

So it was with Paul, and so it will be with all that are like Paul, yea, with all that are brought to the knowledge of Christ.

1. I shall explicate the point.

2. Confirm it.

[1.] In explicating the point, I shall show what those things were.

[2.] His esteem before and after conversion.

[3.] How it holdeth good in other cases in the conversion of others.

First, What are the things spoken of? He enumerateth six causes of carnal boasting—

1. ‘Circumcised the eighth day;’ admitted into the number of God’s people by circumcision, which was done precisely according to the law, not as a proselyte, but as a born Jew rightfully circumcised. Let that be the first privilege.

2. By nation an Israelite, born of a noble tribe of the Israelites, the tribe of Benjamin, ‘An Hebrew of the Hebrews.’ His stock was of Israel, God’s dear servant, and one of the best tribes, of Jacob’s beloved wife; not of the children of the bondwoman, of which tribe Saul was elected king, from whence probably our apostle had his name; of that tribe which with the tribe of Judah came to the house of David and the true worship of God at Jerusalem after the revolt of the ten tribes, and in whose territory the temple was situated.

3. ‘Hebrew of the Hebrews;’ of a family that was never mixed in blood by marriage with those of foreign nations.

4. ‘By sect a pharisee;’ of the strictest among the Jews, Acts xxvi. 5.

5. Zealous above the ordinary sort of the pharisees, instructed with a commission to persecute the christians, which gave him a reputation in the eyes of those who were zealous for the law.

6. External righteousness before men for legal observances; he never neglected any as long as he lived in that course. Well, then, here were church privileges, circumcision, and here was strictness, and zeal in that profession; and for him to renounce all the institutes of the religion in which he was born and bred, and to have a life free from scandal, this was much, if we consider the state of these things.

Secondly, His esteem of these things before and after conversion.

1. Before conversion, they were gain to him, partly as they might procure his esteem with men, and recommend him to the Judaising brethren. If they had cause to boast in these things, he had much more. And partly as to the favour of God, falsely esteeming them as much conducing to salvation.

2. After conversion, whatever he accounted them before, he is now taught better by the Holy Ghost—(1.) What he accounteth them; (2.) For what he accounteth them so.

[1.] What he accounteth them; ζημιѝα, a loss, that is to say, unprofitable and dangerous.

(1.) Worthless and unprofitable, because they could not effectuate what he depended upon them for; they could not give him any acceptation with God.

(2.) Dangerous and prejudicial to better things, as they might with draw him from the faith of Christ, or put him upon more labour and difficulty to renounce them. It is a matter of great difficulty for a man that hath great carnal privileges not to prize them and value them above the conscience of his duty to God. To excel in parts and privileges, and esteem in the world for a blameless conversation, and yet to prize the grace of Christ so as to leave all things for it, is very hard and difficult, and more hard than for those who have not like impediments.

[2.] For what. For Christ, for his sake, his laws and doctrines. Christ is to be sought and bought at any hand and rate: Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; and when he hath found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' Therefore whatever would keep him from embracing christian doctrine would be loss rather than advantage, however they commended him to men, and might procure him gain and honour, or in the judgment of an ill-guided conscience they might seem to commend him to God.

Thirdly, How it holdeth good in other cases, so as it may be of catholic use and profit to us now to imitate this example.

1. The examples of men of worth, who have incurred loss and difficulties in embracing the christian religion, are a great encouragement to godliness. Men that have not so much to lose or to deny for Christ may be sincere, but certainly it is a greater commendation to religion when those who can well enough make up their interests elsewhere are willing to sacrifice all their interests for Christ. Now these have this happiness above others, that they have something of value to esteem as nothing for Christ, and to commend religion to the world.

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2. It commendeth the worth of christianity to us. There are such huge advantages of being a christian, that those who have most to lose, and have best wisdom to judge, are content to be stript of all rather than miss Christ or lose Christ. Ἅτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη, 'what things were gain;' some by his Hebrew stock, his laudable sect, his great fame with his countrymen;' these made him an instance worthy to be produced to confirm the truth of the religion which he professed.

3. Such things will come to be denied by every one that will be a thorough serious christian. In any age there are the rabble of nominal christians, who stand only upon the legs of others, and have a christianity commended to them by the testimony of others and the sufferings of others who have lived before them; and as they are concerned in these things, have nothing but the name and the profession, but have not that constitution of heart or manner of conversation which will become christians. Briefly, then, there is a twofold conversion—one without the church, the other in the church.

[1.] Without the church, from paganism or a false religion to the true: 1 Thes. i. 9, ‘And how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God.’ Now in this conversion those who are so turned must deny their honour and credit with their party, and all the advantages they enjoyed thereby, as Paul did. So Vergerius, who was bishop of Justinople and nuncio to the pope, whilst he opposed the protestants, was conscious to the truth of their doctrine, and turned a reformed preacher among the Grisons.

[2.] Within the church, or in the bosom of christianity. So men are turned from profaneness to holiness, from formality to serious godliness. The one is spoken of Isa. i. 16, 17, ‘Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.’ And in many other places: ‘Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; why will ye die, O house of Israel?’ Ezek. xxxiii. 11; and Hosea vi. 1, ‘Come, let us return unto the Lord.’ And we are warned of the other: 2 Tim. iii. 5, ‘Having a form of godliness, but denying the power.’ They had a map and model of truth, yet deny the power thereof; suffer not this religion to prevail to subdue their hearts unto God. Briefly, then, these latter may either take pleasure in unrighteousness, or repose too much confidence in their supposed righteousness.

(1.) For the first, the words are applicable to them, that when the Spirit of God changeth their hearts, those things which were accounted gain will prove an apparent loss. Sin was formerly to them their delight, or the support of their credit and estate; they thought they could not live without it; but after grace received, they are convinced this was their bane, and shame, and trouble: Rom. vi. 21, ‘What fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.’ Now grace teacheth us to abandon the delights of the flesh, and to renounce the most pleasing and profitable sins, as judging them indeed to be loss to us.

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(2.) When we trust in a supposed righteousness, and for outward things neglect inward grace. As when, because of baptism or profession, or having high notions of an empty though a strict form, or mere civility and blameless conversation, we neglect faith, hope, and love, and that internal change which is necessary for those which are in Christ: 2 Cor. v. 17, ‘If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.’ Those things which men thought gain are nothing to the soul in regard of the new creature: Gal. vi. 15, ‘For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature;’ Gal. v. 16, ‘Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;’ 1 Cor. vii. 19, ‘Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.’ We may undergo the wrath of God notwithstanding all these things. But before the soul was touched with the sense of sin and deserved wrath, and a change wrought in the soul, God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness were contemned and little set by; but when we have a sensible and awakening knowledge of our great necessity, then we see that there is no full and solid satisfaction in order to

righteousness and salvation but only in, and by Christ; so that all things are as dung and dross, as trouble and loss, in comparison of the knowledge of him and the gain by him.

The reasons of the point.

1. From the state of those who are to be converted. There is in all Borne false and imaginary happiness, and some counterfeit righteousness, wherein they please themselves. The false happiness is as their god, and the counterfeit is as their Christ and mediator, and so they are secure and senseless; and till God open their eyes, they neither seek after another happiness, nor trouble themselves about the way whereby they may attain it. That men set up a false happiness in their natural estate needs not much proof; for ever since man fell from God he ran to the creature: Jer. ii. 13, 'My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' We left the fountain, and betook ourselves to the cistern; and if we can make a shift to patch up a sorry happiness here in the world apart from God, we care not for him, will not come at him: Jer. ii. 31, 'Wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?' Our pleasure, profit, and honour, that is our god; and while we enjoy these things without control, we look no further, but count ourselves well paid. Certainly we cannot seek our happiness in an invisible God, nor cannot wait for it to be enjoyed in an invisible world. The flesh must be pleased, and the more it is pleased we think it gain to us, and that so far we have profited. But for the second, that there is something which is instead of Christ to us, to keep the conscience quiet when our affections take up with present things. Our happiness is to satisfy our desires; our righteousness to allay our fears. Now here we run to a superficial religion, as if it would make us perfect as appertaining to the conscience. Here we fly to something external, which is diversified according to men's education. If pagans, to the ἔργον νόμου, the work of the law: Rom. ii. 15, law of nature; if Jews, to the observances of the law; if christians, to their baptism, or to the outward profession of some strict form without the power. And till God breaketh in upon us, and convinceth us of our mistakes, and those follies by which we delude ourselves, we think we have gained a great point if we have come under the form, though we have denied the power; for natural men, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, go about to establish their own righteousness, and will not submit to God's humbling way, Rom. x. 3, οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν. As long as he can make a shift without Christ, he is disregarded. Therefore now since this is the natural temper of man, the creature must be dethroned that God may be exalted; superficial righteousness must be lost, that Christ may be gained, that we may cordially accept God for our God, and Christ for our redeemer and saviour. Therefore we are dead to the law, that we might live unto God, Gal. ii. 19, with Rom. vii. 14.

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2. From the nature and parts of conversion. It is a turning from the creature to God, from self to Christ, from sin to holiness. Now in all these respects, many things which were formerly gain to us are found to be loss, impediments, and hindrances to our full conversion. Certain it is conversion consists in a turning from the creature to God; for when God is laid aside the creature hath our

hearts, and intercepts our love; and till we have another last end and chief good, we are carnal. If we love pleasures more than God, we are of the number of those that love themselves, 2 Tim. iii. 4. If we love the praise of men more than the praise of God, John xii. 43, how are we faithful to Christ? Therefore till we are inclined to God, turned to God more than to other things, there is no conversion. So for the second part; till turned from self to Christ, till we receive Christ by faith, we cannot come to God as the last end or chief good. So we come to Christ as the way to the Father, John xiv. 6. Christ alone is our way, by his merit taking off the legal exclusion, by his Spirit giving us a heart to come to God. Turning from the creature to God, and not by Christ, is no true turning. So believing in Christ, while the creature hath our hearts, is no true believing. Then there is a turning from sin to holiness. This followeth; for an inordinate love of the creature is sin, and love to God and delight to do the things that please him is holiness. We turn to God, not only as our happiness, but as our sovereign and lord. Therefore if we are fitted to obey him by the change of our natures, and do actually obey him by the change of our lives, then we are converts. Now supposing all those things (as they are evident and clear), it must needs follow that those things we formerly counted gain, when we are converted we count loss. Why? Because if we still idolise the creature we lessen God. If we exalt self, we despise or neglect the reconciling and renewing grace of the Redeemer. If we retain our love to sin, we abate of our care of holiness. If the creature be still our idol, how is God our God? If self-righteousness or superficial righteousness be still esteemed, how will Christ be precious to us? If sin be still our delight, holiness will be still our burden. Therefore if God be our God, and Christ our saviour and redeemer, prosperity, riches, credit, pleasure and honour, will be a sorry happiness, and counterfeit and superficial righteousness yield no solid peace to the conscience.

3. From the nature of the Spirit's enlightening.

[1.] That the Holy Ghost, in converting men to God and Christ, doth enlighten them, as well as turn their hearts and change their practice, is evident: Luke xxiv. 45, 'Then opened he their understandings.' Though a man hath an understanding, yet it needeth the Spirit's illumination: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light.' The eyes must be opened, that we may discern spiritual and heavenly things: Rev. iii. 18, 'And anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.' He proffereth eye-salve to the spiritually blind, that they may see and be directed in the ways of holiness. And David beggeth that his eyes may be opened: Ps. cxix. 18, 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.' And the apostle telleth us that when the Jews shall turn ix the Lord, the veil shall be taken from their hearts, 2 Cor. iii. 16, the veil of ignorance and prejudice. Surely it is a great advantage to see things in the lively light of the Spirit. So that in the general there must needs be a great change in men's judgments, as if they were opposite to themselves. What they counted happiness before they find a misery; what was gain, to be loss; what peace and life, to be death and torment to them.

[2.] That we have great benefit by this enlightening.

(1.) We know things more clearly, and have a spiritual discerning, without which, being blinded by the delusions of the flesh, we put darkness for light, and light for darkness. We think our misery to be our happiness, and our true and solid happiness to be our misery and bondage. The curse of our corrupt estate is an injudicious mind, and the blessing of our spiritual estate is a spiritual discerning, 1 Cor. ii. 14. A judicious discerning of the worth of things is the work of grace: 2 Cor. v. 16, 17, 'We know no man after the flesh; for whosoever is in Christ, is a new creature.' Knowing things after the flesh is one thing, and after the spirit is another. A new creature hath a new sight of things, looketh upon all things with a new eye; seeth more odiousness in sin, more excellency in Christ, more beauty in holiness, more vanity in the world, than ever before. When a man is changed, all things about him are changed. Heaven is another thing, earth is another thing. He looketh upon body and soul with another eye, and therefore hath another value and esteem of all things. His thoughts are changed about God, about self, about Christ, about sin, and misery by sin, and that superficial righteousness wherewith he contented himself before, and that true holiness which Christ requireth of him. He was wont to marvel why men did keep such a stir about sin; what harm was in it for a man a little to enlarge himself, and gratify his flesh with some forbidden pleasure? Misery out of Christ was another thing while he pleased himself in his counterfeit righteousness: Rom. vii. 9, 'For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' His estate seemed not so out of measure sinful, nor so intolerably dangerous; nor did he see why men made such a talk about Christ, and such ado to go to heaven. But when he is enlightened by the Spirit, his judgment is marvellously changed: 2 Peter i. 9, 'But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' He can now look into eternity, and see that other things are to be minded more than back and belly concerns. In short, he seeth his misery with other eyes, being anointed with spiritual eye-salve, Rev. iii. 17, 18; Mat. xiii. 9, 'For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' There is a sensible and awakening knowledge of our own great necessity. While we are heart-whole we care not for Christ. A true value and esteem of Christ as our remedy and ransom, not a cold and dead opinion: 1 Peter ii. 7, 'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.' A true sight of the happiness and blessedness offered to us: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.'

(2.) We know things with more certainty and firm belief. With more certainty: Acts ii. 36, 'Let the house of Israel know assuredly,' ἀσξαλῶς, safely; John xvii. 8, ἀληθῶς, surely; 'And have known surely that I came from thee;' John vi. 69, 'And we believe and are sure that thou art Christ the Son of the living God.' Things work not till they be received with a firm assent: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God,

which effectually worketh in them that believe.' God's authority breaketh in upon the heart with a convincing power.

(3.) We know things more seriously as we are awakened to a more attentive consideration. It is a great part of the Spirit's work, not only to enlighten the mind, but to awaken it: Acts xvi. 14, 'And a certain woman named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things spoken by Paul.' Many truths lie by, and are lost for want of consideration. Non-attendancy to spiritual and heavenly things is the ruin of the far greatest part of the world: Mat. xxii. 5, 'And they made light of it.' Men will not suffer their minds so long to dwell upon these things as to see what is true misery and happiness, what is gain, and what is loss; and then in seeing they see not, and in hearing they hear not; as when you tell a man of a business whose mind is taken up with other things. Many men have a sudden thought of their misery and happiness, but a glance cannot work a steady contemplation. When our sin is ever before us, when we have serious thoughts of Christ and his salvation, they work most powerfully with us. But most men, are never their own selves; have no time to think of God, and Christ, and heavenly things; and discontinuing the use, they lose in time the desire. Too many acquaintance in the world make them strangers to God. If they never sit alone to consider the necessity and worth of these things, how can they affect their hearts?

(4.) We know things with more efficacy and power; not only are mistakes discovered, but lusts subdued. Sin, grace, Christ, and eternity are of weight to move a rock, yet shake not the heart of the carnal professors, because they received the word of God in word only, and not in power. But when the gospel cometh in the Holy Ghost, it cometh in power, 1 Thes. i. 5. Where the apprehension is clear, the assent strong, consideration serious, application close, it must needs be so. Men are pierced to the quick, deeply affected with what they know. A man may give twenty reasons against vices and vanities, and yet follow them; but when he is thus enlightened, his heart yieldeth. This powerful conviction maketh him see the wretchedness of his carnal and blessedness of his spiritual estate; and then losses are gains, and gains are losses.

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Use. Is it thus with you? Can you say as Paul did, 'What things were gain to me, those I accounted loss for Christ?' Are your hearts alienated from whatever may keep you from God and Christ?

1. There is something that may keep us from God. Naturally we are governed by the wisdom of the flesh. Now what the wisdom of the flesh is the apostle will tell us: James iii. 15, 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.' Our understanding, as influenced by the flesh, doth only prompt us to pleasure, profit, and honour. The heart pitcheth upon vain delights, and valueth its happiness by them, which while we indulge and cherish, it careth not for God; other things take up his place in the heart. Their belly is their god, Phil. iii. 19; mammon is their god, Mat. vi. 24; and honour and greatness: John xii. 42, 'Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.' Self-love forsaketh idols, and sets up gods instead of the true God, who should

be our chief good and last end. But when the mind and heart is changed by grace, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are restored to their due honour. The love of God and heavenly things overcomes that natural delectation which we take in worldly things; and the force of celestial love doth sweetly prevail in the soul, so that you value your happiness by the favour of God, not by the enjoyment of worldly things: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time when their corn and their wine increased.' Partly because the heavenly light shining upon the soul obscureth all worldly things; and partly because love inclineth us to God and the things which tend to the enjoyment of him; our minds are altered by spiritual eye-salve, and our hearts by the victorious force of celestial love; and then you will judge that the enjoyment of the creature, if it alienate your hearts from God, is a loss rather than a gain to you. You lose by your honour if it make you less zealous for God; by your pleasure if it unfits the heart for God and weakeneth your delight in him; by your profits and wealth, if they cause you to abate of your diligence in seeking after God. Well, then, are you changed? Do you count the world an enemy as it would draw you away from God, however it gratifieth your fleshly mind and fancy? Surely the sanctifying and enlightening Spirit hath been at work in your hearts.

2. That which keepeth you from Christ is a superficial righteousness, which maketh your conviction and conversion more difficult; as it maketh us senseless and ignorant of our danger, and careless of the means of our recovery. Therefore Christ saith, 'Publicans and harlots should enter into the kingdom of God' before pharisees and self-justiciaries, Mat. xxi. 31. No condition is more dangerous than to be poor and proud, corrupt and rotten, and yet conceited and confident. The most vicious are sooner wrought upon than those that please themselves in external observances, without any real inward holiness or change of heart. They neither understand law nor gospel; not the law in its purity, and strictness, and spiritual exactness; not the gospel, which offereth a remedy only to the penitent, and those which are deeply affected with the pollution of their natures and lives, and the misery consequent, but are puffed up with a vain conceit and opinion of their good estate without any brokenness of heart. They are injurious to the law, as they curtail it, and reduce it to the external work, that the ell may be no longer than the cloth. They make a short exposition of the law, that they may cherish a large opinion of their own righteousness. They are injurious against the gospel, as they continue in their impenitency and unbelief; were never brought home in a broken-hearted manner to accept of Christ. The law well understood would humble them: 'The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin,' Rom. vii. 14. The gospel is not for them; for Christ came to call sinners, not those that are righteous in their own eyes, Mat. ix. 13. The whole tenor of the gospel is against them, which is a remedy for lost and broken-hearted sinners: 'He came to seek and to save that which is lost;' Luke xv. 7, 'Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.' Nothing is more opposite to the frame of the gospel than an impenitent and unbroken-hearted disposition of the spirit, satisfying itself in a partial, external obedience. So the woman that was a sinner was preferred before Simon

a pharisee, Luke vii. 44; and the self-condemning publican in the parable before the self-justifying pharisee, Luke xviii. 13; and the penitent adulteress before her conceited accusers, John viii. 7. And in the general, the most odious and despised sinners, repenting and believing in Christ, find more grace and place with him, than those that satisfy themselves with exterior righteousness. Well, then, are you of this temper, to count this external, partial righteousness loss rather than gain?

[1.] If so, then you are humbled and awakened with a sense of your lost condition; for God doth not offer grace to sinners, as sinners simply, but to lost sinners, such as are weary and heavy laden, Mat. xi. 28; to such as are broken in heart, and grieved, and troubled: Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn.' To such as confess and forsake their sins.

[2.] Art thou kept vile in thine own eyes, and in a humble admiration of grace after you are partaker of it? Luke vii. 47, 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.' When God is pacified towards them, they loathe themselves for what they have done: Ezek. xvi. 63, 'That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.'

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[3.] Then a partial outside obedience will not satisfy you. Pharisees tithed mint and cummin, but neglected the weightier things, Mat. xxiii. 23. No; you must have your natures changed, every day grow more complete in the will of God.

[4.] Thankfulness for grace will set you a-work for God rather than a legal conscience. You will do what you do for God for love to him rather than fear. Duties are a thank-offering rather than a sin-offering, and will not look upon God's rewards as a debt, but as a further act of his grace; blessing God for Jesus Christ, rather than ascribing anything to yourselves; in short, imploring pardon for our best duties, rather than boast of them. This is the true gospel spirit, and which only declareth that you find a loss rather than a gain in all those empty formal services and that external partial obedience that keep you from Christ. Christ is precious to you that believe.

SERMON II

Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.—PHIL. iii. 8.

THESE words are added to the former by way of amplification, for three reasons—

1. To show his perseverance in the contempt and disesteem of all outward and worldly privileges; he had counted them loss for Christ's sake, and did still count them loss: 'I have counted,' and 'do count.' He repeats it over and over; he repented not of his choice in the review; he seeth no cause to recede from it. He had undervalued and quitted everything that might keep him from Christ; and this not only when first converted, but he still continued in the same opinion. We affect novelties, and are transported when we first change our profession, but repent at leisure. No; if he had done it, he would do it again.

2. To comprehend all other things besides the Jewish privileges, wherein he excelled the greatest pretenders among them. He had said before, 'Those things which were gain to me.' Now he extends this rejection to all things imaginable without Christ—honours, wealth, pleasures, all outward and worldly accommodations. A christian can deny anything for Christ's sake, his own honour, his own ease, profit, name, estate, everything but his own God and Christ.

3. In this new proposal he shows the reality of this assertion: 'Yea, doubtless.' It was not a pretended business, nor a bare naked approbation of Christ as more excellent than other things; not a speculative, but a practical esteem: 'Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.'

In the words observe—(1.) His great contempt of all worldly and external privileges; (2.) The causes of this contempt, out of his esteem and value of Christ.

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1. His contempt is set forth by two things—

[1.] The vehemency and greatness of it: 'I account them loss,' yea, I account them 'dung.' So excellent is Christ, and so precious to them that believe in him, that all things compared with him have so much baseness, that a word bad enough cannot be found to express them σκύβαλα, the word signifieth the inwards of beasts, or refuse things thrown to dogs.

[2.] The reality and sincerity of it; here was a real demonstration of it. Many approve the things that are excellent, Rom. ii. 18, yet have no mind to embrace them, because they cannot deny temptations. But the apostle saith not only ἡγοῦμαι τὰ πάντα, 'I count all things but loss and dung,' but ἐζημιώθην τὰ πάντα, 'I have suffered the loss of all things.' He proveth the sincerity of his purpose by his actual self-denial; he had suffered the loss of friends and country, and all things dear to him in the flesh, that so he might become a christian. He did not only count them nothing worth, and despise them all, but was content to be stripped of all. These were not brags; for he really suffered the loss of all, was hungry and naked, went in danger of his life often. We must either lose all, or be prepared to lose all for Christ when called thereto. Paul could value his natural interests as well as another, but in case of necessity, lose friends or lose Christ, then all is counted loss and dung. Men in a shipwreck throw overboard their most precious wares to save their lives.

2. The causes of this contempt were great, and such as did every way justify it. As he contemned great things, so he contemned them for weighty causes. Two are mentioned—

[1.] 'The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;' that is, that he might obtain the knowledge of Christ, which is so excellent that it made all other things seem vile in his eyes. Those things could only yield a carnal, light, and temporary profit; this a spiritual, solid, and eternal felicity. To keep them and lose this would be a loss not to be recompensed.

[2.] 'That I may gain Christ;' that is, have the favour of Christ, which is the highest of all privileges.

I shall now insist upon the greatness and vehemency of his contempt of all worldly and carnal things in comparison of Christ.

Doct. That he that is or would be a good christian should have such an esteem of Christ as to count all things but loss and dung, yea, should readily quit and forsake all things rather than miss of Christ.

1. Let us consider Paul's self-denial as it is here represented.

2. Give you the reasons why it bindeth all christians, and becometh them to have such a frame of spirit.

I. This instance of self-denial; and there—

1. The universality of its extent, 'All things,' whatever would detain us from Christ, be they honours, pleasures, profits, yea, life itself, what ever we are and have. This is to be observed—

[1.] Partly because some can deny a few things for Christ, but not all; their resignation is not entire and unbounded; but if we keep back any one thing, the price is too short. Any one lust reserved keeps afoot the devil's interest in the soul; therefore if we esteem but one thing, though we prefer[1] never so many, before Christ, though we renounce many profits and pleasures, yet that one darling contentment to which we have a special liking will prove a snare to the soul. Herod did many things, but was loath to part with his Herodias. The young man lacked one thing, Mark x. 21. If a woman love but one man in the world more than her husband, though she love him better than millions of others, yet it is a breach of the marriage covenant. Any one thing reserved may bring us to forsake and neglect him as much as if we had preferred a hundred things before him. That one thing will quickly prevail over us for the entertainment of more; therefore David prayeth, Ps. cxix. 133, 'Order my steps in thy word, and let not any one iniquity have dominion over me.' If a man be dead to pleasure, yet if he be alive to credit; if he have a slight esteem of honour and glory, yet the riches

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[1] Qu. 'postfer,' or some such word?—ED.

of the world have a great interest in him; if he can bridle passion and anger, and easily become meek, yet his fear may betray him; if he can withstand boisterous temptations, which by violence would withdraw him from Christ, yet if he be over come by vain appetites, and cannot tame his own flesh, he may finally miscarry. When men come to take possession of a house, all persons must be outed, or else the possession is not valid and good; you must deliver up all to Christ, or he will accept of none.

[2.] And partly to show that not only things apparently unlawful must be denied for Christ, but things lawful must be disesteemed, discountenanced, and rejected for his sake.

(1.) That our sins must be renounced is out of question. If I cannot deny adultery, gluttony, covetousness, pride, drunkenness, oppression for his sake, surely I am unworthy of him. Therefore there can be no question made of this, that I must put off the old man with his lusts, Eph. iv. 22. These were never worth keeping; these stick to us as our clothes or the skin on our backs, yet they must be put off, whatever interest they have in our affections. It is no strange motion of the physician if he should require the patient to part with his disease; or he that minds to bestow new apparel upon us, should require us to cast away our old rags. If we would try it once, it is more pleasant to be rid of sin than to keep it; and the pleasures of sin would be found more troublesome than the most painful course of obedience. Surely they can leave little for Christ that cannot leave one delightful or profitable sin, or are so far from preferring a saviour before the glorious pomp and vanities of this world, that they cannot leave the abominable crimes of it.

(2.) That lawful things which are not absolutely to be despised, but only comparatively, when they come into competition with Christ, may be comprehended also; such as are the comfort of our relations, esteem and honour in the world, the natural supports of the present life, yea, life itself. Such things are reckoned up by Christ: Luke xiv. 26, ‘If any man come to me, and hate not father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple;’ where you see that not our lusts only are to be forsaken, but our natural interests, those things which otherwise lawfully we may and ought most dearly to affect; these must be forsaken, hated, trampled upon in comparison of our love to Christ; that is, we must resolve to gain Christ, and please and follow him, though with the loss of all things. Nothing must be preferred before the conscience of our duty to him. What ever is a help to Christ, be it honour, wealth, or pleasure, it must be cherished; and what is a hindrance, it must be cut off and renounced.

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2. The degree of forsaking, with loathing and indignation; for the apostle here counteth them loss and dung, as if he could not sufficiently express his abhorrence of them. Whilst we stand peddling, and hanker after these things, the temptation is not fully off; but we are like crows and ravens, though driven from the carrion, yet we keep within scent of it. Pleasures, profits, and honours must be esteemed as dross and dung when they come in competition with Christ. We must not only undervalue these transitory earthly things if they hinder us from Christ, but hate and detest them: ‘If any man hate not father and mother,’ &c., Luke xiv. 26. The reason is, because none can deny

themselves but those that have a low esteem of all worldly things, and a high esteem of Jesus Christ and his favour. Now the more either of these are greatened, the more we will express our holy indignation at the temptation. What! part with my Christ for paltry vanities and a little unsatisfying pleasure? hazard my eternal hopes for so slight a temptation, sell the birthright for a mess of pottage?

3. Here is the consent of his mind and resolution actually verified; he did not only count them dung and dross, but he had 'suffered the loss of all things.' Paul ran the hazard, and actually quitted his honour and credit, who before had a high esteem of them; and so must we if called thereunto. At first, before the way to heaven was a little smoothed by the holy martyrs and primitive confessors of the christian faith, it was a great deal more rough than now it is; yet there is no man can be true to his duty but he will meet with trouble in the flesh; some of his interests must be sacrificed for Christ's sake, either his reputation, ease, and peace with the world, the opposition and scorn of dear friends and relations, or some expense and cost which his religion will put him upon. There are still duties lying upon us unpleasing to the flesh, or some uncompliance with the fashions of the world which will expose us to their contempt or hatred. A dull approbation of that which is good will serve no man in the most prosperous time of religion; but more or less he must manifest his esteem of Christ and contempt of the world by some act of self-denial, and therein be conformed to the Son of God and the rest of his brethren, that have trodden the way to heaven before him. And Moses, being assaulted with all kind of temptations at once, Heb. xi. 24, 25, honour, pleasure, and profit; the honour of the world, which so many greedily catch at, he refused; the profits of the world, which are wont to blind the hearts of men, he despised; the pleasures of the earth, which men so much affect, were no better to him than trash and dung compared with the reproach of Christ. And still the same spirit must be in us. All those things which are pleasing to the flesh, and will draw us off from our duty, must be actually denied, trampled upon, and contemned.

II. The reasons why it binds all christians, and becomes them to have such a frame of spirit.

1. Because this is plainly inferred out of the faith, love, hope, and obedience of the gospel.

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[1.] Out of the faith of the gospel. Faith looks on the great things God hath provided for us in Christ as true and good: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.' As true, they call for a firm and strong assent; as good, so for our consent and choice, or hearty embracing these things above all others. Now take either notion, and it enforces what we have in hand.

(1.) For assent or a sound belief of eternal blessedness as offered by Christ, which, because it is future, the assent is fiducial, and implieth a dependence upon the veracity and truth of God, that he will make good his promise to us in the appointed way. Now certainly we do not know these things with any firm persuasion, unless we dare venture ourselves in the bottom of the promises, and are resolved to crucify the flesh and sacrifice our interests, and perform duties unpleasing to

nature on the hopes they offer to us, and with confidence and joyfulness wait upon God in the midst of all pressures and afflictions.

(2.) As it is a consent, choice, or acceptance, because Christ and his benefits, which are the object propounded to faith, are good, and better than life and all its contentments. Now good is accepted; and because there is a competition, inferior and transitory good things offer and obtrude themselves upon us, and divert us from him. Therefore it is election and choice, which is a preference of Christ above other things, or such an esteem of his incomparable worth as lessens all other things in our opinion of and affection to them. But if our affections continue in strength to worldly things, we have neither this assent nor acceptance; we have not chosen them for our felicity and portion. So that the strength of faith is not to be measured by our overgrown confidence or persuasion of our interest in God's mercy, but by mortifying our affections to present things, so as to be ready to do and suffer anything for Christ's sake: 1 John v. 4, 'This is the victory we have over the world, even our faith.' In short, faith is an assent to the promises as true and good in themselves, and as offered to our choice, as far better than all the honours, profits and pleasures in the world.; and therefore we should part with all that is pleasant and profitable to obtain the benefit of them.

[2.] It is inferred out of the love of the gospel; we are to love Christ with a transcendent and superlative love: 'For all men must honour the Son as they honour the Father,' John v. 23. Therefore, as we love God, so we must love Christ above all. We love God above all: Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee.' If we love him less than other things, or equal with other things, we do not love him at all; as you degrade a prince if you give him no more honour than you give a constable. Love anything above or equal with God, and in time it will tempt you to desert him or neglect his service: Mat. vi. 24, 'No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or hold to the one and despise the other; ye can not serve God and mammon.' Now, as you love God, you must love Christ above all, in whom the divine nature is made more amiable to us; therefore our Lord saith, Mat. x. 37, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.' Therefore certainly Christ is to be loved above all; and other things relating to him, as his doctrine, benefits, laws, ordinances, these must be prized above any inferior good whatsoever, and all things counted dung and dross rather than despise these things. This love is of the more value, because it is the heart of the new creature, as self-love is of original sin.

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[3.] This may be inferred out of the hope of the gospel, which is everlasting life. If there be a certain and desirous expectation of such a blessedness, the will should be so far divorced from all transitory good things, and fixed on the supreme good, that we shall not be diverted either by the comfortable or troublesome things that we meet with here. Surely it is better to suffer a little misery for an eternal reward than to enjoy momentary pleasure and after that endure eternal torment. Eternal pleasures do far excel temporal, as holiness doth sin. Alas! what do we lose if this be our gain? Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with

the glory which shall be revealed in us;' 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;' Mark x. 29, 30, 'Jesus answered, There is no man that has left house, or brethren, or father, or mother, &c., for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and mothers, &c., with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life.' Time will be when we shall neither have miseries to fear nor blessings to desire beyond what we enjoy.

[4.] It may be inferred out of the obedience of the gospel. If we mean not to break with Christ, we must be of this disposition. Certainly Christ stands upon obedience if we would obtain his promises: John xiv. 21, 23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, &c. If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him,' &c.; John xv. 10, 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love,' &c. Now as long as we are addicted to the world, and its baits and snares, which gratify this earthly life, we can make no work of christianity. The first lesson of Christ's school is self-denial: Mat. xvi. 24, 'Then said Jesus, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.' Till we prefer Christ before the world and the ease of the flesh, we can never have solid comfort in ourselves. In one kind or other we shall be tried. We may cull out the easy, cheap, and safe part of religion, but that is a christianity of our own, which brings God no glory, and will yield us no comfort. If we will submit to the christianity established by Christ, there are in it many duties displeasing to the flesh, some that lay us open to the disgrace and reproach of the world. We must obey him when his service is most painful and cross to our humours; therefore he bids us sit down and count the charges: Luke xiv. 28, 29, 'For which of you intending to build a tower, sits not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him.' It is good to consider whether we can go on with this warfare or raise up this building, whether we are able to obey his strict laws, to renounce our accustomed delights and dearest interests, whether we shall endeavour to please God in all things, though never so much against our bent and humour; whether we will entertain afflictions and persecutions with all joy, if they come upon us for Christ's sake. If we flow in wealth, can we live as having nothing, and rejoice that God hath made us low? If indeed we have nothing, can we be satisfied with the favour of Christ and our preferment by grace, use all things not as our own but God's, and be guided by Christ in our whole course, and be contented to be anything or nothing so we may promote his glory?

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2. Because Christ hath deserved this esteem—(1.) By what he is to us; (2.) By what he hath done for us.

[1.] By what he is to us, more excellent, more necessary, more beneficial than all things else.

(1.) He is more excellent; the rarest contentments of the world are but base things to his grace, all as dung and dross to one drachm of grace or comfortable experience of the love of God. This world's good things are not only uncertain, but vain and empty as to any solid and real good, such

as is hope toward God and peace of conscience: Job xxvii. 8, ‘For what is the hope of the hypocrite when God taketh away his soul?’ On the other side, Christ is incomparably more excellent: ‘If thou knewest the gift,’ John iv. 10; ‘If thou hast tasted that the Lord is gracious,’ 1 Peter ii. 3. All the world could not keep you from him.

(2.) Christ is more necessary, for the soul cometh to him under a deep want and broken-hearted sense of misery. If we want and lose the world, God can easily supply it to us, or give us more than this; and he will save us at last without these things. To want clothing or food is not so bad as to want grace; and to be exposed to temporal ruin is not so great a danger as to be obnoxious to eternal flames.

(3.) More beneficial to a poor guilty sinner; in him alone true peace and happiness is to be found: 1 Cor. i. 30, ‘But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.’ Therefore trample upon all things rather than offend God and lose a saviour, and come short of his grace.

[2.] Consider what he hath done for us. Christ requireth not so much at our hands as he himself hath voluntarily performed, and that for our sakes; he pleased not himself that he might promote the glory of God and our salvation: ‘He became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich,’ 2 Cor. viii. 9; ‘He was obedient to death, even the death of the cross,’ Phil. ii. 7; ‘Made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,’ 2 Cor. v. 21; ‘Made a curse for us, that we might have the blessing,’ Gal. iii. 13. Doth he require so much of us? Surely those who would have benefit by Christ must imitate him: 1 Peter iv. 1, ‘Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.’ It is grievous to the flesh to be crossed, but he hath suffered great sorrows. How can we manifest our thankfulness to him who by these bitter sufferings hath procured pardon of sins and eternal life for us?

Use. Is to press us to reflect upon ourselves. Have we such an esteem of Christ as to count all things but loss and dung, and to be ready to forsake all for his sake? It is a temper essential to christianity. A man’s heart is not sincere to Christ unless he doth prefer him before all the world. Now this esteem will show itself by these things—

19

1. In labouring to get Christ above all, and with the hazard of all; this must be the prime care: Mat. vi. 33, ‘First seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness;’ Ps. xxvii. 4, ‘One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord.’ And it must be carried on whatever it cost us; the bargain will abundantly recompense the charges we are at: Mat. xiii. 45, 46, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; and when he hath found one pearl of great price, he sold all he had and bought it;’ Prov. iv. 7, ‘Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom and with all thy gettings get understanding.’ Every man is in the pursuit of happiness; it lieth only in communion with God by Christ. This must be minded whatever is neglected. Now how few have

this care to get Christ above all! Their time and labour is laid out upon unsatisfying vanities; if they may be rich, if they may live a life of pomp and ease, this taketh up their minds. But if indeed this be the business you look after, to be acquainted with God, to have an interest in Christ, and you are still attending upon this work as the great business of your lives, you may take comfort you have got that disposition which is essential to christianity.

2. A care in keeping Christ above all; superlative love shows itself in this, in a chariness and tenderness of your interest in Christ above all things which are dearest to you. He is your life, Gal. ii. 20, your strength, 1 John iv. 4, your blessedness, Col. i. 27. Now, then, if you keep your beloved as a bundle of myrrh, or, in plainer terms, if he constantly dwell in your hearts by faith, Eph. iii. 17, and you keep up an habitual dependence upon him, and a constant love to him as to your life, peace, and joy, and are loath to put your comforts to hazard for a little carnal satisfaction, surely then Christ is all in all to you. But when you are careless, and mind not how the spiritual life is obstructed, are not so chary of your respects to your Redeemer, who is so necessary for you, it is time to look about you, and say, Have I the spirit of the gospel? is Christ so dear and precious to me as he ought to be?

3. Grief for losing Christ above all. Love is seen in delighting in his presence and mourning for his absence: Mat. ix. 15, ‘When the bridegroom is taken away, then shall they mourn.’ Many times by our sin and folly we lose the comforts of his presence, the quickening influences of his grace. Now if you take occasion by every sin to renew the sense of the want of Christ, and keep his room warm for him till he return again, by your longings and lamentings after him, this discovers this temper and frame of heart. Certainly it is a great part of a christian’s work to observe the accesses and recesses of the Spirit; for the retiring of the Spirit is a great punishment of sin, as its continuance is a benefit to be prized above all the world. David was deeply afflicted with the one: Ps. li. 10-12, ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God; renew a right spirit within me: cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me,’ &c. No judgment to be dreaded and lamented as the grieving of the Holy Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. But when men are stupid, and never mind whether the Spirit of Christ go or come, surely these have not the heart of christians. Now this holdeth good in cases without us, when Christ’s interest riseth or falls, to be affected with joy or grief: 1 Sam. iv. 20-22, ‘The women that stood by her said, Fear not, for thou hast borne a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel,’ &c. Though a son was born, she regarded it not; though she had lost a father and a husband, yet the ark of God is taken, and the glory departed from Israel. The ark was a type of Christ, and one of the highest mysteries of their religion. Are we thus affected with the dishonour done to Christ’s name? do you rejoice when his gospel flourisheth and prevaileth? All this floweth from the same spirit.

4. By delighting in him and the testimonies of his love above all things: Cant. i. 4, ‘We will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy loves more than wine.’ The choicest contentments

of the flesh are not so comfortable and satisfying as Christ's love, the joy which results from thence is unspeakable and glorious, 1 Peter i. 8, better felt than uttered. The strength of it is seen in that it can keep itself alive when all outward fuel and matter of comfort faileth.

5. By loving other things for Christ's sake, everything that hath the stamp of Christ is honourable and precious. His ordinances, because Christ is to be found there: Ps. xxvi. 8, 'I love the place where thine honour dwelleth.' His ministers, as they have authority from him to treat with sinners about the greatest matters on earth: Phil. ii. 29, 'Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation.' They bring the Lord's message to the soul: 1 John v. 1, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten.' So in order to Christ, valuing all things more or less as they bring us nearer to Christ.

6. By seeking his honour, glory, and praise more than our own interests. They do not live to themselves; having fixed their end, they take their way as they find it: Phil. i. 20, 21, 'Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or death; for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' The scope, end, and business of their living is to honour Christ. They are contented to decrease, so Christ may increase.

7. Things dishonourable are made honourable: Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt;' Acts v. 41, 'Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame and reproach for his name.' The more the world despiseth him, the more they prize and worship him. The wise men worshipped him when in a stable. Joseph of Arimathea owned him at the lowest, when he had suffered an ignominious death. It is no great matter to own that which is of public esteem; and now Christ is everywhere received, it is easy to make a general profession of his name.

21

SERMON III.

Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.—PHIL. iii. 8.

THIS is the first end or reason why he contemned all things. There are three propositions in the words—

1. That the knowledge of Christ is so excellent, that a gracious heart counteth all things dung and loss rather than miss it.

2. That Christ Jesus must be known as the Lord.

3. That there should be some application when we consider Christ or address ourselves to him.

I. For the first point, that the knowledge of Christ is so excellent that a gracious heart counteth all things dung and loss rather than miss it—(1.) What knowledge he speaketh of; (2.) Why it is so prized.

First, What knowledge he speaketh of. Knowledge is twofold—(1.) A bare speculative knowledge; (2.) Affective and saving.

1. For the first, this is a privilege, to know Christ. It is a mystery hidden from ages, and it is hidden from a great part of the world unto this day. Therefore the bare naked knowledge and contemplation o Christ is a great mystery, is a great privilege. Angels desire to pry into it: 1 Peter i. 12, 'Which things the angels desire to look into.' Have higher apprehensions of God by the revelation of this mystery to the church: Eph. iii. 10, 'To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.' But yet if we content ourselves with this general speculative knowledge of Christ, we may perish eternally. As the old world saw an ark built before them, with vast expense and charge, but whilst they entered not into it themselves, they were drowned in the flood. The light of the gospel shineth in the world, but if the darkness comprehendeth it not, but men love darkness more than light, their condemnation is the greater, John iii. 19. Certainly this speculative knowledge is not here meant, but an applicative knowledge: 'My Lord,' an operative and effectual knowledge; for he presently addeth, 'That I may gain Christ,' an experimental knowledge; for ver. 10, he explaineth himself, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.'

2. A saving knowledge, such as is accompanied with faith, love, and obedience. There is *memorative* knowledge, such as children have, whereby the field of memory is planted with the seeds of knowledge, so as they are able to speak of God and Christ by rote; and *opinionative* knowledge, by which men are orthodox in judgment, and can dispute for the truth; but wisdom entereth not upon the heart, as it is Prov. ii. 10. They have a form of godliness, but not the power, a naked model of gospel truth: 2 Tim. iii. 5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.' But there is, besides this, a saving knowledge, such as is accompanied with faith, love, and obedience.

[1.] With faith, which is a certain knowledge and persuasion of the truth of our redemption by Christ upon sufficient evidence, so as we may venture our souls and all our interests in his hands: John vi. 69, 'And we believe, and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;' Acts ii. 36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made the same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ;' John xvii. 8, 'And have known surely that I came out from thee.' So in many other places faith is expressed by knowledge; as concerning the future recompenses: Rom. viii. 28, 'And we know that all things work together for good to them, that love God;' 1 John iii. 2, 'But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see

him as he is;' 2 Cor. v. 1, 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Faith goeth not upon hearsay or the tradition of man; it consists not in some light credulity or some loose and wavering conjectures, but is a certain knowledge of the truth concerning Christ's person and offices, and the glorious things purchased thereby, called the 'Assurance of understanding,' Col. ii. 2. Faith addeth certainty and efficacy.

[2.] It is a knowledge accompanied with esteem and love. We never know God in Christ as we ought to know him unless we love him as well as know him: 1 Cor. viii. 2, 'And if any man think he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.' A gracious heart seeth more beauty and excellency in Christ than in all the world. This is the true knowledge of Christ, to know him, and prize him, and embrace him as our Lord and Saviour, and prefer him above all things; to prize him more than all my goods, more than all my friends, yea, more than myself. This appreciative knowledge is that which is here spoken of, and is the fruit of certain persuasion: Heb. xi. 13, 'And being persuaded of them, they embraced them.'

[3.] When we know him so as to obey him. In this sense we know no more than we practise: 1 John ii. 4, 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' He prattleth of God, but doth not know God. It is a falsehood, *cum intentione fallendi*. A lie is a falsehood with an intention to deceive; he goeth about to deceive himself and others: Jer. xxii.

16, 'He judged the cause of the poor and needy; was not this to know me, saith the Lord?' Our actions give us a better image of our opinions and thoughts than our words, as being more deliberate, and proceeding from the principles we have laid up in our hearts, and chosen to live by; which is to be observed against those that seem to know Christ, but yet have but dead and cold opinions about him and the mystery of his redemption.

Secondly, Why is this knowledge so prized? The reasons are taken from the object and the subject, what is prized, and who prizeth. The knowledge of Christ is to be valued in itself, but the temper of a gracious spirit is such that they must needs prize it.

1. The knowledge of Christ is valuable in itself; it is better than all other knowledge.

[1.] From the author, which is the Spirit of God: Mat. xvi. 16, 17, 'And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Farther which is in heaven.' All that truly own Christ are taught of God: John vi. 45, 'They shall all be taught of God; every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh to me;' and again, 'The unction teacheth you all things,' 1 John ii. 20. Now to have the enlightening and sanctifying Spirit is a great privilege and mark of favour which God puts upon us. It is a greater argument of God's

friendship than to give you wealth and honour: Prov. iii. 31-33, ‘Envy not the oppressor, and choose none of. his ways. The froward is abomination to the Lord, but his secret is with the righteous. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just.’ Many are kept low and bare under the frowns and power of insulting adversaries. You cannot therefore say that God hateth you and loveth them. If God hath given you the saving knowledge of himself and his Christ, this is certainly a greater token of his love, and you should prize this above all other things. He dignified you above those that want it, though they excel in power and pomp of living, and are able to oppress you by it. Again, it is an argument of his favour to you above the rabble of nominal christians: John xv. 15, ‘But I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.’ We may have a form of knowledge, or a model of truth put into our heads by men, but to know Christ so as to believe in him, love him, and obey him, is the special favour which God reserveth for his peculiar people.

[2.] The matter to be known, Christ the Saviour of the world and the repairer of the lapsed estate of mankind. We know him under that notion. There is in him a matchless excellency and sufficiency to do us good. This is enough to take up all our thoughts: 1 Cor. ii. 2, ‘I have determined to know nothing amongst you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.’ This is the most comfortable knowledge in the world if we consider—(1.) Our deep necessity; (2.) His all-sufficiency.

(1.) Our deep and absolute necessity of a saviour to reconcile us to God, being ‘Enemies to him in our minds by evil works,’ Col. i. 21. To renew our natures, being carnal, and sinful, and unable to help ourselves: Job xiv. 4, ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.’ The work would cease for ever if a saviour were not revealed to restore lapsed mankind, to vanquish and conquer our enemies, being so weak and impotent, and ‘taken captive by Satan at his will and pleasure,’ 2 Tim. ii. 26. To free us from hell, which we had deserved, and to bring us to happiness, which we had not deserved; which only the Son of God could do, who died, the just for the unjust, ‘to deliver us from wrath to come,’ 1 Thes. i. 10, and bring us to God. Surely to those that are sensible of their necessity what can be more sweet and precious? Hungry consciences will prize the bread of life. To those who lie in tears and anguish of soul through the feelings of sin and the fears of the wrath of God, nothing can be sweeter than to hear of their acceptance in the Beloved, and reconciliation with God by Christ. What have we else to answer against all the terrors of the law and the accusations of conscience, or to comfort us against the remembrance of our approaching misery, than redemption by Christ? yea, what to allay our present sorrows and trouble about a naughty heart, an opposite world, and a tempting devil, but the remembrance of the captain of our salvation, who hath undertaken to bring us to God, and make us perfect through suffering? Heb. ii. 10, ‘For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.’

(2.) His sufficiency to do us good. There is the blood of God to be a ransom for our souls: Acts xx. 28, ‘Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you

overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' And so to make our peace with God: Col. i. 20, 'Having made peace; through the blood of his cross, to reconcile all things to himself, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven.' The Spirit of God to renew and heal our natures, 'Shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Titus iii. 5, 6. 'The captain of our salvation,' to conquer our enemies: Heb. ii. 10, 'Christ in us' the pledge of our hopes and joys, and the root of everlasting blessedness: Col. i. 27, 'Christ in you the hope of glory.' Surely if we have the eternal Son of God from whom to fetch our daily supplies and our daily delight, we must needs be well provided for, so that the heart of trouble is broken. This is a sufficient remedy against all our fears and sorrows.

[3.] The effect of this knowledge. It is a renewing and transforming knowledge. It impresseth the image of God upon our hearts: Col. iii. 10, 'And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him;' 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Others can talk of God and Christ, but you resemble him, and are changed into his likeness. When sight is perfect, your conformity will be greater: 1 John iii. 2, 'But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,' But now it leaveth some impress of God upon the soul, it maketh you more like him, and amiable in his sight.

2. The subjects who thus esteem the knowledge of Christ, their minds and hearts are changed.

[1.] Their minds. It is a special privilege promised in the new covenant: Jer. xxxi. 34, 'For they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord;' Jer. xxiv. 7, 'I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord.' Now by this new covenant knowledge they have a spirit of discerning. In discerning there is comparing, differencing, esteeming, choosing. Their minds are awakened; they do compare what they lose and what they gain; on the one side, worldly things are short and uncertain, and which cannot satisfy the heart of man, or if they could satisfy his desires, they cannot give rest to the conscience. That is the trial, rest for souls: Jer. vi. 16, 'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way? and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' That is not to be found in the world: Isa. lv. 2, 'Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?' Let conscience be once awakened with the sense of sin and fear of wrath, it can find nothing in the world to pacify it; but in Christ it may: Mat. xi. 28, 29, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest for your souls.' They prefer good or discern bad things: Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' Good things: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' They esteem and choose: Heb. xi. 25, 26, 'Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the

people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.'

[2.] Their hearts are turned as well as their minds convinced. These things do not suit with their scope and end, which is to please and enjoy God: 2 Cor. v. 9, 10, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.'

Use 1. Of reproof—

1. To those who study to know all things else but Jesus Christ. There is no sap or savour to them in this knowledge. They would know the course of nature by philosophy, the affairs of the world by history. We condemn not this knowledge simply, but if it be with the neglect of the knowledge of Christ, alas! it is folly rather than wisdom. To know the creature without the creator, the history of providence but not the way of redemption, the courses of the heavens and not to know how to live and dwell in heaven, is not to seek a salve for the great malady we contracted by the fall; for ignorance in eternal things is the first part of the harm we caught by the fall. This is to heal a cut finger and neglect a deadly wound. No secular wisdom can deliver us from the wrath of God, nor make us everlastingly happy. The angels, who are the spectators, desire to pry into these things; but we, that are the parties interested, should be much more concerned to know our misery and our remedy, our disease and our cure. If God hath laid out the riches of his grace and wisdom to do us good, surely it deserveth our best thoughts.

2. To reprove those that content themselves with a form of knowledge: Rom. ii. 20, 'Thou hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.' No; it must be a practical and experimental knowledge: 'That we may know him, and the power of his resurrection.' Most of christianity is not only to be believed, but felt. It is set forth not only by sight, but taste: 1 Peter ii. 3, 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious;' Phil. i. 9, 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment,' αἰσθήσει, in all sense. Otherwise you know Christ, and are never the better for him; like the nobleman at Samaria, that saw the plenty, but could not taste of it. They hear of a mighty Christ, but feel nothing. Experience is the best seal and confirmation: John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them by the truth; thy word is truth;' and chap. i. 32, 'John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.' The testimony of Christ confirmed in us: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.' This is knowing 'the grace of God in truth,' as it is Col. i. 6, when we have tasted of the sweetness of the promise, pardon of sin, peace with God, and hopes of glory. *Optima demonstratio est a sensibus,* the best proof is from the senses. Others know it by hearsay, conceits, and imagination. Again, practical knowledge is for use and practice, not for idle speculation. The apostle speaketh of some that are 'barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ,' 2 Peter i. 8.

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Their christianity serveth them to talk well, and stuffeth their minds with high notions, but they are not thereby made ready to obedience, and prone and forward to please God: 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, ‘And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind, all the days of thy life.’

Use 2. Let this be our main study, to know Christ, and to know him as we ought to know him, by the light of the Spirit, in a way of faith, love, and obedience. How hard do many carnal persons study to know the mysteries of nature! and should not we use the means of praying, reading, hearing, that we may know Christ, begging for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation? Here consider—

1. The necessity. You must know Christ before you can believe in him: 2 Tim. i. 12, ‘I know whom I have believed.’ You must know him before you can love him: John iv. 10, ‘If thou knewest the gift of God.’ We must know him before we can obey him: Prov. xix. 2, ‘Also that the soul be without knowledge is not good;’ John xiv. 21, ‘He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.’

2. It is pleasant: Ps. xix. 8, ‘The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes.’ Light is pleasant to the eye, so it is to the eye of the mind: Prov. xxiv. 13, 14, ‘My son, eat thou honey, because it is sweet, and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste; so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul when thou hast found it.’ Every faculty hath its oblectation; as the will, in adhering to God; conscience, in feeling God’s love; so the understanding in the view of truth. Oh, what is the knowledge of Christ, so suitable to our necessities, so ready to relieve them, to have a taste that the Lord is gracious!

3. It is profitable. Its use commendeth it. Curiosities and need less speculations we can well spare; that is a knowledge occasioneth more pain than pleasure. To have the mind stuffed with needless notions is but a burden, not a perfection; but this maketh us wise to salvation, and therefore doth most concern us. For what is more comfortable than salvation? John xvii. 3, ‘This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.’ We begin our everlasting happiness, which consists in the vision of God, when we begin to know him and his Christ. Now if we would have this knowledge, and esteem this knowledge, think often, and by serious awakening thoughts, of the necessity thou hast of Christ: Mat. xi. 28, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ His all-sufficiency to do thee good by virtue of his double office: Heb. iii. 1, ‘Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, the Lord Jesus Christ.’

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Use 3. Bless God that he hath given thee this knowledge, this excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, and do not murmur though he hath denied you other things.

1. Remember how it excelleth all other gifts. All your wants and losses are nothing to that free grace which he hath showed you and bestowed upon you: ‘Eyes to see your teachers,’ Isa. xxx. 20. As it is sinful security to be sensible of bodily wants and senseless of spiritual, so it is sinful unthankfulness to take notice of bodily wants, and not to acknowledge this great benefit. The Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee if he hath given thee the knowledge of his Christ, whatever he denieth thee.

2. Remember how a true value and esteem of Christ lesseneth all other things. As the light of the sun obscureth the stars, so all worldly things grow unsavoury and lose their relish where this true light prevaileth. The taste of carnal pleasures is marred, the love of the world decreaseth, and the pleasures of sin become bitter to the soul, which is the true sign of our having received the saving knowledge of Christ. He is so great that he lesseneth all other things to us. The soul seeth so much worth and suitableness in him to all our necessities, and doth so love and esteem him, that it accounteth all things most vile and base in comparison of him, and is willing for his sake to want or lose the rarest contents the world can give, and suffer the greatest evils the devil or man can inflict upon us.

II. Second point. That Jesus Christ must be known as the Lord. So must we preach him, and so must you receive him: 2 Cor. iv. 5, ‘We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord;’ Col. ii. 8, ‘If you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.’ Let us see—

1. What this lordship of Christ is; it is that *novum jus dominii, et novum jus imperii*, that new right of propriety and government over all men which Christ now hath, as being the sovereign of the world.

Concerning it observe three things—

[1.] It is superadded to the former sovereignty and dominion which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost had as creator. This new dominion and sovereignty is not destructive of the former, but accumulative; it did not abolish the power acquired by the creation, for that continueth still, and will continue whilst man receiveth his being from God by creation, and the continuance of his being by preservation; this therefore is superadded to the former by the new title of redeemer; for he is lord, not as creator, but as redeemer: Rev. v. 12, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.’

[2.] This office of lord is derivative, and cannot be supreme, but subordinate. Though this office be the greatest and highest that ever was, above all angels and creatures, next unto God, therefore Christ’s place upon his investiture and solemn inauguration was at the right hand of the eternal throne of God, yet it is derived from God, and referred to him. Derived from God; for he is, as

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mediator, made Lord, and this power was given to him: Mat. xxviii. 18, ‘All power is given to me in heaven and earth;’ John xvii. 2, ‘Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.’ God hath made God-man the supreme prince and head of the church, that he might dispense salvation upon his own terms, and his doctrine and faith be embraced by all nations in the world. Here is a new power, new government, and new laws, which shall be the rule of man’s duty and God’s judgment. It is referred and subordinated to God: Phil. ii. 11, ‘And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.’ The supreme right of governing is still in God, and subjection to him is not vacated, but established and reserved.

[3.] This lordship and dominion which the Redeemer is possessed of is comfortable and beneficial to us; and the end of it is to effect man’s cure and recovery. God had a full right to govern us, which could not be vacated by our sin; and it was so great that it cannot be greater; yet it was not comfortable to us. It was but such a right as a prince hath over rebels to punish them. We renounced God’s ser vice, and that interest which we had in his gracious protection as our Lord; therefore was this new interest set afoot to save and recover fallen man, that God might have such an interest in us as might be comfortable to us. So lordship and government is spoken of in scripture as medicinal and restorative, to reduce man to the obedience of God that made him: Acts x. 36, ‘Preaching peace by Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.’ It is such a lordship as conduceth to make peace between God and man, that we may enjoy his favour and live in his obedience: Acts v. 31, ‘He hath exalted him to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.’ This new lord hath made a new law of grace, which is *lex remedians*, a remedying law, which is propounded as a remedy for the recovering and restoring of the lapsed world of mankind to the grace and favour of God, granting thereby free pardon, and a right to blessedness to all that sincerely repent and believe in him; but sentencing them anew to death who will not embrace him, John iii. 16-18; all which considerations do mightily enforce obedience. It is a beneficial law; it is a remedying law. They are peremptorily concluded under everlasting death who will not submit to it; namely, as the old sentence is bound more upon us, and ratified by a new curse.

2. How this right of lordship and empire accrueth to him? I answer—Partly by his purchase. This was that Christ aimed at in his death: Rom. xiv. 9, ‘For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.’ It was the fruit and consequent of the humiliation of the Son of God. And partly by the grant of God: Acts ii. 36, ‘God hath made this Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.’ ‘Made,’ that is, appointed or ordained.

3. How we come to be concerned in this lordship, or are related to him? I answer—By our voluntary consent, acknowledging him to be Lord, and submitting ourselves to him as the Son of God and our sovereign: ‘He is thy Lord; worship thou him,’ Ps. xlv. 11. There is a passive subjection and voluntary submission.

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[1.] A passive subjection; so all creatures at all times are under the power of the Son of God and our redeemer; and amongst the rest, the devils themselves, though revolters and rebels, are not exempted from this dominion; and he hath a ministry and service for them to do as well as for the good angels. So ‘at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, whether of things in heaven, or things on earth, or things under the earth,’ Phil. ii. 10.

[2.] We are under his dominion by voluntary submission. Those only are subjects, and admitted into this kingdom, who willingly give up themselves to God the Redeemer, that they may be saved upon his terms, and in the way he hath appointed: 2 Cor. viii. 5, ‘They first gave their ownselves to the Lord.’ So that the devils and wicked men are his against their wills; but all Christ’s people are his by their own consent, to be guided and ordered by him. Well, then, all that have not subjected themselves to God as redeemer are strangers at least, if not enemies.

4. The next thing I shall speak of is both the privileges and immunities on the one hand; secondly, the duties on the other, of those who are subjects to this Lord.

[1.] Their privileges and immunities are great. Their immunities are freedom from the curse and rigour of the law: Gal. v. 18, ‘Ye are not under the law.’ From the guilt of sin: Col. i. 13, 14, ‘Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin.’ We do not actually partake of the privileges of Christ’s kingdom till we are first his subjects. Christ and his people are an opposite state to the devil and his instruments. While we are under the opposite power, we belong not to Christ; the privileges of his kingdom belong not to us. But as soon as translated, and put into another state, then presently we partake of the privilege of remission of sins; so from the flames of hell: 1 Thes. i. 10, ‘Even Jesus, who hath delivered us from wrath to come.’ Privileges positive; grace and glory. We enter as subjects into this kingdom, that we may be reconciled to God, and renewed and fitted to serve and enjoy him. This Christ doth by degrees. He fits us to serve him now by ‘putting his laws into our hearts and minds,’ Heb. viii. 10, or giving us repentance; and doth prepare us for the full enjoyment of God more and more. Christ doth not immediately effect our deliverance, but bringeth us into the kingdom of grace first, that he may perfect our cure there, that after we have for a while resisted the devil, and approved our fidelity to him, we may have an inheritance among the sanctified, Acts xxvi. 18; and so he may deliver us into the kingdom of glory, when the devil and his instruments shall be cast into hell.

[2.] The duties. The notion of the Lord doth call for duty and obedience, and it is our part to obey: Heb. v. 9, ‘He became the author of salvation to them that obey him.’ Our obedience is the best testimony of our subjection to him. This is to be pressed, because the carnal world is usually guilty of a double injury to Christ; one is, that they seem to like him as a saviour, but refuse him as a lord, whereas Christ is not only a saviour to bless, but a lord to rule and command. These two

things must not be divided. But some catch at comforts but neglect duty. Certainly a libertine, yokeless spirit is very natural to us: Ps. xii. 4, 'Who is lord over us?' The world sticketh at Christ's authority: Luke xix. 14, 'We will not have this man to rule over us.' His laws, and restraints of repentance, faith, and obedience are their great burden: Ps. ii. 3, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' If he will come as a saviour, he shall be welcome; but we cannot endure he should be chief. The greatest part of the world is libertine, if not in opinion, yet in practice. They would not be under command. He might have customers more than enough for his benefits, but they look upon self-denial, mortification, and strict walking as harsh and severe. If we love privileges we must not decline duties: Hosea x. 11, 'Ephraim is a heifer not taught, that loveth to tread out the corn,' but will not break the clods. The mouth of the ox was not to be muzzled that trod out the corn. In short, Christ is the 'head of the church,' as well as 'the saviour of the body,' Eph. v. 23. You must give him obedience as well as apply his benefits. Where he is a saviour, he will be prince and lord too. Many carry it so as if they would have Christ to redeem them, but Satan to rule and govern them. Christ must heal their consciences, but the world hath their affections. No; if thou hast no care to obey him as a lord, thy esteem of him is but imaginary, thy knowledge is but partial, thy application of him unsound. The other injury is, that if he will accept of an empty title, and some superficial compliments and observances, he shall have enough of that, and be called Lord oft enough; but there must be a thorough subjection, to do his strict and spiritual duties: Luke vi. 46, 'Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I say?' It is a mockage to call him Lord and not do the things which he hath commanded. This is disclaimed: Mat. vii. 21, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' By 'the will of my Father' is meant the whole duty we owe to God; for this is not made void by Christ, but established upon better terms.

Use. To persuade us to own Christ as a lord. All is in his hands; he hath *potestatem vitae et necis*, power of life and death: James iv. 12, 'There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.' He hath absolute power to dispose and state the terms of salvation and damnation: John xvii. 2, 'Thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.'

1. Let us enter into the state of subjects, servants, and vassals to him, by renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, who were once our old lords, but were indeed our enemies. As the people said, Isa. xxvi. 13, 'Other lords besides thee have had dominion over us.' These must be dispossessed before Christ can take the throne. With godly sorrow and detestation let us throw off these things, resolving no more to hearken to Satan's temptations; to grow more dead to the vanities and pleasures of the world, and to tame and subdue our own flesh. Engage yourselves to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as your God, as your Lord and happiness, returning by Christ through the Spirit to the love and obedience of your creator, and depending upon him for the effects of his love to you. You see his readiness to help poor wretches liable to eternal wrath, and to make them eternally

blessed with this glory. We enter ourselves subjects to this sovereign Lord, that we may enjoy the rights and privileges of his kingdom.

2. Be not subjects only by mime and profession, as many are, and by their ignorance, unbelief, and disobedience are little better than heathens and aliens. We must not be partial subjects, to obey in some measure. No; you must 'walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,' Col. i. 10. 'Of the Lord,' that is, the Lord Christ. We must love him, and serve him, and study to please him in all things, not in a few only, which are not cross to our interests and wills, but we must give him an entire universal obedience to all his laws.

SERMON IV.

That I may win Christ.—PHIL. iii. 8.

THIRD point. That there should be some application when we consider Christ and address ourselves to know him. (1.) What is this application; (2.) Why.

I. What is this application.

I shall give you—(1.) Some distinctions; (2.) Some observations.

1. Distinctions. There is a twofold application; one that more immediately respects comfort, the other duty. The application of comfort is when I respect Christ under such a term as implies some privilege to me; that he is my saviour, stood in my room before God, bearing my sins, and suffered the wrath of God for me: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me.' The application that more immediately respects duty is, when I apprehend Christ under such a term as inferreth my obligation to duty and obedience; as here he speaketh of the knowledge of Christ not only as *the* Lord, but *my* Lord: John xx. 28, 'My Lord and my God.' Now this application is always necessary, and yet questionable. My laying claim to privileges may be disallowed, but my obligation to duty is clear and certain.

2. Another distinction. There is the application of faith and the application of assurance.

[1.] The application of faith is a particular application of Christ and the promise to ourselves, so as to excite us to look after the benefits and ends for which Christ is appointed. This certainly is necessary for all. That which God revealeth I should know for my good: Job v. 27, 'Hear it, and know it for thy good;' Rom. viii. 31, 'What shall we then say to these things?' In this business it is the more necessary, because we are concerned both in the merit of the Redeemer and the offer of grace in the promise: Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is the word of this salvation sent.' It is a message

from God; sent to excite me to accept of the remedy offered. It is my duty to make general grace particular; as to obey commands moral, so also evangelical. And the true nature of faith is an accepting of Christ, to be to me what God appointed him to be, and to do for me what God hath appointed him to do for poor sinners; suppose, to 'be prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins,' Acts v. 31; for certainly I for my particular am to accept of the offered remedy; and since the grace of God hath not excepted me, I am not to except myself.

[2.] The application of assurance is, when I actually determine that my own sins are pardoned, that I am adopted into God's family, or that I am appointed to eternal glory by Jesus Christ. This cannot be made without some sense of our sincerity, because the promises of God require a qualification, and performance of duty in the person to whom the promises are made. Therefore we cannot be certain of our own interest till we have performed the duty and have the qualification. 'We must certainly know that we have performed the duty and are duly qualified. On this application the apostle speaketh, 1 John iii. 19, 'Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.'

[3.] The application, which concerneth our own interest in privileges by Christ, may be either implicit or explicit, dark and reserved, or clear and open.

(1.) Implicit, dark and reserved, when we have not so full a persuasion of our good estate, but comfortable encouragements to wait upon God in the way of our duty. This is expressed, 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' Believers make a shift sometimes to creep into the backdoor of the promise. The general proposal of grace on God's part, and serious diligence on ours in seeking after it, giveth some hope, though as yet our sincerity be not fully witnessed to us, and we have not that sure and firm claim which we may have afterwards.

(2.) More explicit, clear and open. This is expressed in those forms: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of his glorious grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved;' 2 Cor. v. 1, 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' A christian knoweth not only where he is, but where he shall be: 2 Tim. v, 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.'

Secondly, I shall give you some observations.

1. That the application of faith may be without the application of assurance; sometimes they go both together. The application of faith we have, and must have, because the promise of pardon to the penitent believer is universal, that it includeth you as well as others. God offereth pardon and life to you, and you must consent to accept it upon his terms; and that Christ may be yours,

and you his, to the ends propounded in the gospel, you must choose him, and depend upon him as the only mediator, resolving to venture your souls and all your hopes upon him. You are not christians without it. But it may be all this while you do not know that he doth or will own you, because the sincerity of faith and love is doubtful to you. Sometimes they go together, as when your interest in him and his interest in you is clear: Cant. ii. 16, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' Resignation and full appropriation here is clear.

2. The one is necessary, the other is comfortable.

[1.] The one is necessary. A sound convert, who esteemeth highly of this knowledge of Christ, hath no rest in his soul till he doth apply Christ; which application is expressed diversely in scripture; some times by receiving Christ: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, to as many as believed on his name.' We receive what God offereth; he offereth him to be prince and saviour, and we receive him to be a lord to us, a saviour to us, to guide us, and bring us in particular to God in the way he hath appointed. So it is expressed also by apprehending Christ: Phil, iii. 12, 'That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' The words of the spouse do explain this: Cant. iii. 4, 'I held him, and would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.' When we are resolved not to give over the pursuit till we find Christ, and get him into our hearts, that he may dwell there by faith; choose him, cleave constantly to him. Again, this application is expressed by 'putting on the Lord Jesus,' Rom. xiii. 14; Gal. iii. 27, 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.' By faith we make application of Christ to ourselves; and Christ so applied is as close and near to us as our garments. So John vi. 56, it is expressed by eating his flesh and drinking his blood, 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him.' He sticketh not so close to us as our garments only, but as a part of our substance. The seeing of meat, though never so wholesome, doth not nourish, but the eating of it; so general grace doth not profit till it be applied. He that resigneth up himself to be ruled by Christ is made a member of his mystical body, and so there is a mutual in habitation; the same life which enlivened Christ enliveneth us.

[2.] It is comfortable to have a particular interest confirmed to us: Job xix. 25, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' A sight of our particular interest is attainable, and should be looked after: Gal. ii. 20, 'He loved me, and gave himself for me.' There is a double ground of rejoicing—the certainty of God's promise, and the evidence of our own sincerity.

3. That it is a support to us to have the darker way of applying Christ and his benefits, when we have not the full certainty that they belong to us. This is an encouragement to an humble soul that is willing to obey and wait upon God. They are sensible they have as much need of Christ as others, for they seek after him as lost and undone without him. They have an equal proposal of his grace: 'The righteousness of God is unto all and upon all that believe, and that without difference,' Rom. iii. 22. They have an equal obligation to seek after it, for it is the 'common salvation;' 1 John

iii. 23, ‘And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ;’ John vi. 29, ‘This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.’ They are anxious, serious, diligent, and have been kept alive and carried on against the oppositions of the flesh and the world, in the pursuit of this salvation thus long. If they had been asleep, and the good seed had been choked by sensuality, it had been more questionable; still the general grace upholdeth you in waiting upon God; you dare not give over following hard after God, though you have not met with full satisfaction. You are of ‘the generation of them that seek him,’ Ps. xxiv. 6. Now it is better to be a seeker than a wanderer: Heb. vi. 10-12, ‘For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have showed towards his name, in that you have ministered, and do minister, unto the saints: and we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.’

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II. I come to show why there should be such an application of Christ.

1. Because things that nearly concern us do most affect us. The love of God to sinners in general doth not so affect me as when I know that ‘he loved me, and gave himself for me,’ Gal. ii. 20. That is the quickening motive to stir us up to the spiritual life; especially when this ‘love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us,’ Rom. v. 5; Eph. i. 13, ‘After ye believed the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.’ It is not sufficient to know the gospel to be a doctrine of salvation to others, but we must find it to be a doctrine of salvation to ourselves in particular, and apply the promises to our own hearts, that they may quicken and enliven us to obedience. That doth most stir up joy and thankfulness and praise; for still we are affected with things as we are concerned in them ourselves.

2. Without some application there can be no interest or benefit to ns; for general grace must some way be made particular, or else it cannot profit us; else why are not all justified, all adopted, all saved? There is the same merciful God, and the same sufficient Saviour, the same gracious covenant. Some apply this grace, others do not. Blood shed will not avail, unless it be blood sprinkled: Heb. xii. 24, ‘And to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.’ The making atonement is not effectual to salvation unless the atonement be received, owned and applied: Rom. v. 11, ‘We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.’ Christ doth not save at a distance, but as received into our hearts; as a plaster doth not heal at a distance till it be ap plied to the sore. It is our souls that were wounded, and our souls must have the cure. The light that illuminateth must shine into the understanding; the life that quickeneth must be in the substance which is quickened by it. If the bare discovery of grace, without the applying of grace, were enough, the gospel would save all alike, the haters and despisers of it as well as those that submit to it. Therefore we ourselves must be informed, convinced, and converted by it.

3. The scripture insisteth much upon a personal entering into covenant with God; that every one of us should choose God for our sovereign Lord and portion, and Christ Jesus for our Redeemer and Saviour, and the Holy Ghost for our guide, sanctifier, and comforter. Every one must personally engage for himself. As, for instance, it is not enough that Christ engage for us as the common surety of all the elect: Heb. vii. 22, 'By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.' Something he did for us and in our name; but every one must take a bond upon himself before he can have the benefit of it. You must 'yield up yourselves to the Lord,' 2 Chron. xxx. 8. It is not enough that the church engage for us as a visible political body, or a community and society of men that are in visible covenant with God and Christ: Ezek. xvi. 8, 'Thou enteredst into covenant with me, and becamest mine.' They profess in common Christ to be their Lord, and so are a people who are subjects of his kingdom, and have his protection and blessing: but every man must covenant for himself: Ezek. xx. 37, 'I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.' It is an allusion to the sheep passing out of the fold when they were tithed for God: Lev. xxvii. 32, 'Whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy to the Lord.' God will not covenant with us in the lump and body, but every one must particularly be minded of his duty. It is not enough that our parents did engage for us in baptism: Deut. xxix. 9-12, 'Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do. Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers with all the men of Israel: your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in the camp, from the hewer of thy wood, unto the drawer of thy water: that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.' They did in the name of their little ones avouch God to be their God, as we devote, dedicate, and engage our children to God in baptism. No man savingly transacts this work for another. We must ratify the covenant in our own persons, and make our own 'professed subjection to the gospel of Christ,' 2 Cor. ix. 13. This is a work cannot be done by proxy and assignees. Our parents' dedication will not profit us without it. Once more, this must not only be done in words, or some visible external rites that may signify so much; as, for instance, when we publicly make profession in the church of Christ's being our Lord; it is not enough, but a man must engage his heart to God: Jer. xxx. 21, 'Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?' Yea, this is a business that must be done between God and our own souls, where no outward witnesses are conscious to it. God speaketh to the soul in this transaction: Ps. xxxv. 3, 'Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.' And the soul speaketh to God: Lam. iii. 24, 'The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore I will hope in him.' This covenant is carried on in soul-language: Ps. xvi. 2, 'O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord!' Upon this personal inward covenanting all the privileges of the covenant do depend.

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4. Because our interest in him is the ground of our comfort and confidence. It is not comfortable to us, or not so comfortable, that there is a God, and there is a Christ. Devils believe so far; but the thoughts of God and Christ are a part of their torment: James ii. 19, 'Thou believest that there is

one God; thou doest well: the devils believe, and tremble;' Mat. viii. 29, 'And they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come to torment us before the time?' The remembrance of God and Christ will be troublesome to us if he be not our God and our Lord. You shall see the saints express their particular interest to be the great cause of their comfort: I Sara. xxx. 6, 'David encouraged himself in the Lord his God;' Hab. iii. 18, 'Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of ray salvation;' Luke i. 47, 'My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' To see a good thing, and you as much need of it as others; to see a Christ ready to save sinners, and we have no comfort and benefit by him, is a matter of grief rather than of rejoicing.

Use. To press us to this application. A title to his benefits needs good evidence. But we have no reason to scruple our obligation to duty and obedience. If God hath made him Lord and Christ, let him be your Lord and Christ.

1. Resolve to give up yourselves to him, to serve him and obey him, though you know not whether he will give himself to you, to pardon you, and bless you everlastingly. A believer cannot always say, God is mine, or Christ is mine; yet a believer is always resolved to be his: 'I am thine, save me,' Ps. cxix. 94.

2. In applying Christ to yourselves, seek necessary grace rather than comfort. Go to him to renew and change your natures, rather than to give you peace; not to have the grief by reason of sin assuaged only or chiefly, but to have the distemper removed. It is a mountebank's care to stop the pain and let alone the cause; and such a cure do they seek who are more earnest for ease and comfort than for grace. A good christian is troubled with the power of sin as well as the guilt of it, and mindeth the rectitude of all his faculties as well as ease and peace of conscience, that he may be enabled to walk with God thereafter in the ways of obedience, as well as enjoy the pardon of his sins. Christ purchased this double benefit for us: Isa. liii. 5, 'The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' Peace and healing. He would be an unwise man who, having broken his leg, should only mind to be eased of his pain, but not take care to have it set right again; so foolish is that christian who is earnest for comfort, but taketh no care how to be directed and enabled to please God. Sin in some sense is worse than damnation. The taking away of guilt frees us *a malo naturali*, from a natural evil; but the other, *a malo morali*, from a moral evil. Christ delights to be obeyed in his work; for it suiteth with his design, which is to restore us to God, and fit us for his service: Rev. v. 9, 'Thou hast redeemed us to God.'

3. When God presseth upon you more than ordinarily, do not receive this grace in vain, and refuse your own mercies. When he draweth, you should run, Cant. i. 4; when he knocketh, you should open, Rev. iii. 20. When the wind bloweth, let loose the sails, John iii. 9; when the waters are stirred, put in for cure, John v. 4. At such times God doth more particularly apply his grace to you; therefore you should often apply and entertain the motions before they cool and slacken.

I come now to discourse concerning the end, ‘That I may gain Christ.’ The apostle would not only know Christ, but gain Christ.

1. Christ is gained when we get an interest in him and his benefits, when God hath called us to the fellowship of his Son, 1 Cor. i. 9, or, in another place, μέτοχοι Χριστοῦ, Heb. iii. 14, ‘We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.’ The ungodly have no part in him, but believers have. The apostle had already won Christ, but he would more and more win, and be more nearly conjoined to him. That I may win Christ, is that I may get a larger portion in him, or more full enjoyment of him.

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2. This word κερδήσω is put in opposition to the loss that he had incurred that he might be made a partaker of Christ. There was gain enough to recompense all his losses in having Christ. If God and Christ seem not better things to us than the world, we judge ourselves to have no part in him.

Doct. To be made partakers of Christ is the greatest gain.

To evidence this I shall show you—(1.) What gain we have in having Christ; (2.) How much this gain excelleth all other gain.

I. What gain we have in having Christ.

1. He is our ransom from the wrath of God, and so you have some what whereby to appease your guilty fears: Col. i. 14, ‘In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.’ Oh, what a mercy is this to have sin forgiven, to be free from the curse of the law, and the wrath of the eternal God! Ask a tender conscience that groaneth under the weight of sin whether it be not a great benefit to have sin forgiven? Ps. xxxix. 4, ‘Mine iniquities are gone over my head as a heavy burden; they are too heavy for me.’ If you think them too scrupulous, go to a stormy wounded conscience: Prov. xviii. 14, ‘A wounded conscience who can bear?’ Ask Judas, or any of those whose souls are ready to choose strangling rather than life. The damned in hell, who bear their own iniquity, and are past forgiveness, and feel sin to be sin indeed, they would give ten thousand worlds if they had them for the pardon of their sins. Surely then it is great gain to have sin pardoned, to be justified by faith in Christ, and be at peace with God: ‘Blessed is he whose sins are forgiven.’ The heart of trouble is broken when that is done.

2. It is Christ Jesus hath purchased the favour of God, that we may have comfortable access to him and fellowship with him, he having opened the door by the merit of his passion, and keeping it still open, by his constant intercession. By his death he removed the legal exclusion, and remaineth as our intercessor at God’s right hand. All the riches in the world could not purchase such a favour for us. Gold and silver are poor corruptible things to the precious blood of the Son of God, by which blood ‘we have entrance into the holiest,’ Heb. x. 19. Therefore this gain we have by Christ, that we may once more have access to God.

3. Our natures are renewed, and not only the favour and fellowship of God is restored, but his image also. The Spirit is given, whereby we are renewed: Titus iii. 5, 6, ‘By the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;’ and we are made ‘partakers of the divine nature,’ 2 Peter i. 4; that is, made like God, and amiable in his sight: ‘Partakers of his holiness;’ Heb. xii. 10, ‘But he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.’ This is profit, not the pelf of this world. All the comforts of the world, that please and feed our sensuality, are nothing to it. If a beast were made a man, he would not complain for want of provender; so if we are made partakers of a divine nature, we have no cause to complain if straitened in the world. Thou hast that which is better, a nature to incline thee to live to God, and with God in a state of holy communion with him.

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4. Christ is our treasury and storehouse, from whence we fetch all our supplies: ‘But of his fulness we receive grace for grace;’ 1 Cor. i. 30, ‘He is made of God to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.’ This is the riches of the saints; they love the true riches. God would not trust the stock in our hands, but Christ keepeth it for us. Therefore in gaining him you gain all things which a gracious heart prizeth, all that is needful to maintain our expenses to heaven.

5. By him we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life: Rom. viii. 17, ‘If sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.’ Surely everlasting glory is a greater treasure than all the wealth in the world. Now for a title to this, we have the promise and grant of God, the merit of the Redeemer, and the earnest of the Spirit to build upon; therefore their gain is exceeding great if they have Christ.

II. How much this gain excelleth all other gain.

1. It is the most comfortable gain, for here is comfort at all times and in all cases. When nothing else can ease the troubled mind, in the day of wrath, in the day of death, this will be a support to you: Phil. i. 21, ‘To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.’ You get infinitely much more than you can lose upon death. Death maketh all other gain useless to us; openeth a door for us to enter into our greatest felicity. We leave worldly wealth for the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints; a shed for a palace, an ‘earthly tabernacle for a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;’ which is πολλῶ μαῦλλον, ‘much more better.’ We leave friends for the spirits of just men made perfect; ordinances for the vision of God. The glory, and riches, and honours of the world are nothing worth when we come to die. If you have not gained Christ, in what a miserable plight will you be then, when you must go into an unknown world, to an unknown God, and have no intercessor at his right hand to plead for you! When the happiness of God’s children beginneth, your worldly happiness endeth. Death parts you and your wealth, but the believer then goeth to take possession of his blessed inheritance.

2. It is the most universal gain: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, ‘All things are yours,’ because ‘ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.’ Ordinances, providences, graces, comforts, this world, and the next, death

between both. Yea, with Christ we receive temporal blessings: 1 Tim. iv. 8, ‘Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of this life, and that which is to come.’ So far forth as our wise God seeth them expedient for us, for his own glory, and the good of our souls: Rom. viii. 32, ‘He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him give us all things?’ Protection, maintenance; if we want these comforts, it is that we may want a snare; not out of any defect of love in God, but his abundant care and jealousy over us. A father may give his child the inheritance of an orchard, and yet deny him a green. apple. God giveth us an ample portion with Christ, but he will dispense the enjoyment of these as he seeth good for us.

3. It is an everlasting gain, that will never fail us, but yield us a blessedness when the world shall be no more: Luke x. 42, ‘One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall never be taken from her.’ The better part shall never be taken from us, worldly riches may fail us, but never spiritual gain. If Christ be gain now, he will be gain to you to all eternity. The world now seemeth to gratify our senses, but when you are going out of the world, you will cry out, Oh, how hath the world deceived you! What is a little momentary delight or temporal profit to this eternal treasure that will never fail you? Luke xii. 20, 21, ‘And God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; and then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God;’ Job xxvii. 8, ‘What is the hope of the hypocrite, if he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?’ You are living on earth, and stepping into eternity; look after that gain that will stand by you, and do you good to all eternity.

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4. This gain sanctifieth us, all other corrupts us: 1 Tim. vi. 10, ‘The love of money is the root of all evil.’ It is called ‘filthy lucre;’ it doth debase the soul to something that is inferior to it; but this gain maketh you of an excellent and divine spirit.

Use 1. For reproof of two sorts of men—

1. Those that take but little or no pains to gain Christ: ‘What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?’ Mat xvi. 26. What pleasure or comfort can you have in all things that you have gained, if you have not gained Christ? How will it be found at last, when it shall be said to thee, Luke xvi. 25, ‘Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things;’ when your wealth is of no use to you, but your immortal souls must return to God, beggarly and naked as they are.

2. Those that lose Christ, and part with him for a little temporal profit or carnal satisfaction. As many forget God, and Christ, and heaven, and all, so they may have the pleasures of the present life; ‘As Esau sold his birthright for one morsel of meat,’ Heb. xii. 16. These part with their bargain for trifles. So much of Christ as they have, they part with; profession, ordinances, common graces, some taste of his love, some hopes of his glory he offereth, some sense of religion which formerly held them to their duty. They may go a little way with Christ, and after fall off.

Use 2. Is instruction.

1. If Christ be such gain, then you may make some losses for his sake, and part with other things for Christ's sake, if you cannot have them and Christ too. If you should part with all the world, what is this to Christ? If you should be scorned and derided, it is more than to have worldly wealth at your dispose: Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.' If you part with never so much for him, you can be no losers: Mark x. 29, 30, 'And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel; but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come life everlasting.' Those who suffer loss for Christ are gainers in the end; and in him, and with him, all things that can make them happy. In this life the peace of a good conscience hath a hundred-fold better than all the sufferings of this world, and in the world to come as happy as heart can wish. See it set forth, Rev. vii. 14, 15, 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.' That is happiness indeed, to be for ever before God's throne; they are out of gunshot, free from all temptations and dangers which they are now exposed to.

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2. That we should not murmur at our estate, when others go away with other things, if we have Christ. Our heart should rejoice in Christ above all things. What if they have a more plentiful portion in the world? You have that which is better worth, and should be all gain to you: Ps. xvii. 14, 15, 'From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure; they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' David allayeth his envy and repinings by this argument.

Use 3. To exhort you and persuade you to get Christ. You hear them gladly who would instruct you in the ways of worldly gain; why should you not be as desirous to gain Christ?

1. He is the best gain, if God be to be preferred before the creature, and eternal glory before fading riches, and the soul before the body. In gaining him you gain the image and favour and fellowship of God, and the hopes of eternal life.

2. This gain may be gotten, and gotten at a cheap rate: Isa. lv. 1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price;' Rev. iii. 18, 'I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.' Means are appointed, word and sacraments.

3. Seek it and have it; choose it and have it. In worldly things you are not sure to speed after all your toil and pains: Job xxvii. 8, ‘What is the hope of the hypocrite though he hath gained?’ A worldling doth not always make a thriving bargain: Luke v. 5, ‘We have toiled all night, and have caught nothing.’

Quest. What must we do that we may gain Christ?

Ans. That cannot be told you in a breath; but if you will gain Christ, you must—

(1.) Use the means; the word, which convinceth you of your lost estate; and the gospel offereth Christ as your gain and suitable remedy; the sacraments: 1 Cor. x. 16, ‘The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?’

(2.) You must submit to his terms; sell all for the pearl of great price, Mat. xiii. 46; renounce your lusts; devote yourselves and your interests to be disposed by him at his will and pleasure.

(3.) Trust in him that is true; depend on his merits and promises: Gal. v. 5, ‘We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith;’ Acts x. 43, ‘To him give all the prophets witness, that; through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.’ And when troubles and difficulties arise, continue with patience in well-doing, Rom. ii. 7.

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SERMON V.

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.—PHIL. iii. 9.

IN these words the apostle amplifieth the gain we have by Christ. He had spoken of gaining Christ, meaning thereby an interest in his person and benefits. Among the prime benefits he mentioneth his righteousness made ours by faith: ‘And be found in him,’ &c.

In the words we have—

1. A distinction between two sorts of righteousness; his ‘own righteousness,’ and the ‘righteousness of God.’

2. A description of either; his own righteousness, ‘which is of the law;’ and the righteousness of God, which is by or ‘through the faith of Christ.’

3. His different respect to either; the one is disclaimed, not ‘having mine own righteousness;’ the other affected; he would ‘be found having the righteousness of faith.’

For explication—

First, The distinction. What is meant by ‘his own righteousness?’ Either the false, superficial righteousness which he had as a pharisee, mentioned ver. 6, ‘Touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless;’ exact in legal observances; or else any other righteousness that might be thought of, that standeth in opposition to Christ or in competition with him. It is not meant of the graces of the Spirit, nor of things that stand in a necessary subordination to him. Well, then, any righteousness of our own, opposed to Christ, is excluded. But for the other part of the distinction, what is meant by the righteousness of God? His gracious method or evangelical course of pardoning sin to penitent believers in the gospel, and accepting them to life in Christ. And it is called ‘the righteousness of God,’ because it is found out by God, and accepted by him, and given us by God. It is found out by God: ‘Deliver him from going down to the pit; for I have found a ransom,’ Job xxxiii. 24. The way of satisfying God’s justice by a ransom was not devised or found out by men or angels, but by God himself. And it is given us by God: ‘For he is of God made unto us righteousness,’ 1 Cor. i. 30; and 2 Cor. v. 21, ‘We are made the righteousness of God in him.’ And partly because it is accepted by God. It is a righteousness wherein God acquiesceth, and which he accepteth for our absolution: Mat. iii. 17, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ God is satisfied with Christ’s obedience to the death, as a perfect ransom for us, and is well pleased with those who make use of it, and apply it in the appointed way; namely, the faith and obedience of Christ; that is, being ‘justified by faith.’ We continue to live by faith, and being married to Christ, do bring forth fruit unto God. Certainly with the righteousness of God we may appear with all manner of confidence before the throne of God, and look for all manner of blessings from him. The law which condemneth us is the law of God, the wrath which we fear is the wrath of God, and the glory which we expect is the glory of God, and the presence into which we come is the presence of God, and the righteousness by which we stand is the righteousness of God.

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Secondly, The description of these different and opposite righteousnesses. His own righteousness he describeth to be that which is by ‘the law;’ the other, the righteousness which is by ‘the faith of Christ.’ The meaning is, it is appointed by God, merited by Christ, and received by faith. Now these two are often opposed; as Rom. iii. 21, 22, ‘But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference.’ So again, Rom. x. 3, ‘For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.’ Where you see there is a perfect opposition between our own righteousness and the righteousness of God, the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith. The law may be taken two ways—either for the law of works or the law of Moses.

1. For the law of works, which required a man to be justified by a perfect sinless obedience of his own; this is that which is often opposed to the righteousness of God by faith in Christ; and

against this doth the apostle reason when he reasoneth against justification by works or our own righteousness, as will be evident by two places: Rom. i. 17, 18, ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.’ That is, the wrath and vengeance of God is denounced against those who are under the law covenant, which they have broken in every point and tittle, in every table, in every commandment. There clearly the two revelations are opposed, the law-covenant in which the wrath of God is revealed, and the gospel-covenant in which the righteousness of God is revealed. The other place is Rom. iii. 20, ‘Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.’ Take the illative particle, *therefore*, as it is a conclusion or inference drawn out of his former argument; did he prove them guilty of the breach of ceremonies? No; but of moral duties. Take the reason subjoined, ‘for by the law is the knowledge of sin;’ questionless he meaneth the moral law as it was a covenant of works; by that is the knowledge of sin, *quoad natur am peccati, et inhaerentiam in subjecto*, in respect of the nature of sin, and its inherence in us. To fallen man it doth not discover his righteousness but his sin. Now it is impossible for us to be justified by this legal righteousness. None of us have such a personal legal righteousness; for then there were no sin, no place for confession, nor for Christ. No; we have all broken with God; yea, there is no one work perfectly justifiable by the law: ‘all are corrupt and abominable, there is none that doeth good, no not one,’ Rom. iii. 12.

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2. The apostle disputeth also against the works of the Mosaical or ceremonial law, and proves that by that law no man could be justified; and therefore the Jews did seek righteousness where it was not to be found, whilst they stuck so close to that law, being guilty therein of a threefold error—First, that they thought pardon of sin and acceptance with God were to be obtained by the bare works of that law; secondly, that they overlooked, and rejected Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every believer; thirdly that they would keep up this law when it was to cease and be abrogated. These are the errors of theirs which Paul everywhere disputeth against.

Thirdly, His different respect to either of those; he renounced the one and affected the other.

1. That which he renounced was partly the superficial righteousness which consisteth in the external observances of the law, a mere speculative righteousness, and partly the righteousness of the law-covenant, which some did falsely imagine they did or might fulfil; whilst arrogantly holding up the dignity of their own works, they refused to embrace the gospel.

2. That which he affected was, to ‘be found in Christ, having the righteousness of God through faith in Christ.’ And there—

[1.] The state of his person, or the way how this is applied or conveyed to us; by being found in Christ.’ The word. *found* is emphatical, and often used with respect to the day of judgment: 2 Cor. v. 3, ‘If so be we shall not be found naked;’ and 2 Peter iii. 14, ‘See that ye be found of him

in peace, without spot and blameless;' Mat. xxiv. 46, 'Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.' It implieth two things—

(1.) That the last day is a day of exact search and trial. Wrath maketh inquisition for sinners; we shall be found out to be what we are.

(2.) That the last day cometh upon the greatest part of the world by way of surprisal. They do not look for it, nor prepare for it. It cometh upon them unawares, like 'a thief in the night,' 2 Peter iii. 10, unthought of, unexpected by the most, who will not be awakened out of their sins, and do not look for it, but are found of it.

[2.] 'In Christ,' that is, incorporated into his mystical body, or united to him by the Spirit; as a branch ingrafted into the true vine: John xv. 2, 'Every branch in me that beareth fruit;' or found in the ark when the flood cometh. Paul was lost before, then found in Christ: 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ,' Rom. viii. 1. Being united to him by faith, love, and holiness, we are made partakers of his righteousness.

Again, The righteousness wherewith he would appear before God, the righteousness of God by faith in Christ. The righteousness of the new covenant is twofold—(1.) Supreme, prime, and chief, and that is the righteousness of Christ; (2.) Secondary and subordinate, and that is the righteousness of faith and obedience. As to our first right, faith; as to our continued right, new obedience. These things must be a little cleared, that we may not mistake.

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1. For the supreme principal righteousness, by virtue of which we are reconciled to God. It is Christ's obedience unto the death. So it is said, Rom. v. 18, 19, 'As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous;' that is, our great righteousness before God, by which his justice is satisfied, and by the merit of which all the blessings of the new covenant are procured for us.

2. The subordinate righteousness, or the way, and means, and condition by which we get an interest in and right to this supreme righteousness, is faith and new obedience. But for a distinct use—

[1.] As to our first entrance into the covenant of God, faith is required: Rom. iv. 3, 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.'

[2.] As to our continuance in this blessed privilege, new obedience is required; with respect to which it is said, 1 John iii. 7, 'Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.' And thereby his interest in Christ is confirmed: 1 John ii. 29, 'If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of God.'

These scriptures are plain and express; and new obedience has respect to that which is the result of the final judgment: Mat. xxv. 46, 'And these shall go away into ever lasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.' And the righteous there are such as are fruitful in good works. Now from this exposition we may learn how we are justified by faith only, without works, which Paul asserteth; and by works, and not by faith only, which is the assertion of the apostle James. Justification hath respect to some accusation. Now as there is a twofold law, so there is a twofold accusation and justification—the law of works and the law of grace. Now when we are accused as breakers of the law of works, that is, as sinners, obnoxious to the wrath of God, we plead Christ's satisfaction as our righteousness, no works of our own. But when we are accused as non-performers of the conditions of the covenant of grace, as being rejecters or neglecters of Christ the mediator, we are justified by producing our faith or sincere obedience. So that our righteousness by the new covenant is subordinate to our universal righteousness with respect to the great love of God, and that we have only by Christ. If we are charged that we have broken the first covenant, the covenant of works, we allege Christ's satisfaction and merit; if charged not to have performed the conditions of the law of grace, we answer it by producing our faith, repentance, and new obedience, and so show it to be a false charge. Our first and supreme righteousness consisteth in the pardon of our sins, and in our acceptance in the Beloved, and our right to impunity and glory. Our second and subordinate righteousness, in having the true condition of pardon and life. In the first sense Christ's righteousness is only our justification and righteousness. Faith and repentance, or new obedience, is not the least part of it. But in the second, believing, repenting, and obeying is our righteousness in their several respective ways; namely, that the righteousness of Christ may be ours, and continue ours.

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Doct. It shall go well with those, and those only, who in the day of exact search and trial shall be found in Christ, not having the righteousness which is by the law, but the righteousness of God which is by faith in Christ Jesus.

I shall endeavour to make it good by these considerations—

1. That the day of judgment will be a day of exact search and trial. No man can lie hid in the throng and multitude of mankind, but the state of his person and all his works will be made manifest, whether they be wrought in God. God will not deal with us in the lump, by nations, or by any societies and communities of mankind with which we are bundled up, but by head and poll: Rom. xiv. 12, 'Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.' Every tub must stand upon its own bottom; and every man must come before his supreme judge, and give an account of his own actions. The particular inquiry that shall be made is expressed by 'opening the books;' Rev. xx. 12, 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' You see there none shall escape this judicature; kings nor subjects, rich nor poor, powerful nor weak, old nor young; all that have breathed and

have life. And the judgment shall be accurate and particular, for all is upon record; for nothing is missed and mistaken in its circumstances. The books that contain as it were a diary of our lives shall be opened; they are sealed now, it is not known what is in them; but then all actions and events, returns and receipts, mercies, rods, ordinances, providences, sins, graces shall then be produced. God's register is exact, and every man's doom and sentence shall be pronounced accordingly. According to your repentance and faith, or impenitence and disobedience, will Christ deal with you. One place more: Ps. 1. 21, 'I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thine eyes.' Alas! most men's reckonings are in great confusion now, but then they shall be brought to remembrance with time and place. The sinner may then see the whole story of his life orderly repeated out of God's book of remembrance and the sinner's conscience, to his fearful astonishment and confusion. But to the comfort of the elect, the book of life shall be opened; the graces vouchsafed to them, the services done, and sufferings undergone by them, remembered to their joy and honour.

2. That in this day of exact trial there is no appearing before God with safety and comfort without some righteousness of one sort or another. Why? Because it is a holy and just God before whom we appear: 'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' Gen. xviii. 25; and 1 Sam. vi. 20, 'Who is able to stand before the holy God?' If not now in the time of patience, how then in the time of his recompense? His holiness inclineth him to hate sin, and his justice to punish it. The holiness of God is at the bottom of the creatures' fears. We fear his wrath, because it is armed with power, but awakened by his justice, but rooted in his holiness; that is the fundamental reason of our dread. Again, it is a holy law according to which the process of that day shall be guided, a law that is clean and pure, and alloweth not the least evil. When David looked upon the brightness of the sun, he admired God; but when upon the purity of the law, he abaseth himself: Ps. xix. 12, 'Lord, who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret sins.' Well, then, there must be one righteousness or another, if we would speed well in that day.

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3. The righteousness of the first sort by the law of works we cannot have; for the covenant of works requireth of us perfect obedience upon pain of eternal death if we perform it not; for the tenor of it is, 'Do and live; sin and die.' The least sin, according to that covenant, merits eternal death: Gal. iii. 10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them,' By this covenant none can stand; for we have all sinned, and are liable to that death: Rom. iii. 23, 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,' Rom. v. 12, 'By sin death entered into the world; and death came upon all, for that all have sinned,' By sin we are all under guilt and the curse, and so are become children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3, which is the wretched condition of all mankind. Therefore, if we stick to the old covenant, how shall we appear in the judgment, and what righteousness have we to plead before God? and that is the reason why the saints, who have awakening thoughts of this sin and misery, deprecate the rigour of the first covenant: Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;' Ps. cxliii. 3, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' Woe unto us if God should deal

with us according to his strict justice, and we had nothing to bring forth but our own personal righteousness and obedience. We were undone for ever if sentence should pass according to this law.

4. Man having broken the law of nature or works, is lost or disabled to his own recovery, or to do anything whereby to satisfy God. We cannot make any satisfaction to God for the pardon of sin, or escaping the curse of the law; or change our natures to return to the obedience of it; or if we could, the paying of new debts will not quit old scores. What can we do to satisfy justice, and reconcile such rebellious creatures to God? 'The redemption of the soul is precious;' that work would cease for ever if it lay upon man's hands, Ps. xlix. 7, 8. And as little can we renew the soul as reconcile it. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Surely not one. Will a nature that is carnal resist and overcome the flesh, and abhor the sin which it dearly loveth? Therefore man is shut up under misery, without strength, unable to recover himself and return to God: Rom. v. 6, 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.'

5. Because man was under such an impotency, Jesus Christ became the mediator, stepped between us and the full execution of the curse; redeemed us from this lost condition, by taking the penalty upon himself, and. thereby satisfied the lawgiver, and attained the ends of the law. He became the sacrifice to offended justice: Eph. v. 2, 'And hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour;' and a ransom for sinners, 1 Tim. ii. 6; which are the two solemn notions by which the death of Christ is set forth. His sufferings were satisfactory to his Father's justice, and expiatory of our sins. This sacrifice and ransom was paid with respect to the curse of the law; that is, to free us from the penalty of the old broken covenant, there being nothing in us to recommend us to God, or to secure us from the dint of God's anger and justice.

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6. Upon his death, Christ acquired a new right of dominion and empire over the world, to be their Lord and Saviour, to rule them, and save them upon his own terms: Rom. xiv. 9, 'For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living;' Acts ii. 36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ;' Phil. ii. 7-11, 'But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' God hath made this God-man supreme prince of his church, and hath given him all power in heaven and in earth, that all rational creatures should pay him all duty, and subjection, and acknowledgment; and his doctrine and faith should be embraced by all nations in the world, as the means of their recovery to God.

7. Our Redeemer being possessed of this lordship and dominion, hath made a new law of grace, which is propounded as a remedy for the recovering and restoring the lapsed world of mankind to the grace and favour of God, by offering and granting free pardon, justification, and adoption, and a right to glory, to those that, coming off from the law, will submit to his terms; but peremptorily concluding and sentencing them anew to eternal death who will not embrace these terms and this way of salvation which he hath set up. This is the sum of the gospel in many places: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned;' John iii. 16-18, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only be gotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life: for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.'

Here mark that in this proposition I assert three things—

[1.] That Christ, as Lord of the new creation, hath set down the terms of life and death. I say, that Christ, as king, doth enact the law, the law of grace and promise by which we are justified. He merited it by his death and bloody sufferings, but the grant we have from him as lord and king. He, as having all power, sent abroad his apostles as ambassadors to acquaint the world with his new law; and he doth still execute it as lord and judge, and as a judge he doth justify and condemn, and execute his sentence accordingly, partly in this life, and partly in the life to come, as the scriptures abundantly witness: Acts xvii. 31, 'Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.'

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[2.] The privileges of this new grant are exceeding great; pardon, peace with God, justification from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses; adoption into God's family; the gift of his Spirit to renew us, and maintain his interest in our souls; and a right to everlasting glory as our inheritance. Now surely these are things not to be despised. It will go well with those who have sub mitted to Christ when they are to appear before their Lord and judge, having such a grant and charter to produce. Certainly to be interested in Christ's satisfaction and merit, so far as to become acceptable and pleasing to God, is no small privilege. To be accepted in the Beloved for the present, and to stand in the judgment hereafter, these are great things indeed. To be adopted into God's family in the kingdom of grace, and to be received into God's presence in the kingdom of glory, to be freed from condemnation to hell, and to have a right and title to heaven, should not this move us?

[3.] The danger of final impenitency and refusing these things, and not submitting to this righteousness, is very grievous, if there were nothing but a forfeiting the hopes and possibility of our recovery; but the scripture calleth it a 'sorer punishment,' Heb. x. 39. The law of grace threateneth the greatest punishment. Conscience in hell will have a special kind of accusations and

self-tormentings in reflecting on the refusal of the remedy. Besides, the threatening of the gospel is peremptory, excluding all remedy to all eternity; but the threatening of the law of nature is not peremptory and remediless; there is a remedy at hand to dissolve the obligation of suffering that penalty; namely, Christ's satisfaction (who fulfilled the law, and became a curse for us) is pleadable by all those who sincerely repent and believe.

8. The terms of this new law or covenant are repentance, faith, and new obedience. Or take one mentioned in the text, faith; it is a righteousness which is by faith. Faith is the grand and primary condition of the gospel. If you ask why faith is appointed, we might look no further than the will of the free donor; but faith hath a special aptitude and fitness for this work.

[1.] In respect of God, he having determined to glorify his free mercy, he requireth nothing but our belief and acceptance. 'It is of faith, that it might be of grace,' Rom. iv. 16.

[2.] With respect to Christ Jesus, who is the fountain of our life and righteousness, and our head and husband. Faith is the closing act: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him.' The tie and nuptial knot between us and our Lord.

[3.] God had respect also to our necessitous estate, and therefore principally required that they should know Christ and own him, if they will have benefit by him, that such privileges should not be settled upon us without our knowledge, or besides and against our will.

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[4.] With respect to the promise, which offers it to us. This happiness and blessedness is spiritual, and for the most part future, and cannot be seen. Now such things are only apprehended by faith: Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.'

[5.] With respect to God's end, which is the willing subjection of the creature to God. By it we come to Christ as king, priest, and prophet; take his yoke, as well as receive his benefits: Mat. xi. 28, 29, 'Come unto me all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls.'

9. This faith is such a hearty assent to the truths of the gospel as causeth us broken-heartedly, thankfully, and fiducially to accept the Lord Jesus as he is offered to us, and to give up ourselves to God by him.

[1.] An assent to the truths of the gospel there must be, for the general faith goeth before the particular, a belief of the gospel before our communion with Christ. This assent must produce acceptance, because the gospel is an offer of blessedness suitable to our necessities and desires, and receiving is one solemn notion by which faith is expressed. And this acceptance must be broken-hearted, because Christ and his benefits are a free gift to us; and we come to accept this grace as condemned sinners, with a confession of our undeservings and ill-deservings: 1 John i. 9,

‘If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ And that eternal wrath may justly become our portion, God lets none come out of the prison of the first covenant till they have felt somewhat of the smart of it in the sense of our guilt and misery, that we may fly to the ransom of Christ’s blood, and the merit of his obedience. Therefore this must be distinctly considered as the procuring cause, which cannot be done seriously without a broken heart.

[2.] A thankful acceptance; for so great a benefit as pardon and life should not be entertained but with a grateful consent, and deep sense of his love, who so freely loved us, and forgave us so great a debt, and doth so freely save us: Luke vii. 47, ‘Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.’ Surely Christ should not, cannot be received into the heart without a hearty welcome and cordial embraces.

[3.] It is a fiducial consent, or such as is joined with some confidence and affiance; for there is a confidence and trust to be included in the nature of faith, and cannot be separated from it, and without it we cannot be satisfied with the truth of the offer, and cannot depend upon God’s word: Eph. i. 13, ‘In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.’ Now this trust will make us venture all in his hands, and renounce our dearest lusts and interests.

[4.] It is obediential. We give up ourselves to obey God through Jesus Christ, that we may enjoy, please, and glorify him; which you do when you receive Christ with a hearty consent of subjection, to be guided, ruled, and ordered by him; for he is our Lord as well as our Saviour: Col. ii. 6, ‘As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him;’ 2 Peter iii. 2, ‘Of the commandment of us the apostles of our Lord and Saviour.’ We must obey his strictest laws; and as he is the physician of our souls, we must rest upon his skill, and suffer him to apply his sharpest plasters, take the bitterest medicines, most ungrateful to flesh and blood.

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Use. Oh, let us think of these things. The hour of death and judgment will come. How sweet will it be then to be found in Christ, not having our own righteousness? None will be found in Christ but those who believe the gospel, and so accept of Christ as to depend upon him and obey him. We depend upon the merit of his satisfaction for pardon and life, and we keep his commandments and abide in his love, seeking his glory, and yielding ourselves to his obedience, as our Lord and sovereign, that he may conduct us to everlasting glory in his own way. Do this, and you have an interest in his merits and righteousness. We shall one day come to be judged and tried whether we have done so, yea or no; whether we are unbelievers and rebels against the Lord Christ, or whether sound believers.

SERMON VI.

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death.—PHIL. iii. 10.

PAUL goeth on enumerating his advantages by Christ. The first was his interest in Christ's righteousness; now he mentioneth two other necessary to be added to the former; for whoever boasts of his justification must show it by his sanctification: 'That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness; and that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.'

Here the double benefit is, a conformity to Christ in his life and in his death.

1. To his life, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.'

2. To his death, 'And the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.'

There is a spiritual inward conformity to the death of Christ, when we die unto sin; and outward, in bearing the cross. This is spoken here; and in this latter there is a double benefit which we have in our sufferings for Christ—(1.) Fellowship with Christ; (2.) Conformity to Christ.

[1.] Our conformity to his life, or 'knowing the power of his resurrection,' is mentioned first, before our conformity to his death, which in order of nature should have preceded, because we should first know what we should propound as our hope and scope before we resolve upon the way of dying to sin and dying to the world. Till we live the new life and are excited to the hopes of glory, we cannot encounter sufferings. The new life is the principle, and the hope of glory the end, and the patient continuance in well-doing the way.

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Again, it is observable how the apostle increaseth the description of his self-denial, what he accounteth gain, and such gain that he esteemeth all things but loss and dung in comparison of it; not only to know Christ and privileges, but Christ and the sacred influence of his grace. To desire to be found in Christ, not having our own righteousness, will be assented unto by most. We all desire happiness and immunity, to be freed from the penalties of the law and the flames of hell; this point of submission will not be much scrupled at; few value the life of holiness, but the apostle 'counted all things loss and dung, to know him and the power of his resurrection.'

[2.] Again, he reckoneth affliction for Christ's sake among the advantages of Christ. Surely the afflictions of the gospel, when they are holily and patiently endured, are an advantage; not affliction as affliction, but partly from the cause: Phil. i. 29, 'For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.' Bare suffering is not more than believing, nor valuable with out believing; but suffering and believing too is more than single believing. A gift and an honour vouchsafed to a few of Christ's choice servants; it is given to all to believe, but to some not only to believe, but to suffer. Partly from the manner, such as argues fellowship and

conformity to Christ. To find what exceeding joy and comfort it is to suffer for Christ and with Christ is more worth than all the world. Partly from the end and fruit in this life, as these afflictions promote our dying to sin and the world; therein we feel the virtue of Christ's death, and may glory in the cross of Christ: Gal. vi. 14, 'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' In the world to come, 'if thereby we may attain the resurrection of the dead,' ver. 11.

[3.] Once more; no affliction, though never so great, was excepted out of Paul's resignation to Christ; for such a fellowship in his sufferings as maketh us conformable to his death doth also include the dying a violent and infamous death for Christ's sake. Now if God call us to this, we must count it an honour, and all things but loss and dung for Christ's honour's sake. An infamous death for Christ is better than all the glory of the world; and we rejoice in the very disgraceful circumstances of our sufferings, and that we are put to shame for Christ's sake: Acts v. 41, 'And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.' Now all these circumstances do mightily heighten his self-denial; and yet this is the true spirit of christianity, to count all things but loss and dung for Christ and his righteousness, for Christ and his grace, for Christ and his sufferings, even those which are most painful and disgraceful to us.

I begin with the first benefit, a conformity to the life of Christ, 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.' Knowing is here put for sense and experience; and for the word 'resurrection,' there is a first resurrection and a second, with respect to the life of grace and glory. The Spirit first raiseth us up from the death of sin to the life of grace, and then from the death of nature to the life of glory. Christ raised from the dead, giveth us the Spirit, which beginneth that life of grace here which shall be perfected in heaven. We shall know him and the power of his resurrection fully hereafter, when we are raised by him to eternal life and glory. But we know him and the power of his resurrection here when we experience his virtue, and the sacred influence of his grace in renewing the heart. As we know the power of his death when sin is mortified, and the old man crucified, so we know the power of his resurrection when we feel the operation and virtue of his Spirit in quickening us to newness of life: Rom. vi. 4, 5, 'Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.'

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Two points from this clause are to be observed. The first is, that an experimental knowledge of Christ is so great a blessing that we should count all things but loss and dung to get it.

I take it for a granted truth that, besides the knowledge of faith, there is an experimental knowledge of Christ, whereby believers, from this effectual working in them, find that to be true which the word affirmeth of him. It is sometimes expressed by taste which is more than sight. Sight doth fitly express the knowledge of faith, and taste the knowledge of experience: 1 Peter ii. 3, 'If

so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' So Ps. xxxiv. 8, 'Oh, come, taste and see how good the Lord is.' When we either taste his goodness or feel his power, then we have an experimental knowledge of Christ. Many know Christ so as to be able to talk of him, his birth, life, and doctrine, of his death, passion, and resurrection; but feel nothing, have no real proof within themselves of what they speak, no lively, experimental knowledge of Christ. Many speak of his salvation from day to day, but have not the effects of it. When we find within our selves the fruits of his sufferings, the comfort of his promises, the likeness of his death, the power of his resurrection, then we know Christ experimentally. Now the benefits which we have by this experimental knowledge do show the value of it.

1. Experience giveth us a more intimate knowledge of things. While we know things by hearsay, we know them only by guess and imagination; but when we know them by experience, we know them in truth; as he that readeth of the sweetness of honey may guess at it, but he that hath tasted of honey better knoweth what it is: Col. i. 6, 'Since the day that ye knew the grace of God in truth;' that is, knew it indeed, and by sensible experience. Our understandings are much advanced by knowing the same truths more experimentally than we did before; it is a more satisfactory manner of knowledge. A man that has travelled through a country knows it better than he that knoweth it only by a map. When we have tasted of the sweetness of the promise, and pardon of sin, and peace with God, and hopes of glory; when we have lived awhile in communion with Christ, or the love of his people, or walked with God in a heavenly conversation, it is another thing than it was before.

2. Experience giveth a greater confirmation of the truth. *Optima demonstratio est a sensibus*—Sense giveth us the most sure and in fallible knowledge of things. A man needeth no reason to convince him that fire is hot who hath been scorched, or that weather is cold who feeleth it in his fingers; so when the promises of God are made good to us, and verified in our experience, we see that there is more than letters and syllables: Ps. xviii. 30, 'The word of the Lord is a tried word; he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.' So when the fruits and effects of the gospel are accomplished in us, and we have the impression and stamp of it upon our own hearts, it is past contra diction but that this is true: 1 Cor. i. 6, 'Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.' It was confirmed among them by miracles, but within them by the gifts and graces of the Spirit: John viii. 32, 'Then shall ye know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;' John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.' When God hath blessed his word to free us from the bondage of sin and to cleanse and sanctify our hearts, that we may live in love to God, and all purity and holiness to his glory, you find it to be a powerful word, a word which God hath owned, by accompanying it by his Spirit. So 1 Thes. i. 5, 'For our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.' That doctrine is certainly owned by God, and blessed to the conviction, conversion, and salvation of many souls, and therefore our assent is stronger. You cannot persuade men against their own sense. They that have felt the power of the Spirit inclining them to God and heavenly things have found the admirable effects

which bare speculation could not discover do them in order to faith, certainty, and close adherence; their hearts are confirmed.

3. Experience giveth us greater excitement to the love of Christ and his ways; for though love be built upon the proper reasons of love, yet it is increased by experience. The proper reasons of love are necessity, excellency, and propriety; yet experience addeth a force to all these. And therefore it is said, Phil. i. 9, 'This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in all knowledge and judgment.' The word, ἐν αἰσθήσει, signifieth spiritual sense or experimental knowledge. This doth increase the love of Christ in us: the more we feel the necessity of Christ, and know his usefulness and excellency in binding up our broken hearts, and subduing our carnal affections, the more shall we love him, as being appointed a saviour for us, to relieve our necessities, and procure blessings for us. When Christ doth heal our diseases, remove our anguish, sanctify our natures, give us the promised help in temptations, relieve us in our distresses, and bridle our corruptions, then we know that he is ours; and so far as propriety conduceth to increase love, we have the more reason to love him. Now that is a notable enforcement: Gal. ii. 20, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loved me, and gave himself for me;' 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him, because he loved us first.' We may know the truth of the gospel by other means, but we cannot know that it be longeth to us by any other means. The grace of the gospel remaineth where it was, in the hands of Christ, and the conditional offers of the gospel, till it be applied and brought into our hearts, and we are in part put in possession of it by the Spirit of sanctification; and when this is done, we know our interest, and so our sanctifier becometh our comforter, and we carry about in us the matter of our continual joy, confidence, and comfort; and therefore we have greater obligations to love God and Christ: Rom. v. 4, 5, 'And patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us.' Our particular interest is assured by experience, whether in ordinances or afflictions, either by the tastes of his love or the effects of his sanctifying grace.

4. The experimental knowledge of Christ doth more engage us to zeal and diligence in the heavenly life. Certainly reports and exhortations cannot do so much as experience. Partly—

[1.] Because when we have experience of the power of Christ's resurrection, it begetteth a new life within us, which inclineth us to God and heavenly things; there is a principle to work upon. Indeed, in the tenders of the gospel there is a principle of reason to work upon, which, with a little common help of the Spirit, may convince us of the duty which we owe to God; but when this life is begun, there is a principle of grace to work upon, an inward mover striving with you, and inclining you to perform this duty. And there is a great deal of difference between blowing to a dead coal and a live coal: 'If you live in the Spirit,' you will more easily be persuaded to 'walk in the Spirit,' Gal. v. 25. Where there is life, it is soon excited to action.

[2.] When this life is gratified with the rewards of obedience, such as are peace of conscience, the comforts of the Spirit, and some tastes of God's acceptance of us unto life by Christ, this is an argument of itself above all arguments to engage us to press on for more. As the Gauls, when once they tasted the Italian grape, could no longer be kept beyond the mountains, but they must get into that country where this plant did grow, or the liquor of it might be had. Or rather, let it be represented to you by a scriptural instance: There were some sent into the land of promise, to bring them the clusters of Canaan into the wilderness, to animate and encourage them to put in for the good land. So here; God giveth us the Spirit, and sweet foretastes of life eternal, not only as an earnest, 1 Cor. i. 22, to show us how sure, but as the first-fruits, to show us how good, Rom. viii. 23. Now surely this experience is more than all motives without the soul, to engage it in this heavenly pursuit.

[3.] When this life is obstructed by our folly and sin, you find more of the displeasure of your Redeemer in your inward man than can possibly be represented to you in your outward condition, by the suspension of his comforts, by a wounded spirit, by the troubles of the sensible soul upon the neglects of his grace; that it is worse to them than the loss of all temporal comforts when the grieved Spirit withdraweth. You know the anger of your Redeemer for the abuse of his grace: Eph. iv. 30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' The soul is more awakened by the interruptions of the acts of love, and his wonted quickenings and comforts; yea, by a sore sense of God's wrath and displeasure; it is more than want of health, or loss of estate, or a breach upon our relations. Therefore experience of Christ's dealing with us is a notable part of Christ's spiritual government, and so a notable excitement to the heavenly life.

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Use 1. To exhort us to get this experimental knowledge of Christ. An exhortation is discharged by motives and means.

Motives. Sometimes from the danger if you have it not, and the benefit you have had already.

1. If you have it not, you are in danger of atheism. To hear of such a mighty Christ, and feel nothing of the virtue of his death, or of the power of his resurrection, after so long a profession of his name, what is this but a temptation to us that christianity is but an empty pretence? We are told, 1 Cor. iv. 20, that 'the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.' It standeth not in notions, and proud boasts of knowledge, or empty discourses, but in the effectual force it hath upon the heart of man. There is a power, and an admirable virtue, which goeth along with the gospel for the changing of the heart. Now what a dangerous temptation is it when it cometh to you in word only! You hear of great things, but they have not their effect upon your hearts You meet with nothing but words and notions; nothing of this purifying and sanctifying virtue of the word by the Spirit of Christ. This must follow, either you settle in a cold form, which is practical atheism, and certainly produceth nothing of a divine spirit, or real inclination towards God and another world: 2 Tim. iii. 5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;' or settle into an open denying of Christ and the excellency of his religion. The cold form may consist with the grossest sins, which

is a practical denying of God; or else you live in doubt and irresolution, and know not what to make of religion, which is a more secret denying of him.

2. If you have not the practical experimental knowledge of Christ, how will you be able to carry on the spiritual life with any delight, seriousness, and success? This appeareth by a serious view of that context which you have, 1 John v. 3-10. In the 3d verse he saith, 'This is love, to keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.' In the 10th verse, 'He that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself.' How do we bring these together? I answer—By these propositions, all which are clear when you come to view that scripture. That the readiness of our obedience dependeth upon the fervency of our love, and the fervency of our love dependeth on the strength of our faith, which overcometh the world, the great impediment of obedience. The strength of our faith dependeth on the evidence of the object of our faith, which is, that Jesus is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, the true Messiah and head of the church. The evidence of this dependeth on a double testimony—without us, from heaven, and by somewhat within us, which is the testimony of water, blood, and Spirit; and this testimony every sound and true believer hath in himself, and so loveth God and keepeth his commandments. Now judge you whether it doth not concern you to get an experimental knowledge of Christ, and whether you can carry on the spiritual life against the world, the devil, and the flesh, without it. Either you must suppose to meet with no temptations, or else that temptations will be vanquished by the evidence without us, without any experience of Christ in our own souls. The former is not likely; why else are we warned of enemies and assaults? Not the latter, because our temptations to unbelief are many and strong; for a guilty conscience is not easily settled, nor a man soon brought to trust one whom he hath wronged: sinning Adam is shy of God. Besides, the way of our deliverance is so strange and supernatural, that God should not spare his own Son, but give him up to die for us. Again, the main of our blessings lie in another world, and nature cannot easily look afar off; and for the present we are afflicted, and seemingly forsaken; and the duties of christianity are so opposite to a carnal heart, which would fain be pleased with what is grateful to present sense; besides, we have an opposition to that future and invisible felicity till grace doth overcome it. These and many more things which may be alleged would weaken our hands in duty, if we have not, besides the principles of faith and external confirmations, some experience in our own souls, to assure us that Christ is the Son of God, by his changing us into the divine nature. Surely that doctrine is of God which maketh poor creatures like unto God. This is more sensible and more affecting, as being more at hand. A soul that hath felt this power, findeth the wisdom, power, and goodness of God in it, whilst his conscience is quieted, heart changed, affections raised to heavenly things: you have a confirmation and testimony within you.

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3. Without this experimental knowledge of Christ you can have no assurance of your own interest. Though Christ died for sinners, yet many perish for ever. Our certainty and assurance ariseth from a work of the Spirit upon our own hearts, if we have felt the power of his resurrection, if we be risen with Christ. Our sincerity is a far more questionable thing than the truths of the gospel.

The stamp of God upon the gospel is more plainly to be seen, whatever thoughts we have of it; but our own case is more hard to be understood. But if Christ hath left his mark and impression upon us, if we be planted into the likeness of his death and life: Rom. vi. 4, 5, ‘Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.’ If we be such in the world as he was in the world, we may have boldness: 1 John iv. 17, ‘Herein our love is made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in the world;’ 1 John ii. 6, ‘He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked.’ In short, if Christ hath taken us into the communion of his life and Spirit, there is no scruple to be made of our condition. The more you feel the power of his resurrection, you will have not only some doubtful and slight conjectures, but may assure your hearts before him that he hath loved you, and will be and is your Lord and Saviour.

4. You will not honour christianity, and cannot propagate it to others with such effect, as when you yourselves have had an experimental knowledge of Christ, of his graces and comforts. You cannot propagate it either by word or deed.

[1.] By word. You cannot recommend the heavenly life, nor the comforts of entertaining communion with God, as when you have had experience of them in your own souls. David speaketh affectionately, and like a man of experience: Ps. xxxiv. 8, ‘Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.’ You may the better invite them to Christ when you yourselves have found benefit by him. A report of a report at second or third hand is no valid testimony; none can speak with such warmth and confidence as those that have felt what they speak: 2 Cor. i. 4, ‘Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.’ They that speak feelingly and with a sense speak most effectually for Christ.

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[2.] In deed and work. You do most honour Christ when you know him, and the power of his resurrection, and by him are converted to God; for though this power be within us, and be principally ordained for our comfort and satisfaction, yet the effects and fruits of it appear to others; for the new life cannot be altogether hidden, if it be in us in any power, and so maketh up an inducement and invitation to others to hearken after the ways of God, when they see that God is in you of a truth, and the work of his Spirit showeth itself by a holy and heavenly life. This discovereth the power and virtue of Christ to them: 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, ‘Wherefore also we pray for you, that God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name o our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ;’ 1 Thes. i. 4-7, ‘Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God: for our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were

among you for your sakes. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy in the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.' You sanctify God in their eyes, and glorify our Redeemer.

Means. It is the Spirit worketh all, as the fruit of electing grace: 1 Thes. i. 4, 5, 'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God: for our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.' And also of redeeming grace, for it is the power o Christ's resurrection; and the apostle telleth us that 'the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe was according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead,' Eph. i. 19, 20. We have it by the mediator, yet we must use the means. Now the great means are three—(1.) Sound belief; (2.) Serious meditation and consideration; (3.) Close application. If we would get this experimental knowledge, there must be—

[1.] A sound belief of the doctrine of the gospel; for we are told, 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself;' which is the witness of the Spirit, and water, and blood: 1 Thes. ii. 13, 'Ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.' We cannot feel the power of the truth till we receive the truth. It is the impression of God on the word which begets faith, but his impression upon our hearts serveth to confirm faith. We discern it in the scriptures before we feel it in our hearts, for this experimental knowledge of Christ is not to begin faith, but to strengthen it and confirm it. We first have a rational proof of the truth of the gospel before we have a sensible proof of it in our own souls. The word must be let into the heart by some means or other before it can discover its effects. There is enough in the truth to discover itself, if the mind be not strangely perverted: 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.' Upon these grounds we believe, and afterwards feel what we do believe.

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2. Serious meditation and consideration is necessary. If there be not a sober and impartial consideration of the things believed as necessary, they cannot work such a change on the heart and life, but will slide away and be ineffectual. Deep thoughts make truth operative; musing maketh the fire burn: 'My heart is inditing a good matter; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer,' Ps. xlv. 1. Men are biassed by contrary affections, and their hearts are hardened by carnal lusts; therefore till grace softens them we shall be as a stone, or wax that is not softened; they make no impression upon us. It is the great work of eternal grace to give us attentive and awakening thoughts: Acts xvi 14, 'Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things that were spoken by Paul.' Many truths lie by, and are of no use for want of consideration. Serious thoughts of Christ and his salvation work most powerfully with us; but most men are not at leisure, and have not time to think of God, and Christ, and heavenly things, and never sit alone to bethink themselves, and then how

can these things work upon them? They hear of Christ, his death, and resurrection; but because things pass lightly away, they feel nothing.

3. Close application. Things work not upon us at a distance, with out being applied; as the plaster doth not cure till laid close to the wound. We ourselves must take home the truth if we would feel the virtue of it. The comfort and the mercy must be brought near to us that was before afar off and at a distance. While it remaineth in the conditional offer, it is as fair for others as for us, and for us as for others. But take it home: Rom. viii. 31, 'What shall we say to these things?' Job v. 27, 'Hear it, and know it for thy good.' Every particular person must look upon himself as concerned in the offer of Christ, excite his own heart to it, live in him, and receive his benefits.

Use 2. Have we any experimental knowledge of Christ? Do we know him, and the likeness of his death, and the power of his resurrection? Search, but yet take these two cautions—

1. Look for experience in a way of sanctification and holiness rather than in a way of comfort and ravishing delight, for the one is not so necessary as the other. The Spirit may lay by his comforting office to promote his sanctifying work. God's interest is above your own, and the new nature is the greatest evidence. Consolation is not the highest and most necessary part of Christ's work. It is sin is the true cause of our trouble; get that mortified, and you have an experience of Christ working in you. Your cure may be working, though you have not present ease.

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2. Look to the thing, not to the measure and degree. If the Spirit of God possesseth you, and ruleth you for God, and giveth you his nature and image, and inclineth you to God, there is a change, though not carried to such a degree.

Doct. 2. One great point or part of the experimental knowledge of Christ is knowing the power of his resurrection.

We have showed you before that the knowledge of Christ is not a slight and superficial knowledge, but such whereby we are made sensible of his power, to what ends he died and rose again. It is not a naked speculative knowledge. We know Christ aright when we feel his power, and have experience within ourselves of the things which we know.

Now I must show you more particularly what is the power of his resurrection.

1. This power is the Lord's work in regeneration, whereby he bestoweth upon us a new life, a spiritual life of grace; for so it is explained: 1 Peter i. 3, 'Hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'

2. This new life is not only an obligation to live in all purity and holiness to the glory of God, but an inclination or a power to do so, because it is from the Spirit of Jesus; for we live to God in the Spirit: 'But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies, by the Spirit that dwelleth in you,' Rom.

viii. 11. The profession of the name of Christ, into which we are baptized, inferreth an obligation, but the actual indwelling of the Spirit in us implieth an inclination, power, or ability to walk with God in all newness of conversation.

3. This Spirit or renewing grace we receive from Christ: Titus iii. 5, 6, 'By the renewing of the Holy Ghost, shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord.' We have it from Christ as the second Adam, or head of the new creation. Look, as the first Adam was by his sin the fountain cause of spiritual death, for 'in him all sinned,' Rom. v. 12, and through the merit of his sin we were deprived of original righteousness: Rom. v. 19, 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners;' in place whereof an universal inclination to all evil succeeded: Gen. vi. 5, 'That every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;' and our own particular actual sins do lay us lower under the state of death, and make our deliverance more difficult: Jer. xiii. 23, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil;' so Jesus Christ is the beginning, root, and fountain cause of all the grace that we have; he is the second Adam.

4. This gift of the Spirit is procured for us by the intervention of Christ's merit and mediation, whereby he satisfied divine justice, and acquired those things which divine love and mercy had prepared for us. They were lost in Adam, but purchased by Christ, who was made a curse for us, 'that the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,' Gal. iii. 13, 14.

5. Though this Spirit and renewing grace were purchased by Christ's death, it is conveyed and applied to us with respect to his resurrection, and so spoken of everywhere in scripture; as here it is called, 'the power of his resurrection;' so it is said, Eph. ii. 5, 'He hath quickened us together with Christ.' Not at the same time in our own persons, for so we are quickened a long time after Christ's resurrection in our effectual calling; but by the same power by which Christ was quickened and raised we are quickened and we are raised also, every one of us in his own time. Our head and lord was dead, but is now alive and liveth for ever, for that end and purpose. By his resurrection it appeareth that God is satisfied and appeased, death subdued and overcome, and Christ in a capacity, and exalted, to give us this new life, Acts v. 31. Christ rose 'as the first-fruits of the regenerate,' 1 Cor. xv. 20; as 'the first-born from the dead,' Col. i. 18; 'The first begotten of the dead,' Rev. i. 5. He rose by his own power to immortality and life. So by the same power and virtue will he raise and quicken his members as the first-born among many brethren, and give the rest a share of the Father's goods.

But more particularly, I shall show you how, by virtue of Christ's resurrection, christians obtain the grace of a new life. [For this see sermon on 2 Corinthians v. 15.]

Secondly, The fellowship of his sufferings, ‘that I may be conformable to his death.’ Here is the second privilege, conformity to the death of Christ; so the apostle accounts it in this place. Here take notice—

1. Those that would be partakers of Christ must not fancy to themselves an easy life free from all sufferings, but such a condition as they may be conformable to the death of Christ: Rom. viii. 17, ‘If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.’ We must be partakers of his sufferings if we would be partakers of his kingdom. If we be dead with him, and suffer with him, ‘we shall also reign with him,’ 2 Tim. ii. 12. The way to eternal salvation is to tread in Christ’s steps, by the cross to come to the crown.

2. These sufferings for Christ should not seem grievous to God’s children, and they should be so far from shunning sufferings when God calleth them to it, or from any repining or heartless discouragement, that they ought rather to think it their glory, and their great honour and happiness; for Paul reckoneth it among his advantages. And else where in scripture we are bidden to rejoice in it, if we suffer anything for Christ and his truth; for indeed there is great comfort and joy to be had in suffering for him and with him in his mystical body. They that have tasted this sweetness count all things but loss and dung in comparison of it; and so might we rejoice and be exceeding glad if we consult with the privileges of the Spirit rather than the interest of the flesh: James i. 2, ‘Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;’ Mat. v. 11, 12, ‘Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name’s sake: rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.’

3. The two grand things which lighten all our afflictions and sufferings for Christ are those mentioned in the text—fellowship with him, and conformity to him.

[1.] Fellowship with him, ‘That I may know the fellowship of his sufferings;’ 1 Peter iv. 13, ‘But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.’ How partakers of his sufferings? He suffereth with them, and communicateth his Spirit, and that in a larger measure of comfort than to the rest of his people. As a special measure of wisdom and strength, so a more liberal allowance of sup ports and comforts: Col. i. 24, ‘Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh;’ στερήματα Χριστοῦ, the leavings. The sufferings of christians are the sufferings of Christ, and the filling up of his sufferings. Not as if his personal sufferings for the redemption of sinners were imperfect, and to be supplied by our sufferings; that cannot be, for ‘by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;’ but partly because such is the sympathy between Christ and believers, that their sufferings are his sufferings: Acts ix. 4, ‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?’ How persecute me? Christ was far enough out of his reach, but he persecuted him in his members. When the toe is trod upon the tongue will cry out, You hurt me. And partly because so strict is the union which is between them and Christ, that he

and they make up but one mystical Christ: 1 Cor. xii. 12, ‘For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.’ That is not Christ personal, but Christ mystical; they are one; he partaketh of their sufferings, and they of his Spirit.

[2.] Conformity to Christ. We must be like him whom we have chosen for our head and chief. What do we with christianity, if we refuse to be like Christ? Rom. viii. 29, ‘Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son;’ to be holy as he was holy, and to be afflicted as he was afflicted: 2 Cor. iv. 10, ‘Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.’ When name dieth, and interests die and languish, when we are scorned, reproached, despitefully used, we carry up and down the sufferings of Christ. Patient undergoing crosses for Christ is an evident resemblance of the cross of Christ; this maketh us like christians, yea, like Christ himself. And however this seem troublesome and disgraceful to those that are blinded with the delusions of the flesh, yet to a holy man and a believer this should make a bitter cross lovely, that thereby he may be more like his lord and master; as the apostle, ‘That I may be conformable to the death of Christ.’

Use 1. Look for sufferings. Every member of Christ’s body hath his allotted portion and share. The great wave of affliction did first beat upon Christ, and some drops will light upon us. The bitter cup goeth by course and round. Christ began and drank of it first, the apostles then standing by: John xviii. 8, ‘If ye seek me, let these go.’ But their course came next: 1 Cor. iv. 9, ‘For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death.’ And thus it hath gone from hand to hand ever since. All are not made to drink it at once, that some still may be in capacity to pity, help, and sympathise with others; but we have all our course and turn.

2. Propound to yourselves the pattern of Christ. It is a blessed thing to know by experience the sweetness and comfort which cometh by communion with Christ, and conformity to Christ in these sufferings. As Christ suffered, we must suffer; as he died patiently, meekly, so must we bear whatever God will lay upon us; as he had his consolation, so have we sweet comfort and support too; as he had his glory, we must carry it so that we may be partakers of eternal glory by Christ, and our sufferings have the same issue.

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SERMON VII.

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.—PHIL. iii. 11.

THE apostle in the context is reckoning up his gain by Christ. We have insisted on two grand privileges and benefits already—justification and sanctification. This latter consisteth of two

parts—conformity to his life and death. The first ennobleth the creature to be admitted unto the life of God; the other part seemingly depresseth the creature, the fellowship of his sufferings, and conformity to his death; yet that is an honour too, and so should be valued and reckoned among other privileges; partly because of its present use, as it helpeth to mortify sin, and deaden our affections to the world; and partly because it is the way and means to our future advancement, and its respect to the third benefit, which is glorification. Our gain by Christ reacheth further than to anything within time. It accompanieth a man, and preserveth his dust in the grave until the last day, and maketh him a partaker of the glorious resurrection of the just. This last benefit, as the fruit of our closing with Christ, the apostle here represented, 'If by any means we may attain to the resurrection of the dead.'

In the words observe—

1. The benefit to be obtained by Christ, 'The resurrection of the dead.'

2. The submission of a self-denying believer, 'If by any means I might attain to it.'

1. The benefit. How is this a great privilege, since there is a resurrection of the wicked? Acts xxiv. 15, 'That there shall be a resurrection, both of the just and unjust.' But their resurrection shall be to condemnation: John v. 29, 'But they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation;' and so a fall rather than a resurrection. Therefore the faithful and the righteous are only called 'Children of the resurrection;' Luke xx. 36, Neither shall they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.' Not as if the other should not rise, but they shall not rise to glory. And Grotius observeth the word in the text is not ἀνάστασις, but ἐξανάστασις, to express that full and blessed resurrection which no death, no evil shall ever follow. Therefore by the 'resurrection of the dead' he understandeth that eternal life and blessedness which is consequent thereupon: Luke xiv. 14, 'And thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.'

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2. The submission of a self-denying believer to use any means to obtain it: 'If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.' The words seem to express a doubtfulness, but indeed they do not. Paul was not doubtful of his particular interest: 2 Cor. v. 1, 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Paul could not be doubtful whether by these means he might obtain a blessed resurrection, for there is no uncertainty or fallibility in God's promise; why doth he then thus express himself?

[1.] To intimate the difficulty, thereby to quicken his desire and diligence; as if he had said, I know it is hard to come by this happy estate, but I resolve to pursue it by any means. It is a matter of great difficulty to attain to the glorious resurrection of the just, and have our portion in it; but

though it be a difficult thing, yet where the reality is believed, difficulties do but kindle desire and excite our diligence.

[2.] To express the variety of the means, or the way by which God bringeth his people into glory. There is doing good, and suffering evil for his sake. Now whether it be by living to God or suffering for God, Paul submitted to both or either way; and therefore this, 'If by any means,' must be referred to his exercising himself to godliness, implied in that expression, 'Knowing the power of his resurrection;' or his patient suffering for Christ, implied in this expression, 'The fellowship of his sufferings, and conformity to his death.' Holiness of life is not the only means, nor are the afflictions of the gospel the only means; sometimes God will use both. Some may get through and escape to heaven without any remarkable afflictions, if they be of eminent holiness; or if they have afflictions, yet they may get to heaven without persecution, as in quiet times when the churches have rest: Luke ii. 29, 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word.' Others with persecution, but not to effusion of blood: Heb. xii. 4, 'Ye have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin.' Some only suffer spoiling of goods: Heb. x. 34, 'And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and enduring substance.' And others by plain and direct martyrdom: Rev. xii. 11, 'They loved not their lives unto the death.' Some have store of inward troubles, as Heman; others not, but are exercised with outward crosses.

[3.] To set forth his full submission. We must neither except one means nor another in bringing us to glory. We know not which way he will take, but we must submit to all, even to death itself: Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.'

[4.] His unwearied diligence and earnest endeavour to obtain this happiness whatever it cost him; and therefore he resolveth to be any thing and do anything, if he might be happy at length. Though in the meantime we meet with many troubles and crosses, and are put upon duties displeasing to the flesh, yet we must not stick at any means to obtain so excellent an end.

[5.] The value of this benefit, and his ardent and vehement desire to attain it. Paul did all things for the resurrection's sake, or that happiness to which the resurrection of the body is an introduction. He did rest satisfied with the hopes of eternal life, and that perfect holiness and felicity he should then enjoy, as a sufficient recompense for all his losses and labours, disgraces and troubles. The word is emphatical, εἴ πως καταντήσω. The word ἀντᾷν, which we translate 'attain,' signifieth to come to the place which is directly opposite to that we are now in. So is the state of glory to the present life; here is misery, there is happiness; here is sin, there is holiness; here shame, there glory; here labour, there rest; here the cross, there the crown; here the conflict, there the full and absolute conquest; here the work, there the reward; here absence from God, there for ever present with him; here weakness, there perfection; then all good is perfected, and all evil shall cease; here we are capable of a dissolution, the body and soul may be severed, but there eternally united never to part

more; here God's children are scattered up and down, living in several places and ages of the world, there all God's family shall meet together in one great congregation. So that the resurrection of the dead is the mark we should aim at in the whole course of our lives, and we should say, 'If by any means;' as if he should say, I shall account it well with me, and that I am recompensed enough, if at length I shall attain the perfection and happiness of that blessed estate.

Doct. That the blessedness of the saints at the general resurrection is so great, that we should be content to use any means, to run any hazards, so we might attain it. I shall show you—

1. What is the happiness of the saints in that day.

2. Give you a short account of the means by which God bringeth us thither.

3. Why we must submit to be guided by him in his own way to this glorious and blessed estate, or use any means that we may attain the resurrection of the dead.

I. What is the happiness of the saints in that day. The blessedness is either subjective and inherent, or relative and adherent.

1. Our personal inherent blessedness is glory revealed in us, Horn, viii. 18. Now this glory in us is a complete felicity in body and soul.

[1.] The body hath its felicity, for several reasons; partly—

(1.) Because the man cannot be happy till the body be raised again. The soul alone doth not constitute human nature, or that kind of creature which we call man; the body is one essential part, which doth concur to the constitution of man, as well as the soul; therefore the soul, though it be a spirit, and can live apart from the body, yet it was not to live apart for ever, but to live in the body; and so remaineth a widow as it were, till the body be raised up and united to it; for with out its mate and companion, it remaineth destitute of half itself, which though it may be born for a while, yet not for ever. The soul is waiting to be sent again into the body; and when the hour is come, what shall hinder? There is a relative union, and a deep rooted love and inclination of the soul to its body; so that it is mindful of it, and waiteth with longing when the command of God shall send it to receive the body.

(2.) It is agreeable to the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, that the body, which had its share in the work, should have its share in the reward. It is the body which is most gratified by sin, and the body which is most pained in obedience. What was it which was wearied and tired, and endured all the labours and troubles of christianity, but the body? Therefore the body, which is the soul's sister and coheir, is to share with it in its eternal estate, whatever it be. Before the general resurrection, the wicked are but in part punished, and the godly in part rewarded: there is a time when God will deal with the whole man.

(3.) The estate of those that die will not be worse than the state of those that are only changed at Christ's coming. Now their bodies are not destroyed, but perfected; the substance is preserved, only it is renewed with new qualities. Now there would be a disparity among the glorified if some should have their bodies, others not.

(4.) In the heavenly estate there are many objects which can only be discerned by our bodily senses; as the human nature of Christ, the beams of the heavenly mansion wherein the blessed have their residence, with other the works of God, which certainly are offered to our contemplation. Now if God find objects, he will find faculties. How shall we see else those things which are to be seen, or hear those things which are to be heard, unless we have bodies and bodily senses?

(5.) As Christ was taken into heaven, so shall we; for we shall bear the image of the heavenly one. He carried no other flesh into heaven but what he assumed from the virgin. The very body which was carried in her womb, offered up as a sacrifice for sin, that very body was carried into heaven. Now this σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως, 'this vile body,' shall be likened unto Christ's glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. That body that is now subject to so many infirmities, which is harassed and worn out with labours, obnoxious to such pains and sufferings, even this body shall be likened unto his glorious body. This body shall be then immortal, free from all diseases, imperfections, and defects. It shall not be decayed with age, nor wasted with sickness, nor need the supplies of meat and drink to repair it, nor be subject to pains and aches, but remain for ever in an eternal spring of youth. And for clarity and brightness, it shall shine as the sun: 1 Cor. xv. 42-44, 'So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.' In short, it is endowed with all the perfections a body is capable of; but the greatest perfection is this, that it shall be united to a soul fully sanctified, that shall never use it as an instrument of sin more.

[2.] For the happiness of the soul, we shall be satisfied with the vision of God, and transformed into the likeness of God: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know, even as also I am known;' 1 John iii. 2, 'Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be: but we know, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Our souls shall be naturally and graciously perfected both in our faculties and qualities, and so firmly established in a state of holiness as never to sin more, or to be in danger of sinning again. We shall fully enjoy the vision of God, and by seeing be made like him. If specular vision transformeth us (2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord), much more the light of glory. We shall be filled with eternal joy and delight, and securely possess our eternal blessedness. The light of God's eternal favour shall shine upon us in its full strength, without cloud or night.

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2. Adherent privileges, justification, adoption, and redemption, they are all perfect.

[1.] Justification. We are justified now as soon as we believe. We have a right by covenant to justification, but the solemn sentence is not passed. Then we have our absolution from our judge's mouth sitting upon the throne: Acts iii. 19, 'That your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;' that is, our full and final justification, when sin shall never rise up in judgment against us any more.

[2.] Adoption. We have a right now: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' But the full fruition is hereafter: 'Now we are the sons of God; but it doth not appear what we shall be;' Rom. viii. 23, 'Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;' when God shall not only take us into his family, but his presence and palace; not only give us a right, but the possession;. not only some remote service and ministration, but everlastingly employed in loving, delighting, and praising God; and the tokens of his fatherly affection to us are not only privately exhibited, but manifested before all the world. Then adoption is adoption indeed.

[3.] Redemption. Therefore that day is called 'the day of redemption,' Eph. iv. 30, because then we are completely redeemed out of all misery, both of soul and body: Luke xxi. 28, 'Your redemption draweth nigh;' Eph. i. 14, 'Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory; for then we are completely redeemed from all sin and misery, both in soul and body at once, when all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, sin and sorrow no more. Christ is a saviour now, a redeemer now; he hath saved us, and redeemed us from all evil as to the fulness of his merit; yea, he is a redeemer now, a saviour now, as to partial application, when guilt is pardoned, and the power and reign of sin broken; but at death he is a more perfect saviour and redeemer, when we receive the salvation of our souls. Now the evils introduced by sin yet remain upon the body, but at death the last enemy is destroyed, and the effects of sin cease.

II. The means by which God bringeth us thither. They may be referred to two heads: there is a way of holiness, and patient enduring the cross. In the general, it will cost us something to obtain it, for all excellent things are hard to come by; in particular, that is by self-denial, both in the active and passive part of our obedience. Therefore the apostle, when he showeth what use we should make of the doctrine of the resurrection, he referreth all to these two heads: 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Wherefore, my beloved, be ye steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' We ought to be steadfast and unshaken in afflictions, and we ought also to abound in the work of the Lord. Of the two, holiness is the most necessary and indispensable. God may bate some men suffering, but he never bated any man holiness; for 'no unclean thing shall enter there,' Rev. xxi. 27; and 'without holiness no man shall see God,' Heb. xii. 14. There must be mortification of sin, and there must be living to God.

Besides, sufferings for religion without holiness are but a scabby sacrifice, and swine's blood offered to him, which are an abomination to the Lord.

1. For the way of holiness, and the active part of our obedience, that consists in two things—dying to sin and living to God.

[1.] Dying to sin. Certainly we must die unto sin; we must 'crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts;' for if pride, worldliness, and sensuality live, we die; for every one of these turneth us to another happiness, and we have our heaven elsewhere than in the habitation of the blessed: Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, in thy lifetime thou receivedst thy good things.' The pleasures, honours, and profits of the world, whilst we make these things our felicity and scope, we discharge God from giving us any other reward. The covetous have their portion in this world, and the voluptuous sell their birthright for one morsel of meat, and the ambitious and vainglorious are not contented with the honour which cometh from God only. We shall have pleasures enough, and riches enough, and honours enough, if we can be contented to tarry God's leisure, and will continue with patience in well-doing. But when we will be our own carvers, and set up sense instead of faith, and an imaginary and corrupting felicity instead of the real and sanctifying felicity which is offered to us in the promises of the gospel, we can blame nothing but our perverse choice; and no wonder if God deny to us the happiness we contemn. Flatter not yourselves; there is no leaping from Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom; no hope to get to heaven at last, when all our care hath been to heap up treasure to our selves here in the world; no such connection between vainglory and eternal glory, that after we have served the one, we should obtain the other. No; the scripture is peremptory with us: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if through the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;' Gal. vi. 8, 'He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.' If the world present to the flesh the bait, faith should show it the hook, and set our loss against our gain. God will not give us two heavens, here in our passage, and hereafter at the end of the journey.

[2.] Living to God. None shall live with God but those that first live to God in a state of holy communion with him, and glorify him upon earth. The spiritual life is heaven begun: if it be begun, it will be perfected; if not, we eternally miss of it. If we look for the resurrection of the dead, we must prepare for it by giving all diligence 'to be found of him in peace,' 2 Peter iii. 14, by watching and praying, that we may be 'counted worthy to stand before the Son of man,' Luke xxi. 36, that we may meet him with cheerfulness and confidence, not fear any evil from him: Acts xxiv. 15, 16, 'And have hope towards God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to keep always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.' Surely it is no easy thing to attain to this blessedness, and therefore we must set ourselves if by any means to seek after it.

2. As to passive obedience, this must be minded too, that so dying with him, and after his example, we may consequently obtain to rise with him to everlasting life. So great a good as eternal blessedness is to be sought, though with the communion of the sufferings of Christ.

Now here I shall observe two things.

[1.] That no suffering must be excepted out of our resignation. Though all that shall be happy do not suffer death for Christ (for all are not called to so great an honour), yet all must be ready to die for Christ; for he is a christian, and none but he, that can deny life itself for Christ's sake. I prove it, because when Christ would teach his disciples self-denial, he doth instance in this point, to put our self-denial to the trial: Mat. xvi. 25, 'He that saveth his life, shall lose it; and he that loseth his life, shall save it.' Whether you love an immortal holy life with God, or else your fleshly and earthly life better. This is the great question to be resolved, whether you are heirs of heaven or hell? The unsanctified may have some love to God, but not a love to him above their lives. But if you can, for the love of God, and the hopes of glory, submit even to death itself, this is the proof of your sincerity. Again, Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come unto me, and hate not father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' You will think it is a note of excellency, and a commendable qualification of some few extraordinary saints. No; it is that measure of saving grace which constituteth sincerity. Some may more willingly and readily lay down their life for Christ, but all must be contented to do so. If you think this is a hard saying, and who can bear it? I answer—

(1.) There is no room for objections against so plain a word of Christ It is the wisdom of God, and not our reason, which disposeth the crown of life, and which way we shall obtain it; and when Christ hath stated his terms, it is too late for the vote of man to think to bring down christianity to a lower rate.

(2.) This self-denial must be acted. When there is no way to escape such sufferings but by sinning, you must cheerfully lay down, not only all your interests, but your lives for Christ's sake. As those martyrs, Heb. xi. 35, 'They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.' When they might have been upon certain conditions freed from these cruel pains, they chose rather to suffer and die than accept of these conditions, being contrary to the laws of God. Why? Because they looked for a resurrection to eternal life, that God would give them a glorious, immortal, blessed life, for a little miserable, short, and mortal breath, and would recompense their cruel pains with eternal pleasures. This will explain the apostle's expression, 'If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.'

III. The reasons why, rather than fail and miss of eternal. life, we must submit to any means which God hath appointed in this world, or for our trial doth put us upon in the course of his providence.

1. From the absolute dominion and prerogative of God, both to make laws and to put us upon what trials he pleaseth to appoint. He is our lord and sovereign, and therefore it is his wisdom, and not our reason, must determine by what we shall attain to that blessedness for which we were created. In his word he hath prescribed the duties, and hath reserved to himself a liberty in his providence to appoint our trials. To repine against his laws is to question his sovereignty: Ps. xii. 4, 'Who have said, With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are our own; who is lord over us?' If we think to speak and do what we please, and as our affections and interests shall move us, we go about to disannul his authority, and question his right to govern. So also to murmur against his providence. He may do with his own as he listeth, Mat. xx. 15. Therefore we must submit to his sharpest dispensations, and be in perfect subjection to the Father of spirits, Heb. xii. 9. Our comforts, our lives, are not our own; God, that doth require them, is absolute lord of them. If he cannot dispose of us and our comforts at his own pleasure, he is not, at least he is not owned as our lord and governor.

2. From the temper of his government, or the mitigation of his sovereignty, which he observeth in all his dealings with his people. God is an absolute sovereign, and giveth no account of his matters; therefore we must acquiesce in his laws and providences, though we know not the reasons of them. Yet his sovereignty in the exercise of it is always mitigated, and made sweet to us by his wisdom, power, and goodness, as to the case in hand. For his laws, they are holy, just, and good; there is no modelling and bringing them down to our humours and fancies, but they must stand as they are, being built on eternal equity, and commending themselves by their own evidence to our consciences.

But for his providential dispensations—

[1.] There is much wisdom in them: for he doth not call us to any eminent act of self-denial till we are prepared for it, sufficiently enlightened and confirmed, before we are called to suffer for the truth, or upon the hopes of glory. As Jacob drove as the little ones were able to bear, so doth God lay upon his people no more than they are able to bear, 1 Cor. x. 13. His castles are well victualled before they are besieged; first enlightened, then afflicted: Heb. x. 32, 'After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction;' Gen. xxii. 1, 'After these things God did tempt Abraham.' After solemn assurances of his love, then he put him upon offering up Isaac. So he deals proportionably with all his children. Their afflictions are according to their strength, and the degree and measure of grace received.

[2.] From the power of God. We have no reason to be discouraged in his service. God can deliver you from hard trials by forbearing to call you to them, and restraining the rage of enemies by delivering out of their hands by his almighty power; only it is your duty to resolve to be obedient to him, whether he will deliver you or no, and make a way for your escape. This was the resolution

of the three children: Dan. iii. 17, 18, ‘We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king: but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image which thou hast set up.’ So Paul: Acts xx. 22, 24, ‘And now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.’ We must be positive in our duty, but refer it to God to determine of our lot. If the worst come to the worst, he is able to support us: 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18, ‘I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion; and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.’ It becometh not the servants of God to be tender of the interests of the flesh, if they will be kept blameless to his heavenly kingdom.

[3.] There is relief in his goodness too, who doth extraordinarily support, assist, and comfort his suffering servants in all their conflicts and trials: 1 Peter iv. 14, ‘If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.’ Cordials are for a fainting time; and his people in sufferings have a more liberal allowance of his supporting presence, a sweeter taste of his love: Rom. v. 5, ‘The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.’ Clearer hopes of glory than others have. All the saints of God are in a way to glory, but his suffering saints are in the nearest way; yea, they have a reward above the common reward, for those that come out of tribulation wash their garments white in the blood of the Lamb, and are admitted to stand before the throne, Rev. vii. 13, 14. Now since these things are so, we may be contented by any means to attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

3. The great difficulty lieth, not in a respect to the end, but the means; and so the trial of our sincerity must be rather looked for there. There is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity, but the greatest difficulty is to convert them from worldly vanities, and to draw them to seek after it. We have a quick ear for offers of happiness, but we snuff at the troublesome conditions of duty, and obedience, and entire subjection to God. All would attain to the blessed resurrection, but they do not come to this, ‘If by any means,’ Balaam could say, ‘Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his,’ Num. xxiii. 10; but he loved the wages of unrighteousness. If the wicked are said to despise eternal happiness, it is not simply as happiness, nor eternal; they like happiness well enough, for they love themselves, and would be happy; nor as eternal, for man, that lost the right object of his desires, hath not lost the vastness of them; he would be happy for ever, but it is not in conjunction with the means. Thus the Israelites despised the pleasant land, and ‘murmured in their tents,’ Ps. cxvi. 24, 25. What ailed them? The land was a good land, a most fruitful possession; but when the spies brought back word, as of the great fertility of the land, so of the giantly strength and stature of the people and their fortifications, they thought God had deluded them, and resolved to give over the pursuit of Canaan. Canaan was

not thought worthy of the pains and difficulties to be sustained in going towards it. So it is in the case of heaven. Heaven is a good place, but out of indulgence to the ease of the flesh, and because of the strictness of holy walking, and the difficulties of obedience, we give over the pursuit after heaven. Therefore if we would be sincere, we must submit to any means prescribed or required.

4. The hope propounded will bear this submission, and so the reason of the thing showeth it. Immortal happiness is most desirable, and endless misery is most terrible. This world is vanity, and hath nothing in it worthy to be compared with the hopes which Christ hath given us of a better life; therefore upon due deliberation we must resolve to let go all that is inconsistent with these hopes. I say, this hope will bear all the costs we lay out upon it.

Reason will teach us two things—(1.) To submit to lesser evils to avoid a greater; (2.) To undergo a lesser evil to obtain a greater good; and both are in the present case.

[1.] To submit to a lesser evil to avoid a greater. You escape at a dear rate when you must sin to escape any trouble in the world. You run into eternal sufferings that you may avoid temporal. No fire like the fire of hell. Christ says, Luke xii. 4, 5, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear, Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; I say unto you, Fear him.' *Parce imperator, tu carcerem, ille Gehennam*—Excuse me, sir; you threaten me only with a prison, but he with hell. It is better for a man to suffer the most cruel punishments, and the worst of torments which man can inflict, than to lie under extreme everlasting pains and the loss of heaven. This is the case here.

[2.] To undergo a lesser evil to obtain a greater good than that evil depriveth us of. This is another head of reasoning the scripture uses in this case: Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us;' 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' The pain and suffering will be short; within a little time you will feel it no more than if it had never been; and if pain be remembered, it will be only to increase our joy.

Use 1. Let us not sit down contented with a worldly portion and happiness. There is another state to be enjoyed after the resurrection. This you must seek after, and propound to yourselves as your great end and scope. This life was not intended to be the place of our perfection, but a preparation to it. God led his people out of Egypt, not to keep them in the wilderness, but to carry them through the wilderness into Canaan. The world was intended for our passage, but heaven for our home; carry yourselves then as strangers and pilgrims, Heb. xi. 13, seeking for the city of God, where you may dwell for ever. You come to renew this profession in the Lord's supper. The Israelites in their first passover stood in the posture of pilgrims, with their loins girt, and their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hands, Exod. xii. 11; so must we be, in the course and frame of our

souls, pilgrims seeking a heavenly country. The ordinances are our songs in the house of our pilgrimage.

Use 2. Let us seek after this happiness without sticking at any difficulties either in active or passive obedience.

1. In active obedience. We must renounce all the pleasures of sense, how near and dear to us soever they be: Mat. v. 29, 30, 'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.' Certainly the damage of sin is more considerable than the delight; the honey will not countervail the sting. If you be men and women of pleasure, how do you keep down the body? 1 Cor. ix. 27. Oh, what kind of hearts have they who prefer every vain delight and wanton pleasure before the honour of Christ and the glory of the world to come! cannot leave a vain speech, a new-fangled fashion, deny themselves in anything! Is this submitting to any means? So also for any strict duty. Heaven is at the back of it, and that should sweeten it to us. If it cost you labour, it is for the meat that endureth for ever. Work out your salvation.

2. In our passive obedience. We are uncertain what changes we may see; it is past our skill to understand the methods of providence. We know not what God will do with us; but whatsoever he doth, you must say, 'If by any means I might attain the resurrection of the dead.' If we never suffer, we must be sure to have a heart to suffer if God call us to it. You may be saved without suffering, yet not without a heart that is willing to suffer, if God put you upon it: Acts xxi. 13, 'I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' We must be ready. Some cannot suffer a scoff, a frown, or a scorn. This part also doth much concern us in the Lord's supper; because—

[1.] Here we renew our belief of the promise of eternal life: John vi. 39, 40, 'And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.' Christ hath engaged his fidelity to take charge of our very dust, and to gather it up again, and to give a good account of it at the last day, and raise it up in glory. Our death and rotting in the grave doth not make void his interest, nor cause his affection to cease. Though we die, Christ is still living, and under this obligation to God, and engaged to us by his promise to us, and inclined by his love to receive our dead bodies.

[2.] Here we come to make application of Christ: John vi. 54, 'Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' A sincere application

of Christ begins that life which shall be perfected by the vision and fruition of God, and he will raise us up that we may enjoy the perfection of it.

[3.] Here we come to bind ourselves by any means to seek after this life, to make a full resignation to give up ourselves to be what God would have us to be, and to do what God would have us to do.

[4.] Here we come to get that peace which may enable us to encounter all troubles which may befall us in our way to heaven: Eph. vi. 15, 'Having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.' No going to heaven without this shoe. When the quarrel is taken up between God and us, we can the better bear the frowns of the world. He calleth it the 'gospel of peace,' because it mainly dependeth on the terms of grace revealed to us in the gospel or new covenant. The law discovereth the enmity and breach, but the gospel discovereth that peace and friendship may be had. He calleth it the 'preparation,' because this peace breedeth a firmness and resolution to go through all difficulties, and hardships, and crosses: Acts xxi. 13, 'I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem;' 1 Peter iii. 15, 'And be ready to give an answer to every man of the hope that is in thee.' The peace renewed between God and sinners breedeth a resolution to hold on our way to heaven, not broken with crosses and continual hardships.

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Use 3. When we are actually tried we must do four things—

1. Be sure you do not ask counsel of the flesh; that will prompt us to present ease. The voice of it is, Favour thyself, love the present world. Ease is pleasing to flesh and blood. We are all by nature addicted to sensuality, or the gratifying of the senses; to say with Issachar, Gen. xlix. 15, 'That rest is good.'

2. Get a right esteem of this world: 1 Cor. vii. 29, 'The fashion of the world passeth away.' It is momentary and fading, and can never give us full content.

3. Look not to the state in which we are, but to that to which we are a-going. God is preparing us for this felicity. And set faith, hope and love a-work.

[1.] Faith, to see it as present. We have it in the promise, though not in possession: Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' You see not the world to come that you are passing to, but faith believeth the reality of it.

[2.] Hope, which is an earnest expectation, a looking joined with waiting: 1 Peter i. 13, 'Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;' Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' Think often what you must be and do and possess for ever.

[3.] Love. All your looking to the reward must be mixed with a love to God, that there may be longing as well as looking. Our spiritual joys consist in a holy love and fruition of God. This is that we desire and value: Phil. i. 23, 'Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.' To be with Christ is best of all: 2 Cor. v. 6, 'Knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.' It is love must incline us heavenward, to long after the fruition of him whom we love, that we may see him, and enjoy him, and be ever present with him.

4. By all means labour to get and maintain the assurance of your title: 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.' Now this is gotten by doing rather than searching. It is sin that woundeth conscience, and wasteth comfort, and grieveth the spirit of adoption, by which we 'are sealed to the day of redemption,' Eph. iv. 30. But it is holiness, and faithful obedience, and diligence in the heavenly life, that you may keep up your assurance in vigour: Heb. vi. 11, 'And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.' When we grow slothful and remiss, desertions follow to our great discomfort, but our certainty is maintained by watchfulness and diligence: Acts xx. 24, 'But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.' He went bound in the spirit to Jerusalem. He had a call, but knew not fully what the issue would be, whether to die at Jerusalem or no; that bonds and afflictions abide me, but I make no reckoning of any such thing: 1 Thes. iii. 3, 'That no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.' A christian should be of such a temper, that out of the hope of eternity he should not be greatly moved with any temporal things.

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SERMON VIII.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.—PHIL. iii. 12.

PAUL having spoken much of his self-denial for Christ, would not be misinterpreted, as if there remained no more to be done by him. No; his race was not yet finished, nor yet had he taken hold of the crown, which conquerors in those races were wont to do, from some high place where it was hung and fixed: 'Not as though I had already attained.'

In the words we have—

1. A disclaiming of present perfection.

2. An earnest endeavour to attain it for the future.

3. The reason of his diligence and earnestness; he was ‘apprehended of Jesus Christ’ for this end.

1. A disclaiming or denial of present perfection, in two expressions, proper to agonistical matters. They had their Olympian, Nemean, Isthmian, and Pythian games, which were the same for nature, only the place differed. Their usual exercises were wrestling, running and the like.

[1.] ‘Not as though I had already attained.’ It is an agonistical word put for receiving the reward due to the conqueror. In the races there was a crown of leaves generally set over the goal, that he that came thither foremost might catch it and carry it away with him: 1 Cor. ix 24, ‘One receiveth the prize.’ So 1 Tim. vi. 12, ‘Take hold of eternal life.’ So here, οὐχ ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβον, I have not yet catched the crown from the top of the goal.

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[2.] ‘Or were already perfect.’ This also is an agonistical word, its Faber proveth at large. Though the runner was to catch at the crown, and seize upon it as his right, yet the ἑλλανοδίκαι, the judges, did first interpose their judgment before he could put it on his head, and when he received the crown from them, he was judged as a perfect wrestler and racer. The word ‘perfect,’ as applied to racing, was sometimes used of their strength, and sometimes of their reward. Of their strength and agility, having passed the agonistical exercises, 2 Cor. xiii. 9, ‘For we are glad when we are weak, and ye are strong; and this also we wish, even your perfection;’ that is, it would be matter of joy to him to see them strong and able to run the spiritual race. Sometimes of their reward, that when the crown was adjudged to them, or that they had done worthily, the more excellent of the racers had the more excellent rewards: τὰ τὲλεια τοῖς τελείοις διδόμενα, saith Philo, which were called perfect rewards or crowns. Well, then, Paul had not yet gotten his crown, but was as the racer in the pursuit, in the way running as hard as he could, that at length he might possibly catch and receive that prize, the crown of eternal life. That he was not yet in heaven was evident, and needed not be so earnestly asserted; therefore the meaning is, that though he were in the way to glory, yet further difficulties remained; and though his estate were so far secured as to exclude diffidence and doubting, yet not so as to exclude caution and diligence; he had not ended his race so as to catch the crown, or receive it from the hand of the judges. Though he were now in prison at Rome, yet some time of living remained, and some further difficulties to be undergone. He speaketh at another rate, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.’

2. An earnest endeavour for the future: ‘But I follow after it that I may apprehend,’ διώκω. I run as hard as I can, pursuing and striving to overtake, with as great desire and diligence in that exercise, when he was behind another; so though he had not attained his crown, yet he would not slacken his diligence till he did attain: ‘If I may apprehend,’ εἰ κὰι καταλάβω, that at length he

might take hold of it. ‘If I may apprehend,’ to exclude security, and to keep on his earnest pursuit by any means.

3. The reason of his diligence: ‘That for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.’ Christ’s apprehending may be also interpreted in the agonistical sense. Instead of the crown, he apprehendeth us; for we are his joy, his rejoicing, his crown, if we hold out unto the end. Now we are apprehended by him—

[1.] In effectual calling, as he puts us upon this race, or inclineth us to this course of life. Paul was apprehended by Christ whet persecuting the church, and running into destruction; then he converted him, possessed him by his Spirit, thinking of no such matter, posting quite another way. When an enemy, he took hold of him, converted him, inclined him, fitted him for this race, that he might obtain everlasting glory.

[2.] By constant support; for having apprehended us, he still upholdeth us. We are on his hands, and he doth influence, animate, draw, and strengthen us in this race, as concerned in it, that he may not lose the fruit of his own agonies. By his constant influence we are strengthened and quickened till we come to the goal.

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Doct. 1. That God’s best children, however assured of their good estate, yet till their race be ended, cannot look upon themselves as quite out of danger.

Doct. 2. Whatever degrees are already attained, we must press to wards perfection.

Doct. 3. That Christ’s apprehending us for the obtaining the end of the spiritual race is a great encouragement to us to go on still.

For the first point, that none of God’s children, however assured, can look upon themselves as past all danger till their race be ended.

I will prove to you two things—

1. That God’s eminent servants may have assurance.

2. That they are not to look upon themselves as quite out of all danger till their race be ended.

I. That God’s eminent servants may have assurance of their sincerity and good estate before God. So had Paul; he asserteth it all along, as we have seen. They may have assurance of their present grace, for Paul looketh upon himself as in the race; and of their final perseverance, for he was apprehended of Christ, that he might at length touch the goal and obtain the reward, to excite his desire and diligence: they may, I say, have assurance in these cases.

1. When grace is not small and indiscernible, but in some degree of eminency, it may be discerned. When grace is weak and small, and doth not discover itself in any eminent and

self-denying acts, it is not noted and observed, but where it is in some degree of eminency, it may be discerned. As in Phineas, because he was zealous for God, Ps. cvi. 31, ‘That was accounted to him for righteousness;’ it was accepted by God as a testimony of his holiness. Surely great things are more liable to sense and feeling than little; a staff is sooner found than a needle. Some stars are so small that they are scarce seen. A strong faith, a fervent love, and a lively hope will soon discover themselves. It is hard to think that the soul should be a stranger to its own operations; though some lesser inconsiderable action may escape us for want of advertency, yet we know, and others about us know our ‘work of faith and labour of love.’

2. It is eminent when this grace is not in their hearts, as a sleepy habit or buried seed, but in continual act: 1 Thes. i. 3, ‘I remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope;’ Gal. v. 6, ‘For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but faith that worketh by love.’ They that keep grace in lively exercise seldom doubt of the truth of it. The sap is not seen, but apples will appear upon the tree.

3. When they blot not their evidences by frequent interruptions of the spiritual life, and so many sins as others do, which make their sincerity questionable. Though it be hard to state what sins are, and what are not consistent with grace, yet though conscience be not observant of our particular actions, or be confounded by them, yet the course, drift, and tenor of our lives cannot be hidden from it. A man in a journey doth not count his steps, yet observeth his way. When a man mindeth the business of going to heaven in good earnest: Phil. iii. 20, ‘But our conversation is in heaven;’ and of approving himself to God in his whole course: 2 Cor. i. 12, ‘But our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world;’ 2 Cor. v. 9, ‘Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.’ Surely a man may know his drift and scope.

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4. They have assurance, because they have the spirit of adoption in a more eminent degree. All God’s children have it: Gal. iv. 6, ‘And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;’ Eph. i. 13, 14, ‘In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.’ But much more they that do more eminently live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit. In some the Spirit discovereth himself only in childlike groans; they feel little of childlike joy and confidence. Surely they find the Spirit a comforter who least grieve him.

5. They have a more abundant sense of the love of God and his rich mercies in Christ.

[1.] By long acquaintance with him: Job xxii. 21, ‘Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto thee.’

[2.] By frequent converse with him in the word and prayer: 1 Peter ii. 3, ‘If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious;’ Eph. iii. 12, ‘In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.’

[3.] By the experiences of their afflictions: Rom. v. 3-5, ‘And not only so, but we glory in tribulation, as knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us;’ Heb. xii. 11, ‘Now no chastening for the present seemeth joyous but grievous: Nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.’

[4.] By those rewards of obedience which belong to God’s internal government, God’s hiding or manifesting his favour to his people. Now a close walker hath many of these experiences: John xiv. 21, 23, ‘He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.’ They have more of sensible consolation. Now all these tastes of the love of God conduce to establish the soul in holy security and peace.

6. The change wrought in them by grace is most sensible, and plainly to be discovered. They may see a manifest difference between them and themselves. Their minds are changed: Eph. v. 8, ‘Ye were sometimes darkness, but are now light in the Lord.’ They have another sight of things, of sin, God, Christ, and heaven. So Paul here: Phil. iii. 7, ‘What things were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ.’ Their hearts are changed; they love what they formerly hated, and, on the contrary, they esteem and choose what they formerly slighted: Phil. iii. 8, ‘Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.’ Their lives are changed: 2 Cor. v. 17, ‘If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.’ And there is a difference between them and others: 1 John v. 19, ‘And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.’ There is somewhat of this in all, but in them the change is more notorious and sensible; whereas others cannot so easily interpret their sincerity.

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[1.] This is not spoken to infringe the doctrine of the saints’ perseverance. No; far be it from me or you to think so; for ‘none can pluck them out of Christ’s hands,’ John x. 28. They are safe in the love and care of Christ, and have his power engaged for their preservation. None can unclasp those mutual embraces of love by which Christ holdeth them, and they hold Christ: Rom. viii. 39, ‘Nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ Yet we must not thence conclude that we have no more care to take, nor danger to be afraid of, or no more to do as necessary to salvation. We have still more work to do, and we have still to encounter new difficulties and dangers till we are in heaven, and much

care and diligence is required at our hands in the use of all appointed means, much exercise of faith, and love, and hope; for by these means doth Christ preserve us in a state of holiness and obedience: 1 Peter i. 5, 'Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation;' 2 Peter i. 10, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall.'

[2.] Neither is this spoken to hinder the comfort and encouragement which ariseth from the application of this doctrine. The belief of perseverance in the general is one thing, and the belief of my perseverance is another. That is not so evident and certain every way as the doctrine itself; for my own sincerity is more questionable than the truth of God's promise: *conclusio sequitur debiliorem partem*—the conclusion follows the weaker part. It is certain that 'he that believeth in Christ hath eternal life and shall not come into condemnation,' John v. 24; because it is a truth revealed in the word of God. Amen, the faithful witness, hath assured us of it. But I am a true believer; this may be certain and evidenced to me by such real arguments and grounds of confidence as I have no reason to doubt of it; yet it depending upon spiritual sense and experience, it is not so unquestionably certain as the word of God is. Therefore this being the limiting proposition, the conclusion can bear no more weight than this proposition hath truth in it. Therefore while I am but making out my claim, as I am doing through out the whole course of my life; though there be no uncertainty in the case, yet since there is no difficulty in the case, I may, and must say with the apostle, 'I press on if I may apprehend;' yet while I am labouring, and striving, and persevering in my faith, love, and obedience, I may encourage myself in the love, faithfulness, and power of God to keep me as he hath kept me hitherto, and that he will preserve me in all difficulties and temptations: 1 Cor. i. 9, 'God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;' 1 Thes. v. 23, 24, 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it.'

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II. Yet they cannot look upon themselves as quite out of all danger, and past all care and holy solicitude. We are not yet out of gun shot till we come to the end of our race, and are conquerors over all opposition.

Reasons.

1. Because there is no period put to our duty but life; and it is not enough to begin with God, but we must go on in his way till we come home to him. We must not give over working till we obtain our reward: Heb. iii. 6, 14, 'But Christ as a son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;' Heb. vi. 11, 'And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.' These places show we have not done our work till we have done our lives. We must not give over running in the race till we obtain the prize. Though we are translated from death to life, we

are not translated from earth to heaven; and therefore you must work, and ‘work out your salvation with fear and trembling,’ Phil. ii. 12.

2. During our lives upon earth there is somewhat yet more to do, and something yet more to suffer; some lust to conquer, some grace to strengthen. Paul was not perfect.

[1.] Sin is slowly weakened, and never perfectly subdued. There is a continual conflict between the flesh and the spirit: Gal. v. 17, ‘For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.’ The leading and commanding faculties of the soul do but imperfectly lead and command; and the faculties that should be commanded and led do but imperfectly obey, yea, often rebel, being put into a distemper by the senses. Now there is danger in a kingdom, where there is a feeble empire, and rebellious subjects.

[2.] There are continual oppositions from the devil and the world, whereby the weak measure of grace present is often interrupted. As sin within disturbeth it, so Satan and the world incessantly assault it. Therefore we must not give over watching till Satan give over tempting, nor striving till the world give over opposing. Well, many a storm and tempest you must expect, and possibly you may be put upon stranger trials than any yet you have undergone. Therefore, if hitherto you have forsaken all and followed Christ, you must follow him to the end. Temptations will haunt you to the last hour of your lives; therefore you must watch and pray that you fall not by these temptations, Mat. xxvi. 41. The danger is not over whilst you are in the way.

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3. Some have ‘left their first love,’ Rev. ii. 4, have fainted in the race before they came to the goal: Gal. v. 7, ‘Ye did run well; who hindered you?’ Men that have made long profession of the name of Christ may find a great abatement of their integrity in their latter days: 2 Chron. xvii. 3, ‘Jehoshaphat walked in the first ways of his father David.’ In his latter time he fell into scandalous sins, partly through the suggestions of Satan. An importunate suitor may at length prevail by his perseverance in his suit. Long conversing with the world, and objects to which we are accustomed, taint the mind. Worldliness formerly hated may creep in. A deformed object is most odious at first sight, afterward it is more reconciled to our thoughts. Indwelling in, long restrained, may break out again; as roses snipt in summer bud in winter. A man, upon the supposition that he hath grace, and is possessed of the love of God, may grow negligent, and thinketh there needeth not such diligence as when he was doubtful.

4. The nature of the assurance is to exclude fear, which hath torment; but not the fear of caution and diligence; for so, ‘Blessed is he that feareth always,’ Prov. xxviii. 14; and ‘we must pass the whole time of our sojourning here in fear,’ 1 Peter i. 17. We need not retain the same doubting perplexities and fears of God’s displeasure, but we must retain a fear of sinning, and be much more in the love of God and his service than ever we were before. So that this assurance, if it foe right, doth increase our diligence and watchfulness, and make us more obedient, holy, and fruitful towards

God. We are never so thankful, humble, and heavenly as when we do most certainly look for salvation.

Use 1. To show us the difference between carnal security and solid assurance of our good estate before God. There are many differences, but it will not suit with my purpose to pursue all.

1. There is a difference in the grounds; the one is a slight presumption of the end without the means, the other goeth upon solid evidences: 1 John iii. 19, 'Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.' The one buildeth upon a sandy foundation, the other upon a rock.

2. They differ in the effects: the one benumbeth the conscience into a stupid, quiet, and lazy peace; the other reviveth the conscience, and filleth it with joy and peace in believing: Rom. xv. 13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.' With joy and peace in obeying: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.' With joy and peace in suffering: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Though now in tribulation, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.'

3. They differ in the way, how either is gotten, or how maintained. Foolish presumption costs a man nothing; like a mushroom, it groweth up in a night, or like Jonah's gourd. We did not labour for it; it came upon men they know not how nor why. The less such men exercise themselves unto godliness, the more confident. A serious exercising of grace would discover their unsoundness. A peace that groweth upon us we know not how, and is better kept by negligence than diligence, is not right. We may say to them, How earnest thou. by it so soon, my son? Men leap into it upon slight grounds; hut a true assurance is gotten with diligence, and kept with watchfulness.

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[1.] It is gotten with diligence. The scripture everywhere calls for it, when it persuades us to look after so great a benefit. And surely the counsel of the Holy Ghost is not to be despised: 2 Peter i. 10, 'Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure;' Heb. vi. 11, 'That ye show forth the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end,' 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Be diligent, that you may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.' Now see after all this warning if the comforts of the Spirit will drop into the mouth of the lazy soul. If you neglect your duty, your sense of your interest will abate. God withdraweth his comforts to awaken his children and quicken them to their duty.

[2.] It is kept with watchfulness. The scripture is plentiful in warnings of that nature. See some places: Heb. iv. 1, 'Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.' The more confident we are of the promise, the more should our caution increase: Heb. xii. 28, 29, 'Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: for our

God is a consuming fire;' 1 Cor. x. 12, 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' The fear of caution doth not weaken assurance, but guard it. And therefore if men be confident of salvation, and gather some ill consequence of it, that tendeth to security and remitting of their watchfulness and care, surely their assurance is not right; that is, if they be bolder with sin, if they stretch conscience, omit some of the more painful and costly duties, take more fleshly liberty and ease, and say, Now I am a child of God, out of danger, and therefore need not be so strict and diligent; these think themselves something when they are nothing.

SERMON IX.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.—PHIL. iii. 12.

USE 2. Is to teach us three duties which are to be observed to the very last—diligence, watchfulness, and self-denial.

1. Diligence. The race is not ended as soon as begun; it is a race from earth to heaven by the way of holiness. New converts are carried on with a great deal of affection and zeal, and make a swift progress at first, but flag and faint afterwards. Therefore you must renew your resolutions for God and heaven. There is many a corruption yet to resist and conquer, many a temptation to overcome, and much necessary work to do, and you received life from Christ to do it. How much is all that you have done already beneath your duty, beneath the majesty of God whom you serve in the spirit, beneath the precious love of Christ, which should both incline and oblige you to live more to him; beneath the promises and advantages you have by grace for your growth and increase; beneath the weight and worth of endless glory into which yon are entering! And therefore you should be best at last, from good grow better, and the nearer to enjoyment, be the more earnest in your motions, and the more confidence of obtaining, the more abounding in the work of the Lord.

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2. Be not secure, but use all caution and watchfulness that you miscarry not. Man is a very changeable creature, therefore we should always stand upon our guard; considering—

[1.] The course of temptations may be altered; the devil doth not always play the same game; as it is said of Joab, 1 Kings ii. 28, he 'turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom.' A man may withstand one kind of brunt, yet fail in another. Every new condition brings new snares: Hosea vii. 8, 'Ephraim is a cake not turned;' that is, baked but of one side. The children of God prosperous differ from the children of God afflicted: Phil. iv. 12, 'I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.' Age hath its weaknesses and frailties as well as youth.

[2.] Corruptions are sometimes strangely disguised. A man may withstand open enemies, yet fail by the insinuations of those who have a show of godliness: 1 Kings xiii. 4, 19, the man of God withstood the king, but was overcome by the old prophet. We read in history of some that lost their limbs in defence of the truth under pagan persecutions, but after made shipwreck of the faith by errors. Many with stand violence, bear it out well in a storm, yet are soon deluded and turned out of the way.

[3.] There is danger after suffering. Many suffer many things for the truth who after make foul defection from God; they may suffer a while upon the example of others; their particular interest is wrapt up in the public applause which sufferers for the truth receive from the lovers of truth, and that will make even hypocrites suffer much. Yea, continued sufferings may make the soul faint for the present time; the best, being left to themselves in the hour of temptation, may shrink, and without continual aid from heaven will dishonour God and themselves. No experience from heaven, no experience of former joy and sweetness which they have found in the way of truth, nor their former sufferings, will make them adhere to it.

[4.] Where there seemeth to be least danger there is many times most cause of fear. Lot, that was chaste in Sodom, miscarried by incest in the mountains, where was none but his own family.

[5.] When conscience is cast asleep, a child of God may fall into grievous sins. David's heart smote him when he cut off the lap of Saul's garment, yet fell into uncleanness and blood, and lieth asleep in it for a long time, till Nathan the prophet roused him up. Who would have thought that such a tender conscience could ever have been so charmed? But the conscience of a child of God may be strangely deadened and laid by for a time, even after he hath passed over the terrors of the law, and gotten some peace and confidence.

3. Continual self-denial; if you have suffered for Christ, you must suffer still, that you may not lose your cost: Gal. iii. 4, 'Have you suffered so many things in vain?' They are lost as to anything you can expect from God. If you have ministered to the saints, you must minister: Heb. vi. 10, 11, 'For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope to the end.' If you have mortified and subdued the flesh, you must mortify and subdue it more and more, that you may not be castaways: 1 Cor. ix. 27, 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway;' as those are who begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh: 2 Thes. iii. 6, 7, 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.' If you have endured afflictions, you must endure still: Col. i. 11, 'Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long

suffering with joyfulness.' The danger is not over whilst you are yet in the way. Take heed of miscarrying in the haven, and falling at last.

Doct. 2. That whatsoever degrees we have already attained, we must press forward to perfection.

As Paul laboured hard after it, so should we all in the sense of our defects, and endeavour a constant progress.

Reasons.

1. By this our title is assured. All that will be saved must either be perfect or labour after perfection. Perfect none can be, but all must labour after perfection, or else they are not sincere, and so far labour as to be ashamed of defects in holiness, and mourn over them, Rom. vii. Certainly we must not allow ourselves in them; still striving after more, and making further progress every day: Mat. v. 48, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.' christians are called to perfection, though they cannot fully attain to it in this life. Many after they have gotten such a measure of grace whereby they think they may be assured they are in a state of grace, never look further, but set up their rest; think that hereafter God will make them perfect when they die. Oh, consider, here is the time of growth. Corn doth not grow in the barn, but in the field. Besides, they hazard their claim of sincerity who do not aim at perfection; for where there is true grace there will be a desire of the greatest perfection. As a small seed will seek to grow up into a tree, and there will be trouble about the relics of sin and grief, that they can serve God no more perfectly.

2. By this our hearts are more prepared in this life for our happiness. The more holy and heavenly we grow, the more meet: Col. i. 12, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' We are remotely fitted by regeneration: 2 Cor. v. 5, 'Now he that hath wrought us to this self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.' But next and immediately by growth and increase of grace: 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' He purifieth himself more and more: Rom. ix. 23, 24, 'And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory, even us whom he called: not of the Jews only, but of the gentiles.'

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3. By this our glory and blessedness are increased. The best graces have a more honourable crown; for according to the degrees of grace, so will our glory be. Every vessel is filled according to its capacity; they that are growing here have more in heaven. Glory and blessedness standeth in communion with God and conformity to him, or the vision and full fruition of God: Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness;' 1 John iii. 2, 'But we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.' Now the more holy we are, the more suited to this happiness, and therefore have larger measures of it; if purity of heart be necessary to see God, to enjoy communion with God now, as unquestionably it is: Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;' 1

John i. 7, ‘If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.’ It is unreasonable to imagine that clarified souls have no more fruition of God than those who have only grace enough to make a hard shift to go to heaven. *Sicut se habet simpliciter ad simpliciter, ita magis ad magis.* If holiness fits to see God, and without it we cannot see him, so a little holiness fits to take in a little of God; and the more of holiness the more of God; and there is the same reason for aiming at the degree as at the thing, heaven being the perfection of holiness. If you do not desire more degrees, you do not desire heaven itself.

Use. Is to persuade us to get ground in our race, which we do as our title is more assured by self-denying obedience.

1. Our end will bear it, to see God and enjoy God: 1 Thes. ii. 12, ‘That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.’ How much is this better than all those worldly things upon which we lay out our labour and diligence?

2. The glory of God requireth it. Less grace may serve for our safety than our comfort; for our comfort than the glory of God: John xv. 8, ‘Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.’ Your hearts will never serve you to do any excellent things for God in the world, but you will betray his honour upon all occasions by your weaknesses and infirmities. God hath most honour from the strong and fruitful christian, who produces the genuine fruits of godliness, and produces them in such plenty that God is mightily honoured by them: Mat. v. 16, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ By your zeal, constancy, and fidelity in your relations. Meekness, patience, strictness, and heavenly-mindedness. But if our lives be filled with sensuality, pride, envy, malice, wherein do you differ from the ungodly world but only in the name, and some little grace buried under a heap of sin?

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3. The notion of grace implieth it. You must not only begin it, but continue it till you come to the goal. Besides your entrance into christianity, there must be a progress. There is a gate, and a way, Mat. vii. 14. Will you always keep at the door and entrance? It is not enough to begin, but we must finish in the way of mortification, heavenly-mindedness, self-denial: Prov. iv. 18, ‘The path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;’ Ps. lxxxiv. 7, ‘They go from strength to strength;’ 2 Cor. iv. 16, ‘But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.’

Now there is requisite to this—

[1.] A strong faith, or a deep sense of the world to come: Heb. x. 39, ‘But we are not of them who draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.’

[2.] A fervent love, levelling and directing all our actions to God’s glory: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, ‘For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.'

[3.] A lively hope, quickening and strengthening our resolutions for God and the world to come: 1 Peter i. 13, 'Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' In short, a faith that we may believe the gospel with an assent so strong as constantly to adhere to the duties prescribed, and to venture all upon the hopes offered therein; a hope so strong that the heart be so set upon glory to come, that present things do not greatly move us, whether the delights or terrors of sense; such a love arising out of the sense of our obligations to God, and a value and esteem of his grace, that we do with all readiness of mind and delight, with frequency and constancy, continue in the obedience of his will, seeking his glory.

Doct. 3. That it is a great encouragement in the spiritual race that Christ apprehended us for this end and scope, that we may apprehend the crown of eternal life.

Christ's apprehending of us implieth—

1. That any motion towards that which is spiritually good proceedeth first and wholly from Christ. He apprehendeth us before we can apprehend him; his person, ways, benefits, but especially our eternal rewards. We have from him beginning and progress; he is the author and finisher; he first layeth hold upon us, when we were dead in trespasses and sins, by his grace, and still upholdeth us by his grace. He puts us into the heavenly race; for till Christ changeth us we take up with things next at hand. A blinded unbelieving sinner can not see afar off, till the spirit of wisdom and revelation open his eyes: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' Nor will he regard heavenly things, nor set his heart on another world, nor lay up his hopes in heaven, and forsake all the things he seeth for that God and glory which he never saw. He slighteth the offer; his heart is shut up against it till God open it: Acts xvi. 14, 'Whose heart the Lord opened, so that she attended to the things spoken by Paul.' Christ's apprehending us in effectual calling is by a work on the will and understanding; till Christ open our eyes and turn our hearts, and instead of sensual and worldly, make them spiritual and heavenly: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.' We disregard these things till our understandings be cleared; have neither sight nor sense of the world to come, will not let go present advantages for heavenly hopes: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' Prov. xxiii. 4, 'Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own understanding.' Till the heart be turned our affections are prepossessed, till Christ puts us in the race.

2. Christ's apprehending us implieth a motion on our part, a sub ordinate operation; for he infuseth a new life, which we receive from Christ, to use it and live by it.' There is a vital power, whereby we are made to stir ourselves in a way of holiness, for thereby we are fitted for operations becoming the new creature enabled and inclined; and so the power of God and the liberty of man do sweetly consist together. Where God is said to create in us a new heart, he is also said to give us a free spirit, Ps. li. 10, 13. Where we are said to be 'God's workmanship in Christ Jesus;' we are said 'To walk in them,' Eph. ii. 10. Where he is said to 'take away the heart of stone, and to give us an heart of flesh,' there it is said, 'I will cause you to walk in my statutes,' Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27; 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18, 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' God first worketh on us, and then by us. God's work is first, ours subordinate: Cant. i. 4, 'Draw me, we will run after thee;' Ps. cxix. 32, 'I will walk at liberty, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.' We are 'transformed by the renewing of our minds, but so as to prove what is that good, that acceptable and perfect will of the Lord," Rom. xii. 2. Well, then, having such a spirit, and power, and principle of life, with which the rest of the world are not acquainted, let us press forward.

3. The tendency of this life infused is to be considered by us, which is to God and heaven. Converting grace draweth and bendeth the soul to its end and rest, that we may grow more divine and heavenly; for you are so far sanctified as you are divine and heavenly.

[1.] Divine: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.' So that we are or should be still growing, breathing, and reaching forth after God, seeking after him, longing to be with him, to be rid of sin, to see his blessed face, and to live in his perfect love, praising him to all eternity. As the seed is working through the dry clods, so doth this principle of grace; it tendeth toward God, that it may have more enjoyment of God in conformity to him, and be more perfectly subject to him, and never grieve him nor dishonour him more. In the world there is not sufficient to answer the desires and expectations of the new creature. Two things the heart looketh for as soon as it is changed by grace—perfect enjoyment of God, and perfect conformity and subjection to him, that he may be with God, and free from sin. For this Paul groans: Rom. viii. 23, 'Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.'

[2.] Heavenly; that we may live in heaven above the earth, and our hearts may be above with God as our happiness. The heart is suited to that exceeding glory promised us in the gospel, that we may affect it, care for it, fix it as our scope and home, travel toward it with all zeal and diligence. Well, then, if the first grace do in some measure incline us to seek this happiness with God above as our treasure, hope, and home, as the chief matter of our desires and joys, then we are apprehended by Christ; for none but illuminated souls can discern this glory, none but the sanctified soul is inclined to it: Col. iii. 1-3, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where

Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;' 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.'

4. Christ having apprehended us, still keepeth us in his own hands, and will not fail us, but stand by us in the race in which he hath set us; for that we have from him beginning and progress. He is the author and finisher of our faith; having laid hold upon us by converting grace, he still upholdeth us by his confirming grace; and having begun life, maintaineth it by a constant influence. His divine manutenency is often spoken of in scripture; so that besides our care, and watchfulness, and incessant labour, we receive a new life, vigour, and assistance from Christ.

Use. Is to press us to answer Christ's apprehension of us by an exact, resolved, diligent pursuit of eternal life, that only will declare that we are apprehended by Christ, that we may be guided by him to the land of promise.

I shall give you two motives—

1. Think often of our great obligation to Christ for the great love he hath showed us in our calling and conversion; that he apprehended you in your sins, called you with a holy calling, gave you some taste of his graciousness in the pardoning of your sins, acquainted you with his great and distinguishing love. And is this to be answered with a cold obedience? Christ snatched you from the furnace of hell as brands plucked out of the burning; you have just cause to bless God to all eternity for making you new creatures, living members of Christ. But wherefore did he make you new creatures, but that at length he might perfect the work begun?

2. Consider how Christ is interested in your preservation. He had his race and his agonies: Heb. xii. 1, 2, 'Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is now at the right hand of the throne of God.' The 'joy before him' was principally eternal glory, for which end he apprehended us. That is not all; we are his crown, his joy, a church of holy believers: Isa. liii. 10, 11, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.' A numerous seed, these are called his 'purchased possession,' Eph. i. 14. He had this in his eye as his crown and the reward of his sufferings: Ps. ii. 3, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession;' given him as a recompense of his humiliation.

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This consideration giveth you a double advantage—

[1.] It assureth you of his willingness and readiness to assist and help you to the end of the race; for Christ will not lose his own crown, if believers be his crown and rejoicing.

[2.] Our Saviour Christ hath given an example of enduring the highest afflictions in this world. Of faith; he hath led us as a captain. Let us lay aside our worldly love, and fear and obey him, for he will be sure to crown all those that follow him.

SERMON X.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth toward those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.—PHIL. iii. 13, 14.

IN the words observe two things—

1. The imperfection acknowledged, 'Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.'

2. His eager desire and endeavour after perfection asserted, 'But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth toward those things that are before.'

I begin with the first general branch, an humble acknowledgment of his imperfection renewed. He had said in the former verse 'Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect;' now he repeateth it again, 'Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.'

This he saith for his own sake, and for the sake of the Philippians.

[1.] For his own sake; to keep himself humble, and solicitous about so much of his duty as was yet behind. The meaning is not, I am not yet in heaven. Who knoweth not that, or doubted of that? Surely that needeth not to be disclaimed by this double denial. Nor doth he mean thereby as if he had not a present right to eternal life. We have a right at conversion, but yet this right to salvation is not full till all be ended. It is continued and confirmed by our perseverance in well-doing. Paul's meaning is, that though he had done and suffered many things for Christ, yet there were more labours and difficulties to be undergone. He had not done all which was necessary.

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[2.] This he speaketh for the sake of the Philippians, to expel out of them that conceit of perfection which they might foster and cherish in themselves, as if, as soon as they were converted to the gospel, all danger were over, either of deceit by error, or defection in point of practice. No; he telleth them he had not that which they boasted of; he was not yet come to the goal; he needed to do and suffer more things before he could obtain the prize.

Doct. They that have made the furthest progress in christianity are usually most sensible of their own imperfections.

The reasons of the point.

1. In respect of grace.

[1.] Because as grace increaseth, light increaseth, and so they are more sensible of defects. Novices, who know little, are most apt to be puffed up: 1 Tim. iii. 6, 'Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.' A man newly acquainted with religion looketh but to few things, and his knowledge is very indistinct and imperfect; and therefore, looking not into the breadth of religion, they are conceited of those few obvious truths which they understand, as if they knew all that is necessary to be known; as smatterers in learning are most conceited of their learning, because they have not knowledge enough to discover their ignorance. Plutarch recorded the saying of one Manedemus, that young men when they came to study at Athens they were σόφοι; after they had studied a little more, only φιλόσοφοι; but the more they studied, ῥήτορες, had some notions, could prattle of things, but not understand them; but afterwards found themselves μῶροι, fools; as they studied deeper in learning, they knew this only, that they knew nothing. So it is in spiritual things. Who more confident than young professors? But as their knowledge increaseth, they see every day more need of the apostle's direction, 'Be not wise in thine own conceit.' In a clear glass the least mote is soon espied. They discern many remainders of pride, hypocrisy, worldliness, besides their latent corruptions, which they knew not before; and their hasty confidence is soon routed, and they see a need of establishing themselves in the hope of the gospel upon surer terms.

[2.] As grace increaseth, their love to God is increased, and so they hate sin more. Love begets a tenderness; as the spiritual life increaseth, so doth spiritual sense. The least sin goeth to their very souls, which maketh them to think viler of themselves than ever before. We have but a gross sense of sin at first, because we know but a few things, prize ourselves by some sensitive expressions of love to God, or external conformity to his laws; but as we look into the breadth of the commandment, make conscience of a thorough conformity to the will of God, we are more sensible how much we come short of that purity, and holiness, and exactness which the law of God requireth, and do more sorely and bitterly complain of the relics of sin dwelling in us: Rom. vii. 18, 'I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not;' and ver. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' The increase of light showeth sin to be more than we thought it to be, and the increase of love maketh it to be more a burden to us. Look, as in the body, the better the constitution, the more sensible of pain; so in the soul, the more thoroughly the heart is set to please God, the more grievous is sin to them.

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[3.] The longer they live, the more experience they have, and that maketh them wise and provident, that they are not so confident and venturous as others; they have more experience of the craft and subtlety of Satan, who easily surpriseth unwary souls: 2 Cor. ii. 11, 'Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.' They know the rocks upon which they are apt to split themselves; what advantage he maketh of their passions and affections, and not only of their natural and carnal affections, but some times of their religious affections. If they will be sorry for sin, he will tempt them to an over-grief, that they may be swallowed up of sorrow. He would turn their zeal to a furious zeal, that it shall exceed the measure of the cause, or offend in its object. How is a child of God or a disciple of Christ sometimes made Satan's instrument? Mat. xvi. 23, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' Therefore these things make them more wary and watchful than younger christians, who fall as a ready prey into the mouth of the tempter.

2. Because of the world. This flattering tempting world, whose delights often tempt them from God, holiness, and heaven, they have proved it, and tried it to be 'vanity and vexation of spirit' at the last. When the apostle had differenced christians by their several ages and degrees of growth, he adviseth all, 1 John ii. 15, 16, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.' All christians must take heed of the world, but none are so likely to do so as those that have smarted for their carnal complacency. They find that the world is more an enemy when it smileth than when it frowneth; that the profits of it are a greater snare than the losses, the pleasure than the pains, and the honours than the disgraces; that the pomp and vanities of the world do easily tempt them to forget God and their souls, death and judgment, heaven and hell. The seasoned christian will be more humble and watchful than the inexperienced.

3. Because of themselves; the longer they live, the more they are acquainted with themselves. You would think it strange that two men should intimately converse together for twenty, or thirty, or forty years, and all this while should not know one another. But it is much more strange that a man should live so long and not know himself, not know his own heart. Too frequently is this so, because most men fly themselves, shun themselves, run away from themselves, never commune with their own hearts. But you cannot imagine a man to be godly and serious, but he will use frequent observation, and 'ponder the path of his feet,' Prov. iv. 26; and as one that hath eyes in his head will consider what he doth, and that upon every weighty matter he will use self-communings, and self-reflections: Ps. iv. 4, 'Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own hearts upon your beds, and be still.' His duties will often call upon him to examine himself, if he goeth about them conscientiously: 1 Cor. xi. 28, 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread, and drink of this cup.' If he omitteth it, God will remember him by many a sharp providence, and put him necessarily upon an inquiry into his state and ways: Lam. iii. 4, 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn to the Lord.' Surely this is a duty necessary, and upon solemn occasions indispensable. Now can a man be observant of his course, and seriously examine and consider what he has been

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before conversion, what he is after grace received, how much he cometh short of his obligations to God, of his advantages by Christ; how much he liveth beneath the provisions appointed for his growth and increase, and beneath the worth and weight of endless glory which he hopeth for; but he must be base in his own eyes, and have a higher sense of his sinfulness than others have, and so bemoan and bewail himself for his defects, and see that he hath not attained to the height of perfection which christians should aim at?

4. By frequent commerce with God they know more of God, and so more of themselves. A godly man hath much to do with that majesty and perfection which continually aweth him, and keepeth him humble: Job xlii. 5, 6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' When he had an apparition of God, it affected him more than all the hearsay knowledge which he had of God before. We see our wants in God's fulness; the ocean maketh us ashamed of our drop. We see our vileness in God's majesty; what is the balance dust to the great mountain, our impurity and sinfulness to God's holiness, our nothingness to his all-sufficiency? All the creatures are nothing but what God maketh them, and continueth them to be every moment. In his supremacy and dominion we see the right that he hath in us to command us as he pleaseth, and so may condemn ourselves for our non-subjection to him. In his beneficence and goodness, we understand more of our obligation to him: the more we think of his majesty and greatness, every service we perform seemeth low and mean; we cannot satisfy ourselves in it, as being much beneath the greatness of God. Certainly sin is more grievous to every one that hath seen God, 3 John 11. Elijah wrapped his face in a mantle when God's glory passed before him, 1 Kings xix. 13, and Isaiah crieth out, 'Woe is me, for I am undone; I am a man of polluted lips, and I dwell among a people of polluted lips,' Isa. vi. 5. The more large and comprehensive thoughts we have of God, the more shall we humble ourselves for our own imperfection.

5. Their estate being changed, their work is now to look to the degree. You know, besides the gate in christianity, there is the way. If you have entered the gate, you must see that you walk in the way. Besides making covenant with God, there is keeping covenant with God: Ps. xxv. 10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto finch as keep his covenant and his testimonies;' Ps. ciii. 18, 'To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.'

Well, then, though we may be comforted that we have entered into covenant with God, yet in keeping covenant we are conscious to many failings, and the covenant is not fully kept till life be ended. All is not done when men have begun a religious life. Many fall off who seemed to have good beginnings. It is one thing to be planted into Christ, another to bring forth fruit with patience. If there were more close walking, the holy life would be a feast and pleasure to us, but by our weaknesses and infirmities we often interrupt the comfort of it. Now good men are troubled that they walk with no more accurateness and resolvedness in the narrow way; that though they have consented to the covenant, yet they do so weakly fulfil their covenant vow; that though married to

Christ, they bring forth no more glory to God; that their course doth no more suit with their choice; at least while their pilgrimage is continued, they see a need of constant caution and solicitude.

Use 1. To teach us that growth in grace, and an increase of humility, or a low esteem of ourselves do usually go together. The laden boughs do most hang their heads, and the sun at the highest casts the least shadow. The conceited seem to have more grace than the real christian, but have indeed less; as swollen flesh is to appearance bigger and stronger, but it is not sound; it is their humour, not their growth. Most men are too great and too good in their own eyes. Self-love representeth ourselves to ourselves in a false shape and feigned likeness, much more wise, and holy, and righteous than we are. Whereas the most serious, and they that most mind their business, humble themselves even to the dust; as Agur did: Prov. xxx. 2, 'Surely I am more brutish than any man, I have not the understanding of a man.' And Paul calleth himself 'the least of the apostles,' 1 Cor. xv. 9; the least of saints, Eph. iii. 8, 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints.' The chiefest of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15, 'Of whom I am the chief.' Oh what a difference is there between them and the carnal professor! They loathe other men's sins rather than their own, extenuate other men's gifts and graces, and extol and cry up their own; but true humility sits in the dust as in its own proper place. Only here is a doubt: How can God's children say so in truth? For we must not lie for humility's sake; that is to personate and act a part. There is a threefold judgment, of verity, charity, and sense. First, the judgment of verity is exact. So we are to search and try ourselves to the uttermost, to pry into all the aggravating circumstances: 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?' Out of a sense of their obligation to God, and deep displeasure against sin; none can charge others as the 'godly will charge themselves. Secondly, there is a judgment of charity, which 'hopeth all things,' as long as possibly it can, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. Charity teacheth us to hope the best of others, for it is a favourable judgment. They may be better than we know, or they may have more to excuse them than we know of, as being more violently tempted, or have not such means to prevent sin. Certainly, charity forbiddeth us to pry into or aggravate their failings 'For love covereth a multitude of sins,' Prov. x. 12. And, thirdly, there is the judgment of sense and experience. We are conscious to our own infirmities more than we can be to others. We have a sense of our own sins, which being compared with that remote view which we have of the sins of others, will make us more condemn our selves than them. We know our own hearts; we know not another's. We know our own infirmities by experience, others only by speculation. A man that hath the toothache feeleth his own pain, not that of another man's, therefore judgeth his own greater; or they that are troubled with a sharp disease think no grief or pain like theirs.

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Use 2. Let us be sensible of our imperfection, and take notice of our defects for caution and humiliation.

1. In point of knowledge: Prov. xxvi. 12, 'Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.' As he said of learning, Many had come to learning, if they had

not conceited themselves learned already; so many had attained more perfect knowledge of the ways of God, if they were not blinded by their own prejudices and self-conceit, and their preconceptions. If we had a true sense of our own imperfection, we would not refuse to yield anything we had taken a liking to, if afterwards it were disproved by apparent and clear light; but dogmatising, especially in doubtful points, hath much divided the christian world.

2. In point of daily practice.

[1.] As to the humble and broken-hearted, suing out the pardon of in: John xiii. 10, 'Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet;' that is, to cleanse himself from his daily defilements; as a man under the law, if he had touched any unclean thing, was to wash his clothes before even. We are not to sleep and lie down in our sins, upon any pretence of our former justification, as if errors would be pardoned of course, without such running to our advocate, as there was to be a morning and evening sacrifice.

[2.] As to caution and watchfulness, as if quite out of harm's way, and we might play with temptations to sin, and no harm come of it. No; this playing at the cockatrice-hole will cost us dear: Mark iii. 37, 'And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.'

3. In point of perseverance, as if we might rest in former doing and suffering for Christ: Ezek. xxxiii. 13, 'If he trust in his righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered;' that is, if he presume upon his good estate so as voluntarily and deliberately to fall into sin; if we think our profession shall excuse us in our covetousness, or our countenancing the ways of God in our oppressions, or our praying atone for our sensuality. Man is very apt to make one part of his life a recompense for another, and to excuse his defect in some duties by exceeding in others. The indulgence is sometimes antedated, and we sin upon a presumption we will afterwards repent of it Sometimes it is postdated; because we have done thus and thus for God, we think God will not be severe to us, but spare us for such a good service or property we think to be in us. Oh, no! you must persevere in a constant, uniform, and self-denying obedience: or[2] think, I am a child of God; as if that would bear us out in sin.

Secondly, He asserts his endeavour after perfection.

Wherein observe—

1. The thing pursued after, 'The prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.'

2. The manner of his pursuit—

[1.] By fixing his end; for he calleth it σκόπον, his mark or scope.

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[2] Qu. 'not'?—ED.

[2.] By seriousness, making it his business, ‘This one thing I do;’ I wholly mind this.

[3.] The earnestness of his pursuit, showed in his diligence and perseverance.

(1.) His diligence, ‘I press toward it.’

(2.) His perseverance, ‘Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are before.’

1. The thing pursued after, τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως, ‘the prize of the high calling.’ The thing pursued after was salvation by Christ, or heavenly glory, which is set forth by the worth of it; it is βραβεῖον, ‘a prize,’ such as will countervail our endeavours in the race.

2. The hopes of obtaining it, ‘The high calling of God in Jesus Christ.’ We are invited to these hopes by the effectual call of God: 1 Thes. ii. 12, ‘Walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom and glory.’ And this call is given us upon the account of Christ, who hath purchased this favour for us, and opened this hope to us in the promises of the gospel; therefore also called ‘his calling,’ Eph. i. 18, ‘That you may know what is the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints.’ By ‘his calling’ he openeth a large door of hope to us, and inviteth us to partake of this rich and glorious reward, Yea, by this calling, as it ends in conversion, he qualifieth and fitteth us for the participation of it. Calling, as it respects the offer of the word, so it inviteth us; as it respects the powerful and sanctifying operation of the Spirit, so it prepareth and fitteth us for it.

Doct. That the prize of eternal glory is set before those whom God hath effectually called in Christ.

1. There is a twofold calling, outward and inward.

[1.] Outward and external, when a man is by the word invited to the communion of Christ and all his benefits: so ‘Many are called but few are chosen,’ Mat. xxii. 14.

[2.] Inwardly, when a man is by the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost actually translated and brought into this fellowship and communion: 1 Cor. i. 9, ‘God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.’ These two are so distinct, that a man may have the one without the other, the external without the internal; but the inward call is by the outward, and he that slighteth the outward cannot well expect the inward. Some have only heard the invitation of the gospel, but obeyed it not: Mat. xxii. 3, ‘He sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, but they would not come.’ To these God offereth heaven, but to these he will not give heaven, for he will save none against their will, nor without their consent. Some seem to comply with the external invitation, but yet are not effectually called, as the man that came to the marriage-feast without a wedding-garment, Mat. xxii. 11. But those have not the prize, for God is not deceived with shows; but those that mind the message, choose the happiness

offered for their portion, pursue after it with all diligence and perseverance, in short, turn to God with all their hearts and souls, these are the called, that ‘receive the promise of the eternal inheritance/ Heb. ix. 15.

2. In this calling God in Christ hath the greatest hand; it is termed in the text ἡ ἄνω κλῆσις, ‘the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.’ This calling is from above, that is, from heaven. The grace cometh from above; it hath its rise from the Lord’s goodness and compassion, and is conveyed to us by the merits of Christ through the power of the Spirit; certainly it hath not its rise from man. Yea, the external call may be said to be from above. In Paul’s instance especially; Christ called to him from heaven: Acts ix. 4, ‘He heard a voice from heaven, saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?’ Yea, the ordinary call of every christian is in a sense from above; with respect to the original authority, the voice is from heaven: Heb. xii. 25, ‘See that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven.’ He speaketh to you by his word in the mouth of his messengers; but he in whose name and authority this message is brought, and by whose power it is made effectual, is in heaven.

3. The nature of this calling. Three things are considerable in it—(1.) The work of God; (2.) The duty of man; (3.) The benefits following on both.

[1.] The work of God (for he beginneth) is his giving grace by his divine power, whereby the heart of man is changed and sanctified, and turned to himself. God by his call giveth a real being to things which were not before: Rom. iv. 17, ‘He calleth the things that are not as though they were.’ *Verba Dei sunt opera*—God’s words are works. As in the first creation he called for those things to appear which lay in the dark womb of nothing, and they presently came forth: ‘Let there be light, and there was light;’ so of graceless he maketh us holy and gracious, of enemies to become friends, of self-lovers to be lovers of God. He bringeth light out of darkness: 2 Cor. iv. 6, ‘For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’ This is the act of God’s great power and grace whereby he freely prevents man; and if he did not prevent him, he would be for ever miserable; for we have neither ears to hear God’s call, nor a heart to turn to him. Yet his call to the deaf is not in vain; for he giveth ears to hear, and quickens our dead hearts. It is past man’s skill to change himself, but not above the great power and mercy of God.

[2.] The duty of man is to be obedient to the heavenly call: for besides God’s invitation, there is man’s acceptation. God calleth us to Christ as the only remedy for our lost souls, and we receive him by faith: John i. 12, ‘To as many as received him.’ God calleth to repentance: Mat. ix. 13, ‘I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.’ And we consent to return to God: Jer. iii. 22, ‘Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.’ God calleth to obedience, and we say, Ps. xl. 8, ‘Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.’ It is fulfilled in christians as well as in Christ. God calls to communion with himself in holy worship: Ps. xxvii. 8, ‘When thou saidst, Seek ye

my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, O Lord, will I seek.' God no sooner calleth but they hear; and what God biddeth them do they do, and forsake they forsake. To many God stretcheth out his hands in vain; God calleth them to purity, but oh, the uncleanness of heart and life! God looketh for grapes, but behold wild grapes. But where God inclineth the heart, they obey his call, though it be to mortify their dearest lusts, to cast away their beloved transgressions, to part with anything rather than part with their God and their Christ. When God called Paul, he made an absolute resignation of himself: Acts ix. 6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' ready to go where God will lead him, to do what God will have him.

[3.] The benefit flowing upon both. There followeth a great change, both in the disposition and condition of the man called. As to his disposition, he is made of unholy, holy. As to his condition, of miserable, he is made happy. Two attributes are given to effectual calling; it is a holy calling and a heavenly calling: 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling;' Heb. iii. 1, 'Wherefore, brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.'

(1.) As to his disposition, the man is powerfully changed, and there is a plain alteration to be found in him; before sinful, now made holy, 'called to be saints,' 1 Cor. i. 2; 1 Peter i. 15, 16, 'As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy as I am holy.' We are called out of a state of sin into a state of holiness. God who hath called us is holy, and he calleth us into communion with himself in holiness; and the calling itself is the setting us apart from a common to a holy use; and the grace and favour showed in our calling, obligeth us to holiness. When we consider in what a sinful estate God found us, how freely he loved us, with how great mercy he called us, passing by others worthier than ourselves, we cannot be so unthankful as to deny obedience to his holy will: Eph. iv. 1, 'Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.' Especially the honour of him that calleth us being concerned: 1 Peter ii. 9, 'That we should be to the praise of him who hath called us.' In short, your calling giveth you great advantages of being holy, a principle or nature in part healed: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature.' A holy and perfect rule: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the whole Israel of God.' A pure reward: 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope in him; purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' The assistance of the Holy Spirit: Heb. xiii. 21, 'Make you perfect in every good work, working in you what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Ordinances: John xvii. 17, 'Sanctify them by the truth; thy word is truth.' Providences: Heb. xii. 10, 'They verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' Now all these things considered, it is a holy calling.

(2.) Their condition is altered; of miserable he is made happy. The great end of our calling is eternal glory: 2 Thes. ii. 14, 'Whereunto he hath called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the

glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.' That is the end and ultimate effect of it: 1 Peter v. 10, 'The God of all grace, who hath called you to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' The miserable estate out of which, the blessed estate into which we are called, should deeply affect us. For the present he is an heir of glory, and in due time he shall be translated into the heavenly kingdom. We receive some part of this happiness here, in our justification and adoption, but the great and chief part is not given us in present possession, but reserved in heaven for us, 2 Peter i. 4.

Use. If there be such a prize set before us in effectual calling, then all good christians should look upon themselves as deeply engaged to pursue after it—

1. In respect of the invitation of the external call, that we may not disobey God's call, and neglect this preventing grace, whereby God would draw us to himself. Your sin will be more heinous than the gin of others who were never called. God beggeth for entrance, he standeth at your doors, but you deny entrance to him: Rev. iii. 20, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man open to me, I will come in and sup with him.' Christ will bring his entertainment with him, and he knocketh that you may give entrance; he knocketh by the word; he knocketh by his providence, mercies, and afflictions; he knocketh by the motions of his Spirit. Men are a little roused, begin to hearken; conscience stirs a little, yet lie down to sleep again. But God knocketh again, and they are more awakened, and have some affections and desires after heavenly things; but these are choked by the cares of the world, and voluptuous living. Therefore God cometh a third, yea, many a time, and giveth them further calling, that maketh them startle, and awaken a little more; but if they return to their old lusts, and negligent way of living, he may justly give them over to a spirit of deep sleep, to that blindness and wilfulness, that they may be sealed up to eternal condemnation, because they love darkness more than light, a base dirty world before the glory and blessedness promised by Christ. There are thousands, yea, millions in the world, who have not had such an outward powerful call, nor an offer of heaven so importunately urged upon them. Oh, how great is their ingratitude who have offer upon offer, and motions and convictions, but outgrow all feelings of conscience! You judge it disobedience and rebellion in a servant, if called again and again, and yet he will not come; how shall God judge it otherwise if you harden your hearts and will not hear his voice? Certainly your punishment will be more grievous than that of others: Prov. i. 24-26, 'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would not turn at my reproof: I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.' When death cometh, you will only serve for a warning to others not to make bold with God. In the anguish of your souls God will not hear you.

2. To show whether the calling hath had its effect upon you. Doth it make you more heavenly? They that obey this call, their hearts are more heavenly. It is heaven they seek: Col. iii. 1, 2, 'If ye

be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, and not on things of the earth/ It is heaven they hope for: 1 Peter i. 3, 'Blessed be God, who hath begotten us to a lively hope.' Heavenly things they savour: Rom. viii. 5, 'They that are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit,' This is their treasure and portion: Mat. xx. 21, 'Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.' Their home and happiness: Heb. xi. 13, 'They declare plainly they seek a country.' It is their scope: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'We look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are not seen.' And therefore are heavenly: Phil. iii. 20, 'Our conversation is in heaven.' Their course is becoming their choice: 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'That you walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom and glory.' They live as heirs of glory. Heaven they seek in the first place: Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom of God.' Their conversation, hope, and happiness is in heaven. But when you are of the earth, and savour of the earth, you are not yet called off from the world. Certainly when grace gets the mastery, when it is the governing principle in our hearts, it sets up some scope and end which was not before, for which it employeth our time and strength, life and love, minds and hearts, cares and endeavours. A carnal mind is carried out with greater estimation, resolution, and delight after earthly things than after heavenly; but these are the proper good suited to the divine nature in us. In heaven is the most perfect enjoyment of God and conformity to him. Being born of God, they cannot live without him, nor be satisfied with that partial enjoyment which the present world will only afford. There is the consummation of the new creature.

3. The calling of God gives us hopes of a right to the blessing: 'No man taketh this honour, but he that is called of God;' and of the continuance of that right: 1 Peter v. 10, 'But the God of all grace, who hath called us to this eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' If you have consented to his holy calling, he will not leave till he hath brought you to the full possession of what he hath called you unto.

SERMON XI.

I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.—PHIL. iii. 14.

HAVING spoken of the thing pursued after, we come now to the second branch, the manner of prosecution. Where, the first thing observable is his fixing his scope. He propounded this 'prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ' as his mark and scope which he aimed at, 'I press toward the mark.'

Doct. 1. That those that would be christians indeed must make heavenly things their scope.

First, Let me show you how many ways this is done—(1.) Habitually; (2.) Actually.

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1. Habitually, when you have first fixed your end, and renounced the devil, the world, and the flesh, and did set upon hopes and resolutions for heaven, and did take the world to come for your portion and happiness, choosing the better part: 2 Cor. iv. 18, ‘While we look not to the things which are seen, but to the things that are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.’ You have fixed this as the end of your faith: 1 Peter i. 9, ‘Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.’ The end of your diligence, and the drift and purpose of all your serving and waiting upon God: Acts xxvi. 7, ‘Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.’ This is the end of all our labours: 2 Cor. v. 9, ‘Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.’ Your great ambition, that you may be accepted unto eternal life.

2. Actually; it is not enough to choose the better part, but we must often actually think of it to renew lively affections. Having pitched upon a right end, you must renew your estimation and intention of it, that you may keep it strong and fixed: Prov. iv. 25, ‘Let thine eyes look right on, and let thy eyelids look straight before thee;’ that is, to the end of your journey; that you may still make it your business to go to heaven.

Secondly, We must distinguish again, that the intention of the end and scope is either explicit or implicit, formal or virtual.

1. The formal and explicit intention is by express thoughts of the world to come, when the mind and heart is in heaven. Now these thoughts should be frequent; for ‘where the treasure is, the heart will be also,’ Mat. vi. 21. Can you travel one whole day to such an end, and never think of the place you are going unto? Certainly the end must be intended in every holy action, and therefore often thought of.

2. The implicit and virtual intention is by the ready unobserved act of a potent habit. As a man in a journey doth not always think of the place to which he is going, yet his motion is influenced by it, he is still drawing toward that place; so by the impression of a powerful habit, a christian liveth for God, and heaven, and glory, though he doth not always think of it: ‘But our conversation is in heaven,’ Phil. iii. 20.

But here ariseth a question, When doth the virtual intention suffice without formal noted thoughts?

Ans. (1.) In momentous actions we must notedly, formally, and expressly mind our great end, as when we are to do any notable thing for God. As Moses in his eminent self-denial had an eye to the recompense of reward, Heb. xi. 26. In lesser things the heavenly frame and bent of heart sufficeth.

(2.) Weak habits and inclinations need more express, formal, noted thoughts than the strong, for without them they cannot do their work; and the habits of grace in most men are weak,

temptations many, and the difficulties of obedience great. They cannot easily keep up their lively zeal and earnest diligence if they seldom think of heaven. They are called upon to raise their minds and affections: Col. iii. 1, 2, ‘If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God: set your affections on things above, and not upon things of the earth.’ But now powerful and strong habits, when men have accustomed themselves, and in a manner naturalised themselves to a heavenly mind, the strength of the general inclination sufficeth, and need not so often raise their thoughts as the weaker christians; it is their constant frame: Phil. iii. 20, ‘But our conversation is in heaven.’

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(3.) When spiritual necessity calleth for it through some present distemper or temptation, drawn either from the delights of sense: 1 Peter i. 13, ‘Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind; be sober and hope to the end, for the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;’ or from the terrors of sense: Rom. viii. 18, ‘For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.’ In the general, there must be a frequent reviving.

But why must we keep up this fixed intention, and make heavenly things our scope?

[1.] That we may be sincere. One main difference between the sound christian and the hypocrite is in the end and scope; the one looks to men, the other to God; the one is ‘fleshly wisdom,’ the other is ‘godly simplicity,’ 2 Cor. i. 12. The one acts to be seen of men, respected and applauded of men; the other maketh God his paymaster, for he expecteth his reward in heaven, and so can go on with his duty when man seeth not, ‘because his Father seeth in secret,’ Mat. vi. 8. When man liketh not what he doeth: Mat. v. 11, 12, ‘Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name’s sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.’ Nobody will commend him but God. When man persecuteth him for what he doeth, he looketh upon God that he will recompense his loss, and repay all his cost: Mark x. 29, 30, ‘And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel’s, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecution; and in the world to come eternal life.’ As he taketh the other world for his whole treasure and happiness, so he can take God’s word for his whole security, which is a notable point of sincerity.

[2.] To direct our way. When the heart and eye is upon the mark, you may the better steer your course in order to it. *Finis est mensura mediorum*—Men take their measures from the end, and by it can the better judge of the aptitude and seasonableness of the means. As the mark guideth the archer how to direct his arrow, so doth the intention guide and direct the soul in all its actions. Certainly if a right mark be in our eye, we are more like to level at it than if we mistake our mark. Therefore fix your end, and you will the better understand your way, and address yourselves to such means as are suited to that end; for our Lord tells us that if our ‘eye be single, the whole body

is full of light,' Mat. vi. 22. Our end shineth to us all the way along, and helpeth us to cut off both those impertinences and inconsistences with which men fill up their lives. What is the reason that men who hope to go to heaven yet spend their time in vanities which have no respect to such a purpose, yea, sometimes seem plainly to take the direct way to hell? The reason is, because they have not resolvedly fixed and determined their choice, or do not regard their end. It would cut off and prevent impertinences if you be true to your end and great scope. As when you are melting away your precious time in ease, and idleness, or carnal vanities, either in trifling, or gaming, or impertinent chatting, or censuring: 'What doeth it?' Eccles. ii. 2. Is this striving to go to heaven? So for inconsistencies: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?' By sin men do not only forget their end and happiness, but run quite away from it.

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[3.] To quicken our endeavours; for the end is the motive as well as the measure. The thought of it makes us vigorous and lively: 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour is not in vain in the Lord;' 1 Cor. ix. 24, 'So run that you may obtain.' The prize and worth of the reward addeth spirits to the runner, maketh him run. more swiftly. There is labour and difficulty, but we run for a crown. If now labour and difficulty, hereafter it will be comfortable: John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give you;' Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.'

[4.] For our joy and solace. A man's end is his solace and support during labours and difficulties, and that afflicted estate wherein God seeth fit to keep us here in the world: Rom. v. 2, 3, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God: and not only so, but ire glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience.' A man's temper is much known by this, from whence he fetcheth his comforts and supports.

[5.] To defeat the delightful temptations of sense: Heb. xi. 24-26, 'By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward.' Most men look to present pleasures rather than future joys.

[6.] To make us constant: Heb. x. 39, 'But we are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of our souls;' that we may neither fail nor faint, because of difficulties in the way. In the spiritual race there are stumbling-blocks in the way, difficulties and discouragements which we cannot easily get over; now the remembering the end puts courage into us.

[7.] To engage us in a uniform course of holiness. No one part of our lives will agree with another if they be not firmly fixed by the power of our last end, which runneth through all the parts, and so puts a harmony into them. Our actions are as a mere lottery; the various fancies men are

governed by are jumbled together by chance; and so we either walk at random, or having different ends, are ‘double-minded and unstable in all our ways,’ James i. 8. The last end fixeth the mind, which otherwise would be tossed up and down in a perpetual uncertainty, and distracted by a multiplicity of ends and objects.

Use 1. To persuade us to make heavenly things our scope.

1. For this we were created and sent into the world. It is good to consider the cause for which we were born, and the end for which we were sent into the world: John xviii. 37, ‘To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world.’ If our Lord Christ did thus, surely man was made for some end, for the wise God maketh nothing in vain. Now what is man’s end? Not to fill up the number of things, as stones; not to wax bulky, and increase in growth and stature, as plants and trees; not to eat and drink, and gratify a present appetite, as the beasts. That is a mortal happiness, which will not suit with that immortal spirit which God hath put into us. If we had souls that would perish, it would be more justifiable to look after things that perish. No; they will survive these present things: Eccles. xii. 7, ‘Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God that gave it.’ We act here a while; are put upon the stage of the world, and then gone into the other world. Now since we live longest there, this should be our end and scope.

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2. For this end we are redeemed. The saints are purchased to eternal glory: Rev. i. 5, 6, ‘Unto him that loved us, and washed us in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.’ As our dominion and kingship is perfect in the other world, so is our priesthood, when we minister in the heavenly temple immediately before the throne. So it is said that ‘Christ hath obtained eternal redemption for us.’ The virtue is everlasting: Heb. ix. 12, ‘But by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.’

3. For this end we are sanctified or effectually called. Christ’s blessings are not bounded in time, but he hath ‘blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places,’ Eph. i. 3. They are of a heavenly rise and nature, and of a heavenly tendency; there they began, and there they are consummated.

Use 2. To persuade us often to think of this end and scope, or steadily to fix your eye on this blessedness which is reserved for the people of God, that you may have the mark still in view.

1. It is a certain and sure reward, so as we may expect it from him. You have his promise for your security: 1 John ii. 25, ‘And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.’ Now a promise of God should be as sure as if we had seen it with our eyes, or as those things which we see with our eyes, a greater satisfaction and encouragement to us than all the visible things upon earth. We should do more and go further upon such a promise than we will for all that man can give unto us. Though we be exposed to danger and sufferings and unwearied labours, despised by great and small, yet our end, secured by the Lord’s promise, should bear us out.

2. It is a great and full reward. We should labour to get a due sense of the worth of the prize of our high calling. Heaven and eternal glory are no light things: Gen. xv. 1, 'I will be thy exceeding great reward.' To have God for our portion and felicity, and in the highest way of fruition we are capable of; what can be added more to our happiness?

3. It is a pure reward; not only complete happiness, but exact holiness; to see God, and be like him. Surely one that is so sanctified and purified in part, should level all his actions and endeavours to this mark: 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' And be working toward his final perfection.

Use 3. Measure and value all things with respect to your end. Man is made wise by his end. Now above all things eternity must needs make us wise, because it is the last end which we can propound to ourselves, and so thereby we may understand the true measure and value of all things.

We understand what is evil and what is good.

1. Evil things; as—

[1.] The weight and grievousness of sin. Present punishment doth somewhat discover it: Jer. ii. 19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of hosts.' Briars and thorns and sensible smart will teach us that which bare contemplation doth not, but our end will most show it to us; because for temporal pleasures men lose eternal joys; for the ease, and mirth, and pleasure of a moment they have lost all that happiness to which they are called by Christ.

[2.] Afflictions are to be valued with respect to their end. It showeth their lightness; they are not so bad as the world taketh them to be. Tedious for the present, but it is but for a season: 1 Peter i. 6, 'Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.' All things are lessened by having eternity in our eye. It is grievous, but not eternal: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' A man in the deep waters, as long as he can see banks, is not out of all hope.

[3.] Sufferings for Christ. If we may win eternity with the loss of all the world, we are no losers: Heb. x. 34, 'And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, as knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and a more enduring substance.' On the contrary, it is a sorry bargain to lose eternity for the enjoyment of all the world: Mat. xvi. 26, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'

[4.] Death, the king of terrors. It is not feared by a christian, because it is the entrance into eternal life; when he dieth he shall live: John xi. 25, 'Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and

the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' It separateth us from our worldly comforts, but bringeth us to God, with whom we shall abide for ever.

2. Good things are also to be valued with respect to their end.

[1.] There are many things which the vain deceived world dotes upon, but they suit not with our scope, help us not to the crown, but divert us rather. 'What doeth it?' is the question we should ask: 'The pleasures of sin are but for a season,' Heb. xi. 25.

[2.] The enjoyments of this world. They are valuable upon a natural account, but we must consider them with respect to our end. Are they helps or hindrances to heaven? If hindrances, it is the greatest misery that can befall us. It is a great part of God's curse to condemn some men to worldly felicity: Jer. xvii. 13, 'All that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written on the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters;' Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' A little as a help to heaven is a great mercy, and an estate is more valuable by the use than the possession: Luke xii. 21, 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'

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[3.] Duties. Time spent with God in order to our great end is the best part of our lives: Ps. lxxxiv. 10, 'For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness;' because there is trading for heaven. When you are employed in the world, you make provision for a few months or days, it may be hours.

[4.] Graces are glorious things, because they are the seed and earnest of eternal glory. It is called an 'immortal seed,' 1 Peter i. 23. By these we are more prepared for, and assured of, our great end.

[5.] Christ is valued as the only way to the Father a John xiv. 6, 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me.' And therefore all things are lessened in our estimation in comparison of him: Phil. iii. 8-10, 'Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death.'

[6.] The favour of God. It is heaven begun; the first taste we have of our everlasting comfort, which, if we get, we need not envy the best estate of worldlings: Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.'

Use 4. Do we make heavenly things our scope? Whither are we going? What is the thing we intend? Riches, pleasures, and honours in this world, or eternal blessedness? Our scope will be known by our work. What do we most resolvedly carry on? None so wicked but they will be

religious, till religion crosseth that one thing which they do desire. If we design heavenly things for our scope and happiness, all things will be subordinated to them, and we will hold on our way, though disappointed in other things; for then you will only mind temporal things in order to eternal.

I come now to the next thing to be noted, which is his seriousness. He maketh it his business: 'This one thing I do.' Our scope is known by our work, the main thing we attend upon as our great care and business. That which is our first care and chiefest business is usually called in scripture our 'one thing,' Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I seek after;' as if all other things should be forgotten for this one thing's sake: Luke x. 42, 'But one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen the better part.' In short, that is our one thing which is most minded, which taketh up our life and love, heart and mind. It is our work, our one thing which must be more esteemed by you than all things in the world besides; other things must stoop to this one thing, and serve this one thing. This is the business which you have to do, and the end for which you live in the world.

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Doct. 2. Those that make heavenly things their scope must also make them their business.

There is a double notion which is of great use to us in the spiritual life—making religion our recreation, and making religion our business.

1. It must be our recreation, in opposition to tediousness and wearisomeness; so we must delight or recreate ourselves in God's statutes: Ps. cxix. 16, 'I will delight myself in thy statutes;' ver. 47, 'I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.'

2. It must be our business in opposition to slightness.

Why must religion be made our business?

[1.] Because otherwise it is not our scope; for an end is not thoroughly intended unless we use the means to obtain it. True wisdom lieth in the intention of a right end, the choice of apt means, and a dexterous and ready prosecution; the whole fabric falleth if one be wanting. If we have good aims, and do not choose right means, that is superstition. Men have direct aims, but they mistake their way; or if good means, and they refuse to use them, that is sluggishness and spiritual idleness. But when all three concur, a good end, fit means, and a diligent pursuit, that is true wisdom. Some are out in the end; as they that 'labour for the meat that perisheth,' John vi. 27, or lay out their strength upon that 'which satisfieth not,' Isa. lv. 2; they lay out all their industrious cares about paltry vanities. Others err in the means, while they seek for happiness in a false religion, and the way they take for their cure is a great part of their disease; as Judaism, Turcism, and Popery. But the most common error among us is a defect in the pursuit. Men are convinced of better; they see the right way, but are loath to walk in it. Some decline it wholly, and whilst they talk of heaven, take the way which directly leadeth to hell. Others superficially look after it, and by the by only; they trouble themselves about many things, but they are but trifles and childish toys in comparison

of what they should be most taken up withal. Heavenly things have some underling respects, but they bring nothing to perfection, but are carried away with the cares of the world and voluptuous living: Luke viii. 14, ‘And that which fell among thorns are they who, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.’

[2.] Because this is a matter of unspeakable importance, which must not be forgotten and left undone for three reasons—

(1.) It is not a business arbitrary, but necessary. One thing is necessary. It is not a business that may be done or left undone. No; it must be done or you are undone for ever. If you lose the crown of glory, you lose yourselves everlastingly; nothing concerneth you so much. Within a while it will not be a pin to choose what part you have acted in the world, high or low, rich or poor; as in a choir of voices, it is no matter what part we take, bass, or mean, or treble, but whether we sing well.

(2.) It is a business that must principally be regarded: Mat. vi. 33, ‘But first seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.’ ‘First seek;’ all other things must give way to it. The apostle saith here, ‘This one thing I do;’ nothing wholly alien or contrary to this must be regarded; nothing but what keeps a due subordination to this. This is the one thing you have to mind, that is, the one great thing, to make sure of everlasting life. Therefore progress and growth in holiness must be minded seriously, and above other things.

(3.) This is a business that you must be continually a-doing. Our whole life is but a constant progress in the way to heaven. Every day we take is a step nearer; yea, every action, morally considered, is a step to heaven or hell. We must always be treasuring up a good foundation: 1 Tim. vi. 19, ‘Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.’

[3.] If it be not made our business, some other baser pursuit will be our business. There are two masters, God and mammon, and they go contrary ways, and require our whole strength: Mat. vi. 24, ‘No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye can not serve God and mammon.’ To serve God is to give up a man’s mind, and heart, and whole man, to do what he requireth, and to do nothing in matter of profit, pleasure, and preferment, but what God alloweth him, or in any other thing. To serve mammon is to follow the world as hard as we can, whatever cometh of it. You cannot serve God and your lusts too; you must make a business of the one or the other. In short, our strength is too small, it will not suffice for every thing; and our time is too short to be divided, therefore the most necessary things must be regarded.

Use. Is self-reflection. What is the prize you run for? what is the life of your affections employed about? There are a sort of men whose hearts are upon God and the life to come, and make it their first and chiefest business to seek him and serve him, and whose whole life is but a preparation for

the world to come. And there are others who are gaping after worldly greatness, and gratifying the desires of the flesh. The world morally considered is divided into two societies; the one of the devil, the other of God. Some seek their happiness upon earth, others an eternal abode in heaven; some are pleasing the flesh, others are pleasing God. By nature we are all of the earthly society, but by grace we are of a heavenly extraction, and tend thither. Of which sort are you? What have you been doing in the world, and what is the end and business for which, and in which, you have laboured until now? What thing or prize have you had in your view and chase? Have you lived for the world or for God? have you spent so many years, and you know not why nor about what you have spent your time? You have been strangely careless and inconsiderate. Certain it is you have not been most for God and most for heaven, for that would more sensibly appear; and religion cannot be your business unless you seriously mind it.

The third thing in the text is his earnest pursuit, showed in his diligence and perseverance.

1. His diligence. It was earnestly sought after, as well as intended; implied in the words ἐπεκτεινόμενος and διώκω, reaching forth and pressing towards; which imply vehement desire and earnest endeavour, using all means, bending all the powers of body and soul; I press as hard as I can.

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2. His perseverance is expressed—

[1.1 With respect to what was past, ‘Forgetting the things behind.’

[2.] With respect to things before, which are to come, ‘Reaching unto the things before.’

[1.] What are the τὰ ὀπίσω?

(1.) It may be understood of the things forsaken and renounced, such as pharisaical righteousness, the world, and credit, and honour; that and whatsoever was contrary to Christ’s kingdom. The world and the flesh are things behind. We turned our backs upon them in conversion when we turned to God. It is these things that would now call back our thoughts and corrupt our affections when we should run on and reach forward in the heavenly prize.

(2.) Some understand it of the degrees of grace already attained, or services already performed. The apostle did forget, or not consider (which is called ‘forgetting’ in scripture) how much of the race he had overcome or got through. He overlooked all that was past, how much of the way already spent; he did forget it, so as not to rest in what was already done, or to be puffed up with a vain conceit, as if there were enough done, so as to slacken his pace, or retard himself in his heavenly progress.

[2.] What are the τὰ ἔμπροσθεν, the things before us? They are God, and heaven, and the remaining duties of the holy life; what sins are yet unmortified, what duties are yet almost untouched,

what trials you may yet be called to undergo. We must still take pains to advance forward, and do that which is yet unfinished; there is much of the way yet before us. From the whole we see the expressions are agonistical, both the forgetting or reaching forth, and pressing forward, and do give us this third note—

Doct. 3. Those that would make a business of christianity must look upon it or deal in it as a race or passage from earth to heaven.

All things agree.

1. In a race there was a beginning and ending, a place whence we set out, and the goal to which we run. The race should begin at baptism, but it doth at conversion or effectual calling, and endeth not till death; that is the goal, and then we receive the prize: 2 Tim. iv. 18, 'The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.' We should start forth or engage in this race betimes. Some defer it till they die; but a stride cannot be called a race: we have already lost the morning of our lives, and a great deal of precious time, of our freshest and flowery time. Surely 'the time past should suffice us,' 1 Peter iv. 3. We have been long enough dishonouring God and destroying our own souls. Now let us be obedient to the heavenly call, and begin to set forward, though it be late. But then we must double our diligence; life is uncertain, and our work is long. We were long since called, now let us rouse up ourselves. Death is a time of ending the race, not to begin it. It is not called a jump or a leap, but a race.

2. Between the two terms, that is, from the starting-place to the goal, there was a way marked out, but called κανὼν, the rule, which was a white line, marked out the path within which they were to run; if they transgressed, or went over it or beside it, they did not νομῖμως ἀθλειν: 2 Tim. ii. 5, 'And if a man strive also for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.' 'Strive lawfully,' or run regularly, or else he lost the prize; so that there was a place where he set out, the goal whither he went, and the way by which he passed to his mark. There are frequent allusions to this: 'As many as be perfect, walk by the same rule,' Phil. iii. 16. And we have a rule, a straight line to direct our course: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule.' We all aspire to the crown, but few take the way. We must make straight steps to our feet, run in the way prescribed, within certain bounds and limits: Ps. cxix. 32, 'I will ran the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.'

3. In this race there is a prize, a crown of endless glory which we are running and striving for: 1 Peter v. 4, 'Ye shall receive a crown that fadeth not away.' Their crowns were made of flowers and oaken leaves. We have somewhat in hand that is worth all our pains, but much more when we come home and meet our Lord.

4. There was an *agonothetes*. This prize is given by a judge: 2 Tim. iv. 8, ‘Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.’ Our claim must be justified before his tribunal.

5. No obtaining the crown without running: Heb. xii. 1, ‘Let us run with patience the race that is set before us;’ 1 Cor. ix. 24, ‘Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain.’ And that is no lazy posture. Here is reaching forth, pressing forward; we must bend all the faculties and powers of our souls and bodies to obtain it by faithful and constant diligence. We must do things as for heaven indeed, and make as much speed as we can to get the crown which is offered to us by Jesus Christ.

6. In a race we must hold on without any discontinuance. We are not to stand still and give over, but with a constant earnestness to press toward the mark. So here, there is no standing still, by omitting good duties; by slight occasions we come to leave them off. The fire of the altar was never to go out.

7. There must be no looking back; we must still take pains to press forward. As the true racers do not use to stand still, or look behind them to see how much of the way is already past, or to see how much the rest come short of him, but sets to his business to get through the remainder of the race; so they that set themselves to the heavenly race must not look back in a double sense; first, not to think of what he hath forsaken for Christ: Luke ix. 62, ‘No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.’ We must not mind or look at anything behind us; that will turn us back, and stop us in our course. Secondly, not contenting ourselves with that we have got, possibly, heretofore, with what we might have done, but must hold till we apprehend the prize or mark, and still make forward with all our might. The saints in a sense forget what they have done for Christ: ‘Lord, when saw we thee an hungry?’

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Use. To persuade us to continue in our christian course till we come to the end of the race. Some races are longer, some shorter; but the end of every man’s race is the end of his life.

1. We that have gone so far in the way must hold out, though never so many difficulties and assaults: ‘You did run well, who hindered you?’ When you have gone so far in the way to heaven, do you begin to look behind you, as if you were about to change your mind? Have you fixed upon these hopes with so great reason and deliberation, and will you draw back and be slight in the pursuit?

2. Is the world and the flesh grown better, or God grown worse? Jer. ii. 5, ‘Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?’

3. All former watching, striving, and praying is lost. The Nazarite was to begin again the days of his purification if he had defiled himself, Num. vi. 12; 2 John 8, ‘Look to yourselves, that we

lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward;' Gal. iii. 4, 'Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.'

[The doctor's sermon on the 15th verse being printed already among the discourses on peace and holiness,[3] the reader is referred thither. The sermon on the 16th verse never came to the publisher's hands.]

SERMON XII.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.—PHIL. iii. 17.

IN this verse the apostle persuadeth the Philippians to agree in the imitation of his practice of forsaking all for Christ. There were differences among them; some were thus minded, and some otherwise minded. He would have them agree in one common rule, one common hope, and one common example, that they might avoid deceitful workers, whose walking was not so regular as to become a pattern to others, as in ver. 18. Therefore since all were not to be promiscuously imitated, they should follow the best, viz., himself who had taught them christianity, and those other servants of the Lord who hold on the same course and way of salvation as he did, and breathed out nothing but faith in Christ and holiness, 'Brethren, be ye followers together of me,' &c.

In which words the apostle propoundeth his own example, both at first and second hand.

1. At the first hand, in his own immediate practice, 'Be followers together of me.'

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2. At the second-hand, and in the rebound, as it was transmitted to them by the practice of others, 'And mark them that walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.'

1. For the first consideration, as his own practice was a pattern to them of sincere love to Christ. Συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε. The words may bear a double sense

[1.] Thus do together with me; be followers of Christ as I am. Or—

[2.] Let not a few, but all of you together imitate me; which sense I prefer.

2. For the second consideration, 'Mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.' Where we have—

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[3] See vol. ii. p. 56 of this edition.—ED.

[1.] A description of the better sort amongst them, in opposition to the deceitful workers who did walk disorderly. If a man would imitate others, he should conform himself to the best, and not the worst of christians. Man is sequacious, inclined to do as others do. Now they should imitate them who were willing to suffer for Christ, rather than enemies to his cross.

[2.] The charge is σκοπεῖτε, 'Mark them.' In another epistle, Rom. xvi. 17, it is, 'Mark them which cause divisions and offences, and avoid them.' Here, mark these and imitate them.

Well, then, here is a double example propounded, Paul's and their fellow-christians'.

Doct. That it is the duty of christians to imitate those good examples which God hath set before them.

See this elsewhere: 1 Cor. iv. 16, 'Wherefore, I beseech you, be ye followers of me;' 1 Thes. i. 6, 'And ye became followers of us and of the Lord;' 1 Thes. ii. 14, 'For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have Buffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.' So 2 Thes. iii. 7, 'For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;' and ver. 9, 'Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us;' Heb. xiii. 7, 'Remember them that have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.' These and many other places show—(1.) That there are some to whom God hath given graces to make them holy and fit for our imitation; (2.) That he hath commanded us to consider them seriously, that we may imitate them, and follow them in holiness and patience, that our latter end may be like theirs. For the clearing this point, let me show you—

1. The several sorts of examples.

2. What is this imitation.

3. How far we are bound to imitate them.

4. Why we must imitate and follow them.

I. The several sorts of examples.

First distinction. There are the examples of the saints living in former ages, and the saints living in our times.

1. The saints living in former ages, whose faith and zeal and holiness is recommended to us in the faithful records of time, especially in the scriptures. We are often commanded to imitate them;

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as Heb. vi. 12, ‘That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.’ None went to heaven but they first met with occasions to try and express both their faith and patience. We must look for the like; they had faith, so must we; they had patience, we must be patient also if we would attain the happiness offered in the promises: Heb. xii. 1, ‘Wherefore seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us.’ The apostle had given us a spiritual chronicle in the former chapter, or a little book of martyrs, and then frameth his inference or practical deduction from that series of instances. Having such ‘a cloud of witnesses;’ he calleth them ‘a cloud,’ to show the number and multitude of these witnesses; for as a cloud is made up of a multitude of vapours gathered together and condensed into one body, so here there are many witnesses that concur in one testimony. So the expression is often used: Isa. lx. 8, ‘Who are those that fly as a cloud, and as doves to the windows?’ noting the multitude of converts. So Ezek. xxxviii. 7, ‘They shall be as a cloud to cover the land.’ Well, then, we are not solitary, nor is our condition singular. So James v. 10, ‘Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering afflictions and patience.’ They are examples of hard sufferings and great patience. We are not better than our fathers, and should not look for more privilege than the prophets. They have been cast into prisons and dungeons, and burnt and butchered, and sawn asunder, and shall we stick at a little sufferings? Surely, having such forerunners, we may go the more cheerfully. Now these examples should be regarded by us—

[1.] Because they are so many and various, and suited to persons of all degrees and ranks of men, and for all christian ends. In the word of God we have many examples on record fit for all persons to imitate. The prince in Josiah and Hezekiah; the counsellor in Hushai; the rich man in Abraham; the poor in the Shunamite; officers in court, in the eunuch of Candace; the captive in Daniel and the three children; the afflicted in Job; the banished in Joseph; the soldier in Cornelius; women in Sarah, 1 Peter iii. 6; the magistrate in Moses and Joshua or Nehemiah; ministers in the apostles of Jesus Christ, a zealous, self-denying company, who left their all to promote the gospel. And then of all graces, Abraham for faith, David for devotion, Job for patience, Timothy for temperance, Paul for diligence and activity in the Lord’s work.

[2.] Because these show that there is nothing impossible in our duty, and nothing so difficult but hath been overcome, and may be overcome through Christ strengthening and enabling us. That which is done and hath been done may be done. Our duty is reconcilable with our frailty. The saints departed had the same nature with us, and we the same assistances and encouragements with them. They the same nature with us; flesh and blood as we are: James v. 17, ‘Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are.’ They had the same interests, relations, concernments, wants, weaknesses, doubts, fears; and we the same encouragements with them, the same cause, the same recompense of reward, the same God, the same Saviour; and did he not surfer as much for us as for them? and therefore we should follow them, and walk in their steps.

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[3.] Their examples are a standing testimony to confirm by experience the truth and reality of our blessed hopes, therefore called ‘a cloud of witnesses,’ Heb. xii. 1. They all spake to future generations to believe constantly in God as they did, that we may receive the like reward. The scripture telleth us that every one that believeth ‘hath put to his seal that God is true,’ John iii. 33. Much more these eminent ones; they are an instance of God’s fidelity to those that faith fully adhere to him and self-denyingly believe in him, and so they confirm our faith, and excite and quicken our hope and love.

(1.) It doth confirm our faith. Are the wisest and soberest that ever the world knew deceived? or were the comforts wherewith they were sustained in the most grievous sufferings fantastical impressions? They continually professed the certain knowledge of and comfort in the hopes of an unseen glory, and died in the Lord, Heb. xi. 13, commending their souls into the hands of Christ. And is not this to our satisfaction, that surely there is such an estate? And should not we believe to the saving of our souls? Heb. x. 30. That bringeth in the catalogue.

(2.) It doth excite and quicken our love and hope, or that desirous expectation of the promised glory which maketh us delightfully and patiently to continue in the love, service, and honour of God, that we may be where they are: Ps. lv. 6, ‘Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! for then would I flee away and be at rest.’ And may come to the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. We are entered into that society now, and are companions with them in the faith and patience of the gospel, that at length we may be companions with them in heavenly glory.

2. The example of the saints now living; for God hath left us a continual succession of good examples. Every age hath its stars, or some that shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation: Phil. ii. 15, 16, ‘Holding forth the word of life.’ We still have our examples of faith, and patience, and sobriety, and watchfulness, and self-denial, and heavenly-mindedness. And present examples are of great use; for though the ways of God be lovely in themselves, and worthy to be chosen, though few or none walk in them: Josh. xxiv. 15, ‘Choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord;’ Ps. cxix. 126, 127, ‘It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold.’ In the most degenerate times we should not slacken our zeal. Yet it is no small comfort and encouragement to have companions in the way to heaven. Woe to him that is left alone. The coals by lying together enkindle one another; and not we alone, but divers others, make the ways of God their choice and practice. Present examples add this above those that are past.

[1.] That they are in our eye. It is a saying of Seneca, that men live *non ad rationem sed ad similitudinem*, not by reason so much as custom and conformity to the practice of others; as beasts

follow the drove, and consider not *qua eundum est, sed qua itur* not how all should walk, but how others do walk. Certainly example hath a great force in evil, because it is before our eyes. There are two senses of learning—sight and hearing; and proportionally it is an encouragement in good to see others mortify those fleshly lusts which the greatest part of the world make it their business and work to please, and to rule their senses, appetites, and passions. Certainly it is a greater engagement and encouragement to us than barely to read of it and hear of it. We see *in foece Romuli*, in the very dregs of christianity, some can be self-denying, mortified, and heavenly. God expects we should profit by what we see, and go and do likewise; for these holy ones were raised up for this very purpose, to instruct the present age and reprove the present age. They are 'the light of the world and the salt of the earth;' Mat. v. 13, 14, to season and direct the world, if it grow unsavoury and noisome.

[2.] There is a greater provocation in the examples of the living; there is direction and confirmation in the examples of the saints departed, but more of excitement and provocation in the examples of the saints living: 2 Cor. ix. 2, 'Your zeal hath provoked many;' and Heb. x 24, 'Let us consider one another, to provoke to love and good works.' There is ἀγαθὴ ἔρις, a holy contention or emulation who shall most excel in godliness. When others are forgetful, negligent, cold, back ward, we provoke them by the light of a heavenly conversation, which shineth into their consciences, and we stir them up to the love of the best things.

[3.] These are yet in the way, and not yet past the pikes, and so partly can the better help and pity us, as being within the reach of our commerce; 'Remember them that are in adversity, as being yourselves also in the body,' Heb. xiii. 3. We have the examples of the saints departed, but not their counsel. And partly, besides, they are yet filling up the measure of their hardships and conflicts: 1 Peter v. 9, 'Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.' They are under like trials; we are not dealt with more hardly than they; and so engage us to more patience.

Second distinction. There are the examples of the guides and pastors, and of ordinary and private christians.

1. Ministers are more bound to be examples to the flock 1 Peter v. 3, 'Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.' To have such a conversation as may be worthy their imitation; and their example is more recommended to us: 'I have be gotten you to God, therefore be ye followers of me;' 1 Cor. iv. 15, 16; Heb. xiii. 7, 'Who have spoken unto you the word of the Lord, whose faith follow.'

2. Private christians. Not only public eminent persons, such as apostles or pastors, and public teachers, but those in a private sphere. They might have been discouraged if only the example of an apostle or the more eminent christians had been propounded; therefore those of a weaker sort are propounded also, who followed his example, who walked so as they had him for an example.

The apostle giveth them his example at second-hand, to show that people of their rank and degree might attain this self-denial.

II. What is this imitation or following? It implieth three things—(1.) *Factum*; (2.) *Alieni facti expressio*; (3.) *Studium et pro positum imitandi*.

1. There must be *factum*, an action. To imitate is not to commemorate, but to walk in the steps of those whom we pretend to imitate; not to admire and commend, but to do likewise. The Jews commended Abraham, and stood much upon the honour of Abraham. Christ tells them, 'If ye were Abraham's seed, ye would do the works of Abraham,' John viii. 39; as the pharisees, that honoured the dead prophets but persecuted the living, did not imitate the prophets, but their ancestors that persecuted them.

2. *Alieni facti expressio.* There must be not only an action, or some thing done, but a correspondent action, or a conformity to the example, both for matter and manner. We must walk as they walk, do such actions with a like mind. As John Baptist is said to 'go before Christ in the spirit and power of Elijah,' Luke i. 17, with the same affections of zeal and courage against sin.

3. *Studium et proposition imitandi*, a purpose and endeavour of imitating. Casually a man may fall on some things which another doeth, but then we propound them as a pattern when we fit and frame ourselves to be like him or them whom we imitate. Christ must be imitated principally; secondarily, his choice servants, which is done when we study to express their graces to the life; σκοπεῖτε, in the text, 'Mark them,' and so resemble them for zeal, faith, patience, and meekness. Well, then, here is doing, and doing that which others do, with an endeavour to resemble them. Thus should we look to any one that hath any good thing in him worthy of imitation; as those that delight in a garden, if they hear others have any choice flowers, they will be sure to get a slip or a root, that they may also have somewhat of the kind; the rather because the Spirit worketh uniformly in all the saints.

III. How far we must imitate them.

1. Not in evil things; for the best have their blemishes, and the saints are not *mensura mensurans*, the rule measuring, but *mensura mensurata*, the copy, the instance, not the standard. Therefore the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xi. 1, 'Be ye followers of me, as also I am of Christ.' No farther than they agree with the original pattern. You may observe in the saints departed, whose memory is continued to us in scripture, that some of their practices were sinful, wherein they bewray human infirmity; as we read of Noah's drunkenness by the power and strength of wine; Lot's incest by surprise; Abraham's dissembling about Sarah, as not being his wife; Jacob's deceit in getting the blessing; Joseph's swearing by the life of Pharaoh; David's sin in the matter of Uriah; Peter's denial of Christ; Paul apt to be exalted, 2 Cor. xii. 7. In these things the saints are represented as spectacles of natural frailty, written for our caution, riot imitation, set up as rocks that we may avoid them.

2. There are exempted cases, or some things done by special dispensation; as Abraham's offering Isaac at God's particular command, Gen. xxii. 10; the Israelites spoiling the Egyptians, Exod. xii. 35; Phineas's slaying the adulterer, Num. xxv. 27; Elias's calling for fire from heaven, 2 Kings i. 10. So infallible gifts and the universal charge of all the churches were peculiar to the apostles. When the disciples would imitate Elias, Luke ix. 54, 55, Christ saith to them, 'Ye know not what spirit ye are of.' This proposal of yours is an abuse of that extraordinary power which Elijah had, and contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and that meekness which should be expressed by christians. So that in things peculiar to their persons and dispensation we should not imitate them, for so we have not like warrant.

IV. Why we must imitate the good examples God hath set before us.

1. Because it is a great part of the communion of saints to profit by one another's graces, or to drive on a joint trade for heaven, wherein they may be mutually helpful to one another: Rom. i. 12, 'That I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you. and me.' We ourselves should provoke and encourage by our example and experience, and should be excited and encouraged by their experience and example, to be more obedient, to God, and patiently and comfort ably to wait for his salvation. Good is diffusive, and seeketh to propagate itself, as fire turneth all about it into fire. Christian society was appointed for this end and purpose. Temporal society tendeth much to the good of persons civilly associated; but spiritual society, or the communion of saints, is far more excellent and beneficial, that the good and holy may live together, to strengthen and quicken each other by their soundness in the faith, diligence in holy practice, which is a great advantage to poor souls seeking salvation. We are neither born, nor born again for ourselves, but that in several communities and societies we may edify one another in love.

2. It is one end of these graces; for God hath bestowed them, not only for the benefit of those that have them, but also for the sake of others, that by their example they might be gained, and quickened, and awakened: Phil. i. 11, 'Filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the glory and praise of God.' We have not grace only that we may be saved, but grace that God may be glorified. Many make a hard shift to get to heaven, and may have grace enough for their own salvation, yet have not grace enough for the honour and glory of God in the world. But when it is so, and God hath raised up some rare choice spirits, surely this should be regarded, or an advantage to gain upon the world is neglected. Noah was raised up in his age to condemn the world, Heb. xi. 7, that is, of their sensuality, and laziness, and contempt of God's warnings; and in every age God raiseth up some to quicken the rest. Now this is lost unless we are alarmed and awakened thereby: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' The graces of the saints serve not only to please God, but to honour God thereby. They are as light that shineth to others, that God may be glorified in their conversion and edification: 1 Peter ii. 12, 'Having your conversation honest among the gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works which

they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation;' that is, when it shall please him to visit them with his saving grace. Now if this end be neglected, one means of saving grace is received in vain: 1 Thes. i. 7, 'So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.'

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3. Because they show us the way to heaven more clearly and compendiously. *Longum iter per praecepta, breve per exempla*—The way is long by precepts, but short by examples. Men can sooner understand an example than they can understand a rule. We see how religion is to be acted and carried on. The ignorant understand it by practice rather than description; and therefore Christ would not only give us a rule, but an example how we should walk in his steps. There are many disputes about the rule and doctrine, but Christ's example is obvious to every considering eye. So by proportion the example of the saints; it is not so exact as the example of Christ, but for the main they are such in the world as he was in the world; and therefore their example is instruction, so far as the rule is exemplified thereby. The apostle saith that many that are not won by the word may be moved by the example of those that profess it, 1 Peter iii. 1. In practice, they see the beauty and usefulness of religion; in the rule it is but in notion and idea. The best discourses will not reclaim them when example may reclaim them. Religion put into act is a less disputable thing than religion in the theory. The beauty, use, and excellency of it is seen in practice. Many suspect a rule when strangely surprised by practice. It affects their senses, and by their senses, their minds and hearts.

4. In the example of others we have encouragement as well as instruction. Indeed, this is the great use of examples; they do not bind so absolutely, as encourage, because men are not infallible or impeccable. We may be mistaken if we take them as a rule, but yet when the rule is clear they are a great encouragement. Though they do not prove a duty so surely, or that all is commanded which is practised by them, yet they are an encouragement, as proving that those duties required are not only possible but comfortable. We have no thing to do but what many thousands have done before us: Jer. vi. 16, 'Stand upon the ways and see, and ask for the good old paths, where is the good way? and walk therein, and you shall find rest for your souls.' And there is nothing to suffer but what they have suffered: 1 Peter v. 9, 'Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world;' 1 Cor. x. 13, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.' We want no grace, help, or comfort which they had; we seek and hope for the same glory which they possess: Heb. vi. 12, 'That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' If we were now to begin before the way were smoothed, it were more discouraging; but the ice is broken, the briars and thorns are cut down, the way to heaven is not untrodden. Others have ventured on the promise of the Mediator, why not we?

Use 1. To show us that good examples must be given and taken.

1. Given, and how exemplary we should be to others. To this end—

[1.] Consider what reverence we owe to weak christians, that w may not set them an ill copy. The poet could say, *Maxima debetur puero reverentia*—We owe more reverence to a child than a man. His meaning is, it is dangerous to let them be privy and conscious to any lightness of ours, lest they adopt it into their manners. Young beginners in religion are apt to take offence, and it is a dangerous thing to lay stumbling-blocks in the way of young converts. Gehazi's crime is mainly aggravated upon this account: 2 Kings v. 26, 'Is this a time to receive money and garments?' A Syrian nobleman had newly experience of the goodness of the God of Israel, which was a means to gain him; the master had refused a reward, and should the servant with a lie receive it, and prejudice Naaman against the true religion which he had newly begun to like?

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[2.] We are to account for those sins we cause or draw others to fall into. It is often repeated that Jeroboam the son of Nebat caused Israel to sin by his command and example; his idolatry outlived him. When Jehu destroyed the idolatry of the house of Ahab, or the worship of Baal, yet he kept up the idolatry of the house of Jeroboam, or the calves of Dan and Bethel. And so a man may sin after he is dead. His example surviveth him; therefore, that none of us may be involved in more sins than his own, we had need be cautious. *Ab alienis parce servo tuo,* Ps. xix. 13. It is a mistake; they read *zarim* for *zedim*; but it bears a good sense. It is worthy the care of every good man not to 'be partaker of other men's sins,' 1 Tim. v. 22. What is done by our example will redound to our account. We were first in the transgression; and then what is done by others is but a copy and transcript of our practice.

[3.] How severe God is upon his scandalous children. Though he may pardon their faults as to eternal punishment, yet they smart for it in the world: 1 Sam. xii. 14, 'Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme.' That sin cost David dear, because he had made others judge ill of the ways of God. His child died, his daughter was ravished, his son Amnon slain in his drunkenness; Absalom driveth him from his palace royal; his subjects deserted him; his wives and concubines were ravished; he forced to go weeping up and down, and forced to shift for his life. He was foretold these should be the effects of his sin, 2 Sam. xii. 10-12. There is no dallying with God; though our eternal estate should be secured, our pilgrimage may be made very uncomfortable.

[4.] The office God hath imposed upon his people; they are to show forth his praises, or his virtues, to the world, 1 Peter ii. 9, chosen out from the rest of mankind for that purpose, to be a mirror of divine virtues, or to be his image and representation to the world, that he is good, wise, and powerful; and therefore we are to take heed what representations we make of God. By our sin fulness we blaspheme his goodness; by our folly, his wisdom; by our weakness, his power. So again, we are called his 'witnesses;' Isa. xliii. 30, 'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.' They are to witness for God to the world, as having experience of his providence and of fulfilling of promises. We are to give a testimony for God to the prejudiced world of the reality of our hopes, and the excellency of our religion, and that purity and strictness which is necessary to everlasting happiness.

If we discredit Christ and his profession, we are not witnesses for him, but against him: Isa. xliv. 8, ‘Ye are my witnesses; is there any god besides me?’ Now, how do you convince, reprove, and convert the world? The best testimony given for God is by deeds rather than words; by holy example, and keeping his commandments, than by a loose profession, and empty complimented respect.

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[5.] It is a greater honour for us to be examples and precedents unto others, than to take example from others and be followers of them: 1 Thes. i. 7, ‘Ye became examples to all that believed in Macedonia and Achaia.’ To be a ringleader in evil is more damnable and evil than to be a follower; so to be the first beginner of any good is most commendable and beneficial: Eph. i. 12, ‘That we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted in Christ.’ Difference of heavenly rewards are propounded for the same purpose. The disciple hath a disciple’s reward, and a prophet a prophet’s reward. The least measure of sound grace is saving; but he that is allowedly content with a little grace hath none at all.

2. If you would prove a motive and encouragement to others, let us take good example.

[1.] It is a shame to come short of those who are upon the same level with us, have the same rule that we have, the same hopes, the same spirit of Christ with we, to heal, and cure, and strengthen them. ‘I profited,’ saith the apostle, ‘above many of my equals in the Jewish religion,’ Gal. i. 14. And should we riot do so in the christian? Surely what we do in religion we should not do negligently and lazily, but should advance and grow in religion, both as to knowledge and practice, and labour to be so far from coming short of our equals for time, age, and means, that we should rather outstrip them. Still our business is to excel.

[2.] There is none but may learn somewhat from others; for every child of God hath his distinct excellency, either as to knowledge, or judgment, or government of passions, or affections, or holy conference, for they have their peculiar gift to the use of edifying. Now their graces are ours, and ours are theirs, and thereby excite and quicken one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, 1 Peter iv. 12. All gifts or graces we have not as absolute owners, but as dispensers and stewards, that these various graces may make us helpful one to another, and we may learn from one another.

[3.] You lose the benefit of God’s dispensation, who hath given us good examples, and set them before our eyes for this very end, that wo may do as they do; and we are accountable for examples, as well as for other helps and means of grace. For examples of evil and punishment: Dan. v. 22, ‘And thou, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knowest all this,’ viz., Gods punishment on his father for his pride. So examples of good: Mat. xii. 42, ‘The queen of the south shall rise in judgment against this general ion, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here.’ The examples of such as have taken pains to get knowledge shall he made use of to aggravate their sins to deeper judgment, who do not make use of it to increase their faith and diligence. So also Dionysius

and Damaris aggravated the unbelief of the Athenians, Acts xvii. 34. There want not self-denying christians in every age to condemn the laziness of the rest: Heb. xi. 7, ‘By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen, prepared au ark, by which he condemned the world.’

Use 2. To show us how cautious we should be that we be not infected by bad examples. Example is of great force either way.

Here I shall show you what examples are most forcible to draw us from God and goodness.

1. The examples of those who are near to us in kindred; as Ruth, chap. i. 15, ‘And she said, Behold, thy sister is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law.’ She spake this to try her, it being a great temptation to do as kindred. Leah gave Zilpah her maid to Jacob to wife, as Rachel had done, and Bilhah before, Gen. xxx. 9. So Lot’s younger daughter committed incest with her father by the example of her elder sister, Gen. xix. 31, 32.

2. Who are gracious with us in friendship; as the disciples murmured against the woman that brought the box of spikenard, by the example of Judas: Mat. xxvi. 8, ‘When the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?’ Compare John xii. 4, 5, ‘Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot,’ &c. One murmurer may infect a whole company, as Judas doth involve the other disciples in his fault: Num. xi. 4, ‘And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?’ They begun, and the other follow.

3. Who are great over us in power; we tread after their track: as the princes and nobles imitated David’s liberality: 1 Chron. xxix. 6-8, ‘Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers over the king’s work, offered willingly, and gave, for the service of the house of God, of gold, five thousand talents, and ten thousand talents of silver, and eighteen thousand talents of brass, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. And they with whom precious stones were found, gave them to the treasure of the house of the Lord.’ And Hezekiah’s piety: 2 Chron. xxx. 24, ‘For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks, and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks, and ten thousand sheep.’ And the king of Nineveh’s devotion: Jonah iii. 5, 6, 10, ‘And the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least: for word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he rose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.’

4. The examples of men eminent, learned, and gracious, are very powerful: Gal. ii. 13, ‘And the other Jews dissembled likewise, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.’ This is of great force, and prevaileth not only over the weak, but over the strong also. Such as are endowed with grace and parts will be corrupted by it. We do not so narrowly

examine their actions; all is taken for current that they do. A plausible error of theirs is not like a duel, but a war.

5. When examples are general and universal, an evil thing is as it were authorised. Public example is like an inundation, it carries all before it: Exod. xxiii. 2, 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.' Therefore we should follow Micaiah's resolution; when the messengers entreated him to comply with the rest of the prophets in his advice to the king, he replied, 'As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak,' 1 Kings xxii. 13, 14.

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Helps to make us exemplary.

[1.] Love to God, or zeal for his glory: Ps. cxix. 165, 'Great peace have they that love thy law; and nothing shall offend them.'

[2.] Love to the brethren's souls: 1 John ii. 10, 'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him.'

[3.] A sincere seriousness in our profession: Phil. i. 10, 'That ye may approve the things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.'

[4.] Watchfulness: 2 Cor. vi. 3, 'Giving no offence in anything;' 1 Cor. x. 32, 'Give no offence to Jew, nor gentile, nor to the church of God;' Luke xvii. 3, 'Take heed to yourselves; if thy brother trespass, against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.'

[5.] Mortify your dearest lusts, deny and resist the pleasures of sense. Mat. v. 9; as Mahomet cut off the head of beautiful Irene, who was an occasion to draw him from public affairs, to the offence of his bassas. Carry a severe hand over all those affections which carry you to earthly things.

[6.] A heart in heaven, and a way with the wise above. The end shineth to us in all our actions.

SERMON XIII.

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ.—PHIL. iii. 18.

HERE is the reason given why they should be cautious whose example they followed, because there were crept into the church a licentious sort of christians, who framed and accommodated their principles and practices to the ease and indulgence of the flesh.

In the words there is—(1.) An introduction; (2.) The character and brand which he puts on these false teachers.

I. In the introduction three things are asserted—

1. The multitude of these deceitful workers, ‘Many walk.’

2. His frequent giving warning of this pest formerly, ‘Of whom I have told you often.’

3. His compassionate way of mentioning them for the present, ‘And now tell you even weeping.’

1. The multitude of them. Error fretteth like a gangrene; and God suffereth seducers to multiply in a church, partly to punish the small respect that hath been given to his truth: 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11, ‘With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish;. because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved: and for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.’ Partly that the ‘approved may be made manifest,’ 1 Cor. xi. 19, and the light chaff distinguished from the solid grain. The use of this is, we must not follow the drove, nor be carried away with the current and inundation of evil examples. Many walk; yet, ‘Be ye followers of me.’ We should keep with the sounder part. The errors of those that are counted godly draw away many. Vice is a duel, error a war, in which many are killed.

2. His frequent warning. God’s faithful ministers must give frequent warning of hazard from errors. Never any epistle was written by the apostles but you will find in them cautions and warnings of this kind. It, is our duty not only to fodder the sheep, but hunt out the wolf. Error is touchy, and loath to be meddled with; yet we must warn, and warn often.

3. The compassionate manner wherein he speaketh of them. This is mentioned partly to show what a burden this was to his spirit, and a superaddition of sorrow to his sorrow. When Paul was at liberty he told them of these things; now in prison he writeth about them; for they were the same men of whom he spake before, ‘that they added affliction to his bonds,’ Phil. i. 16. Partly that his warning might be the better received. The apostle did not inveigh against them out of envy and ill-will, but speaketh with sorrow and tears, out of pure zeal for the glory of God and love to souls.

Doct. There should be more of compassion than of passion showed in reproving persons that err and go astray from their duty.

Because the apostle’s example is of great use to us in like cases, let us a little inquire into the causes of Paul’s grief.

1. Negatively. It was not hatred and ill-will to their persons, nor emulation of their credit, nor a desire of venting reproaches. Some men’s zeal against error is as much to be feared as others lapsing into it; they encounter sin with sin, and speak against those who dissent from them, and it may be from the truth, out of little affection; as Ithacius had nothing good in him but his hatred of

the Priscillianists, who were better men than himself, only fallen into separation from the church, and this so far transported him, that every zealous man was to him a Priscillianist. When wicked men, who have no love of God in their hearts, will be inveighing bitterly against errors, they do not reclaim the wandering, but further alienate and harden them.

2. Positively. The causes were these four—

[1.] Pure zeal for the glory of God, which is more dear to God's servants than all their own interests. Compare Ps. lxix. 9, with Rom. xv. 3, 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.' Carnal men are hot in their own cause, cold in God's; but the contrary is true of gracious spirits; as Moses, who was meek in his own; cause, but zealous in God's. The dishonour done to God goeth near their hearts.

[2.] The church's welfare, which is highly prized by them: Ps. cxxii. 9, 'Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good;' Isa. lxii. 1, 'For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace;' Ps. cxxxvii. 6, 'If 1 do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.' Now to persons thus affected, when others do by their false doctrine and disorderly life seduce and disturb the church, it is a real grief to them.

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[3.] Pity to souls, both of the seducers and the seduced, the ring-leaders and their proselytes, because they brought destruction upon their own heads. It is a grief to a serious christian to see people go to hell by droves. True christians are led by the Spirit of Christ, who was nil made up of bowels of compassion. We find him weeping for friends and enemies. Friends, as Lazarus: John xi. 35, 'Jesus wept.' Enemies, as the Jews: Luke xix. 41, 'When he came near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.' Now his people have the bowels of Christ: Phil. i. 8, 'God is my record how greatly I long after you in the bowels of Jesus Christ.' When others incur God's displeasure and endanger their own salvation, it is grievous to them.

[4.] They have a clearer apprehension of the mischievous effects of sin, see more danger in it than the deluded world do: Jer. xiii. 17, 'If ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places.' Faith hath a great sagacity and foresight in it. As to things hoped, it is a substance; so it is the evidence of things not seen, which compriseth the threatenings: Heb. xi. 1, 7, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became the heir of righteousness which is by faith.' When the merry world, blinded with the delusions of the flesh, never thought of a flood, Noah maketh preparation. Paul is in tears whilst those besotted worldlings glory in their shame. God's children know that his threatenings are not a vain scarecrow; they see a storm coming when the clouds are a-gathering, a judgment in the causes, and execution in the sentence; and however men slight the word now, it will one day be found true. These things being realised and set before their eyes by a clear faith, they are affected even to weeping.

I have the more dilated upon these things, because they are so useful to us in times of general apostasy and detection from God.

II. The brand and character he puts upon them, ‘They are enemies to the cross of Christ.’

This may be understood either of their doctrine or practice.

1. By their doctrine; and so again two ways—

[1.] As they did detract from the merits of his death by urging the observation of the law of Moses as necessary to justification. They taught sins might be expiated and men saved some other way than by the cross of Christ. The pure gospel is the preaching of the cross; by the adding of the rituals of Moses, they made the cross of Christ of none effect: ‘For if righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain,’ Gal. ii. 21. By the blood of his cross Christ made our peace with God, Col. i. 20, and that was enough; but they cried up the ceremonies as necessary, and so frustrated the grace of God in Christ.

[2.] Another particular doctrine of theirs was, that they might confidently abjure the faith in time of persecution, as Eusebius informeth us. Basil ides and the Gnostics had crept into the church in Paul’s ‘time; and in scripture we may trace the footsteps of this opinion, by which they persuade a compliance with Jews and gentiles, to avoid the danger of the cross or persecution. Jews: Gal. vi. 12, ‘As many as make a fair show in the flesh, constrain yon to be circumcised, lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ;’ and Gal. v. 11, ‘If I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.’ Gentiles: that it was an indifferent thing to be present at idols’ feasts, and to eat things offered to idols, 1 Cor. x. This was their doctrine to shun persecution.

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2. Their practice, which was suitable to their doctrine. They were of an unchristian spirit and temper, savouring nothing but the world and the commodities and pleasures of the flesh, loath to suffer anything for Christ, or venture on anything that might bring affliction upon them, but wholly gave up themselves to gratify the present life; therefore they are said to be enemies to the cross of Christ.

This interpretation I prefer for these reasons—

[1.] Because in the next verse, where the apostle explaineth this clause, he doth not instance in their opinions, but their practice: ver. 19, ‘Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things;’ where they are set forth as sensual and earthly-minded men, and upon that account enemies to the cross of Christ.

[2.] By the antithesis or description of the opposite state of the true christians, ‘But our conversation is in heaven.’ True christians are not described by their opinions, but their conversations;

and the kind of their conversation was heavenly, and carried on with respect to their happy state in another world. These then are worldly, and so enemies.

3. Their temper had an influence upon their opinions, as well as their opinions had an influence upon their practice. Their religion was according to their frame of heart, fitted for the conveniency of the flesh, or their ease and quiet in the world.

Doct. That men of an earthly, carnal spirit are enemies to the cross of Christ.

To clear this, observe—

1. That those that profess friendship to Christ may yet be enemies to him. These Gnostics were a sort of christians. There are open enemies, and secret. The open enemies are such as bid defiance to Christ, and live in professed infidelity; the secret are such as seem to own Christ crucified, yet do really oppose the power and virtue of his passion, not mortifying their fleshly and worldly lusts. So that there are enemies of Christ, not only out of the church, but in the midst, where his kingdom is set up; for he ruleth in the midst of his enemies, Ps ex. 1. Now these secret enemies are of two sorts—such as are enemies to his laws, and enemies to his cross. To his laws, or kingly power: Luke xix. 27, 'These mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them,' &c.; Ps. lxviii. 21, 'He will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such as go on still in their trespasses.' He is a God of salvation. To his cross: so those who professed the name of christians, but by their sensual walking and worldly-mindedness declared themselves enemies of the cross of Christ.

2. That friendship and enmity to Christ is not interpreted so much by external profession as by the constitution of our hearts, and the course of our conversations. Christ never respected pure profession, where men have the hearts of infidels and pagans or the lives of infidels: Luke vi. 46, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?' Mat. vii. 21, 'Not every one,' &c.; and 1 Peter i. 17, 'With out respect of persons, he judgeth according to every man's work.' God is not προσωπολέπτης. God will not accept of men according to their appearance; as it is a perversion in man's judgment when persons are accepted for things extrinsical and foreign, and such as have no respect to the merits of the cause. Though you may say, I am a christian, no Jew nor infidel, I am a minister; yet, if carnal, if an enemy to the cross which you preach up, if the constitution of heart he quite opposite to the spirit of religion which you profess, you are reckoned not among the friends, but enemies; Christ will not own you.

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3. That the worldly spirit is that constitution of heart which is quite blank opposite to the cross of Christ. This is that which I am to prove;. but before I go about it, let me drop a consideration or two.

The first is, that the cross of Christ is twofold—what he hath endured for our sake, what we must endure for his sake. The worldly spirit is opposite to both, loath to suffer, though Christ hath

commanded us to take up the cross daily, Luke ix. 23. In a resolution and preparation of mind we must do so; but then the cross which he endured for our sakes, we are enemies to it whilst we resist the power of it, and are not by it crucified to the world; then this great end o the cross is not fulfilled in us.

The second consideration is, that worldliness is not only opposite to the cross of Christ, but also to the glory of Christ, in several respects. There are two considerations set before us in scripture to wean us from the world—Christ crucified and Christ glorified. Of the former by and by; the latter, Col. iii. 1, 'Being risen with Christ, seek those things that are above.' It doth not become the members of a crucified Christ to be earthly-minded, nor the members of a glorified Christ to set their hearts on things so low. A christian should live in a perfect correspondence to all the acts of Christ's mediation. The two solemn acts are his dying and rising again. As he died and was crucified, we must not mind earthly things; as he rose again, our conversation must be in heaven. The one enforceth mortification, the other vivification, or seeking things above. If we feel not the virtue of the one, or the other, or both, we have lost the benefit of our christianity, and shall not be reckoned among the friends and disciples, but enemies of Jesus Christ.

Now I prove that the worldly spirit is most opposite to the cross of Christ.

1. The scripture clearly asserts it: James iv. 4, 'The friendship of the world is enmity with God:' Mat. vi. 24, 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon;' 1 John ii. 15, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' It is apparent in our baptismal vow we are to renounce the world, as one of the enemies of our salvation, as well as the devil and the flesh, when we first enter upon christianity, and seek after the benefits of the cross.

2. Experience confirmeth it. What is it that most opposeth, and ever hath opposed, the gospel, and lieth point-blank opposite to the spirit of it, but the worldly spirit?

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[1.] It was the worldly spirit which caused the Jews to be such obstinate unbelievers, and to persecute Christ and his servants: James ii. 5, 6, 'Hath not God chosen the poor to be rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him? Do not the rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats?' The poor Christ and the poor christians they hated. And Luke xvi. 14, 'And the pharisees, which were covetous, heard all these things, and derided him.' And this is that which continueth them in their unbelief unto this very day; they would have a temporal pompous Messiah, which should come in worldly glory and power, and free them from captivity, and make the rest of the nations stoop to them. This humble crucified Jesus is not for their turn.

[2.] This maketh the Turks adore their Mahomet, because he promiseth success in their worldly enterprises in this world, and a sensual happiness in the world to come.

[3.] This maketh the nominal bastard christian to be such an opposer of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and only to content himself with the name of christianity. When the church ran into the world and the world into the church, religion began to be corrupted. The rabble of nominal christians, they are worldlings, and measure all by outward pomp, pride, and fleshly glory. There is a contest between the evangelical church of Christ and the carnal worldly church of antichrist, who are most esteemers of the cross of Christ. Now of this controversy you shall be judges where the right lieth. The carnal church pleadeth. she is all for the cross; you have crucifixes everywhere painted, carved, gilded; yea, they are ready to worship the cross of Christ with holy worship; they set it in their temples, altars, yea, their highways, market-places; and in every place where they meet with it, bow down to it; they adorn it with gold, and silver, and all costly precious stones; their popes and prelates have it carried before them, their laity wear it in their bosoms; yea, at all times, when they come out of their houses, when they come into churches, when they address themselves to almost anything, sign themselves with the sign of the cross. And are not these better friends of the cross than these new upstart heretics, that are frightened, displeased at the sight of it? But alas! these outward semblances and May-games do but deceive the world, whilst in their doctrine they detract from the merits of Christ crucified, and in their worship turn the simplicity of the gospel into a theatrical pomp, and the discipline of the church into a temporal domination; so that their christianity looketh like another thing than Christ hath established, like a design and frame of religion calculated for the present world rather than a serious preparation for the world to come. Here the evangelical church, they profess to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified; on him is bottomed all their comfort and hope, 1 Cor. ii. 2, and give him the whole honour of our redemption, justification, and salvation, and desire to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and worship him in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh, without such pompous and ridiculous ceremonies, or any worship and adoration of the material cross, or the sign of it; but to be crucified to the world, and quit all things, that they may have pardon, and peace, and life by the cross of Christ. Now judge you who are friends or enemies to the cross of Christ, those who seek to check their worldly lusts, or they who, since Christ's religion came in fashion, do rest in an outward pageantry and seeming devotion to the cross?

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[4.] It is the worldly spirit that distinguished the hypocrites from the sincere in the true church, and where the doctrine of the cross is purely preached. Hypocrites are of two sorts—either such as have the grace of the stony or thorny ground, more gross and open, or more secret and refined.

(1.) Such as have the grace of the stony ground. They are described, Luke viii. 13, 'That which fell on the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.' These are such as are impatient of adversity, and therefore change their minds as their carnal interest doth change, and set their sails to that wind which will most bring them to their worldly ends. They have a liking to religion, and are loath to quit the profession of it, but yet loath to endanger their worldly interests; therefore fit their principles to the humours of men, and fashion themselves for all times. This is libertinism,

carnal policy, not religion. Of this sort were those spoken of in the text, who would be accounted christians, yet suffer nothing for Christ. To eschew sufferings by lawful means is not culpable: Mat. x. 23, 'When they persecute you in one city, flee into another.' Yea, commendable: Prov. xxii. 3, 'A prudent man foreseeth the evil; and hideth himself.' But to disguise religion, and to writhe ourselves into all postures and shapes, that we may secure our temporal interest or worldly portion, is the fault of the third ground, or the property of those hypocrites who are represented thereby. And so we see the world was their bane, because, to shun the cross, or avoid hazard and trouble, they were willing to comply with the persecutors, and tamper with them to abate their edge. And therefore till you are so far divorced from the world as to take up with a naked Christ and the hopes of a heavenly felicity which he hath promised, you cannot escape this snare.

(2.) There are another sort of hypocrites, who are represented by the thorny ground. They are described, Luke viii. 14, 'And that which fell among thorns are they who, when they have heard, go forth and are choked with cares, and riches, and the pleasures of this life and bring no fruit to perfection.' These either are not assailed with persecutions, or, it they are, endure the brunt, but do not tame their own flesh; though they conquer outward opposition, and keep the profession and form of godliness, deny the power; have not so far felt the power of Christ crucified, as to overcome their worldly affections and sensual inclinations; and so religion is still kept as an underling, and they are not brought into that state of the divine nature or heavenly life that God may have most interest in their hearts, and the main drift and bent of their lives may be for God and the life to come. They do not make heaven their end, so as to part with all to obtain it; therefore they are dwarfs and cripples in religion all their days, never make any sound work of it, so as to honour God, and awaken the careless world to mind better things. Now these are enemies to the cross of Christ, because God hath least of the heart, and the world most, and the strongest interest is that which is opposite to God; the cross hath not had its effect in them.

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[5.] It is the worldly spirit that is the great let and hindrance to the sincere, that they cannot do for God as they would. The sincere, and christians indeed, are such as do in affection and resolution forsake all that they have in the world, and look for a portion in the world to come. They by experience find the world to be an enemy to the cross of Christ. I say, they are a people who seek more diligently after heaven than earth, and can let go the world when Christ calleth them to it; yet these find the world and the worldly spirit a mighty impediment both in doing and suffering for Christ. Till we put off the flesh, the world will never lay by its enmity.

(1.) For doing. The world is always hindering you in the way to life. It is continually a snare in all that you do, clogging and retarding you in your heavenly flights and motions: Heb. xii. 1, 'Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,' &c. Though you do believe a life after this, and are convinced that it is your happiness, and have your estimation and love most set upon it, and do for the main contemn the riches, and honours, and pleasures of the world, yet you find a difficulty to comply with the precepts of christianity, those of mortification, self-denial,

charity, meekness, temperance, heavenly-mindedness; cannot do as yon would, because of your inclination to present things, nor so thoroughly comply with that manner of living which Christ hath appointed. Therefore a great part of our religion and constant duty is to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, James i. 27. Many christians can hardly escape the blemish of being worldly, and not attending upon communion with God, and the duties of justice and charity, which we owe to men, so entirely as the law of christianity doth enforce. And that is the reason why the doctrine of overcoming the world is subjoined to the warning of keeping the commandments without grievousness: 1 John v. 3, 4, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous. For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' He knoweth not his own heart that findeth not this.

(2.) Suffering for Christ. What is it that maketh men so tender of suffering but love of the world? If men were crucified to the world, it would be more easy; for we can readily part with things that we do not much value and esteem. These are but small matters in comparison of what Christ hath promised you and purchased for you. If you must endure disgrace for Christ, ἐλαχιστον, it is a small thing with you, 1 Cor. iv. 3; if bonds, and afflictions, and hard trials, these things will not much move you, Acts xx. 23, 24; Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' But alas! every one hath not this constancy of mind, and deep sense of the world to come, this weanedness from the present world, and therefore maintain their resolution for God and heaven with great difficulty; the heavenly life is obstructed and weakened by worldly affections.

(3.) Reason will plainly evidence it to you—(1.) From the intent of the cross; (2.) From the nature of the religion that is founded on the cross of Christ, and the graces wherein the life of that religion consisteth.

First, From the end and intent of the cross. Why the Lord did appoint this way to save the world.

1. It was to be an all-sufficient expiatory sacrifice for sin: Eph. v. 2, 'He hath given himself for us, to be an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour.' By it satisfaction is made to God for the sin which the world enticed man to commit. Our first sin was a turning from God to the world. Man would be at his own finding, and left the happiness which he had in God for somewhat in the creature. Now by 'his stripes we are healed,' Isa. liii. 5. Therefore they cross this end, and so are enemies, who would tear open Christ's wounds, and make them bleed afresh. These refuse God's remedy.

2. By this cross Christ purchased for us that Spirit of power, and all those ordinances and helps of grace, by which we may overcome the world: Gal. i. 4, 'He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.' Both the internal operation of his Holy Spirit, and the out ward ordinances of God, or means of grace,

were given us to this end, that our estimation and love which is set upon the creature might be recovered to God, that we might be called off from the creature, and brought back again to God. Now those who mind earthly things are direct enemies to the cross of Christ, because they go about to defeat the end of it, and this Spirit, which would take them off from the world.

3. By his cross he hath purchased to us that glorious kingdom which is propounded as our happiness; and being formerly shut to all man kind by sin, it is opened by the death of Christ, that believers may enter into it: 1 Thes. v. 9, 10, 'God hath not appointed us to wrath; but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, that whether we sleep or wake, we should live together with him.' This was his end; and how do they contradict this end who only aim at a worldly happiness, and live as if they desired no better satisfactions than those of the belly and bodily life. Surely these hate the cross, and lightly esteem the glory purchased thereby.

4. That it might be a pattern and example to us of three things—(1.) Of suffering; (2.) Contentment and patience under suffering; (3.) A glorious issue. Now those that are of a worldly spirit can have no liking to the cross of Christ, but hate, and are enemies to it.

[1.] Of suffering. He endured the cross for our sakes, that we might endure the cross for his sake; take up our cross and follow him, Mat. xvi. 24. We must have our cross, Col. i. 24, ὑστερήματα Χριστοῦ. We have the remnant of those sufferings which Christ began on the cross, that thereby he may convince us of the vanity and emptiness of the world, which is more than doctrine and hearsay. When we are despised and contemned, and become as the filth and off-scouring of the world, it turneth us more against the world than a lecture or speculative contemplation of these things do, and being sanctified by Christ, doth produce in us a low esteem of the world, and a desire of a better portion.

[2.] Of contentment and patience under sufferings: 'For Christ died, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps,' 1 Peter ii. 21. And truly to eye our pattern, Christ, hanging and dying on the cross, will pierce the world to the very heart. He was contented to be the most despicable object upon earth in the eyes of men. If christians be not ashamed of their head and glorious chief, this spectacle should kill all our worldly affections, and make us despise all the honour, and riches, and pomp, and pleasure of the world, the favour or frowns, the love or wrath, the praise or dispraise of men, so far as it is opposite to the kingdom of Christ. When it is crucified to us, we should be crucified to it: Gal. vi. 14, 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' The applause of the world should be contemptible unto, and actually abhorred by, a sincere believer; yea, the power, beauty, allurements, as they would interpose to weaken our esteem of Christ, or pursuit of that happiness which he hath offered to us, it should all be trampled upon and rejected by us for Christ's sake.

[3.] Of a glorious issue; for Christ escaped out of death, and entered into glory, which he promised us, and so still by his example calleth us off from the world to heaven: Heb. xii. 1, 2, 'Let

us run with patience the race which is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' His cross was the ready way to the crown. Now, as it was to him, it will be so to us; for 'if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him,' Rom. viii. 17. The way is rough, but the prize is excellent. He endured cruel pains of body, bitter agonies of soul; but there was a glorious estate at the back of it in the close and issue; not only to recompense his sufferings, but to be a pledge of our hopes. This now is the cross interpreted, and judge you what a perfect contradiction here is all along to a sensual and worldly spirit.

Secondly, Consider the religion founded on the cross; which may be considered—(1.) On God's and Christ's part, as to its precepts and promises; (2.) On our part, as to the graces wherein it is exercised.

I shall only now touch at the latter, and show you that all grace is at mortal enmity with the world: faith, hope, and love, these all engage us to another world, and do subordinate this unto it.

1. Faith, which is a dependence upon God for something which lieth out of sight. The nature of it is to carry us off from things present to things to come; therefore this being a main grace in the gospel covenant, surely requireth we should be dead and crucified to the world. The spirit of faith spoken of 2 Cor. iv. 13, is a temper of mind prepared for all dangers and hazards, or a ready confession of Christ, with courage, without pusillanimity, or love to our own ease. This is the true spirit of faith, opposite to that spirit of the world which maketh men afraid to venture for Christ.

2. Love. They that love not Christ in sincerity, they are enemies to his cross and kingdom. It argueth such an high esteem of God, and Christ, and his precious benefits, that our souls are drawn off from Other things, and all things are made to give way to them: Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' &c. The love of the world remaining, the love of the Father is not in us.

3. For hope. This wholly carrieth us to a future happiness; for hope that is seen is not hope. To long for a better estate: Rom. viii. 23, 'We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption.' To look for it and prepare for it: 1 John iii. 2, 3, 'Now we are the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be,' &c. So that the spirit which is in religion is not the spirit of the world, 1 Cor. ii. 12; and they that are under the power of a worldly spirit have neither true faith, nor love, nor hope.

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Use 1. To show how much they are mistaken who think they shall ever be counted friends of Christ, who would indulge the flesh, and reconcile the love of the world with a profession of godliness. No; be you professors, be you preachers, you are enemies of the cross of Christ, especially they who serve themselves of Christ, and make religion a design and cover to some worldly end. The first sort are confuted by the instance of the young man. He had a mind to be a christian; but when Christ telleth him of selling all, and looking for a reward in another world, he goeth away sorrowful, for he was very rich, Luke xviii. 23. There you see plainly that minding earthly things

is enmity to the cross of Christ. For the second, none worse enemies than they that think to serve themselves and their worldly ends upon religion; better keep in the world among worldlings, than creep into the church of Christ, and dishonour religion by greediness of filthy lucre, 1 Peter v. 2; Rom. xvi. 18, 'They serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly.' To make that your inducement to be religious, to bring your base earthly minds among Christ's servants to infect them, it is worse than if you never professed. No; both one and the other must sit down and count the cost. Never dream of being Christ's unless you can forsake all and follow him under the cross, upon the assurance of a promised treasure in heaven.

Use 2. To press those who would be accounted sincere christians to mortify their affections to earthly things.

1. Else you are not friends to Christ, but enemies. He counteth none friends but those that are prepared to take him and his yoke, take him and his cross; therefore we should examine the strength of our resolution. Can we follow a naked Christ, and be content to obey his counsel for another world, whatever be our lot here? Never dream of building a tower before you sit down and count the cost, whether you have sufficient to finish it, Luke xiv. 28.

2. Else you feel not the true virtue of Christ's cross. And how will you glory in it when you hear of such a mighty Christ, and feel nothing? Gal. vi. 14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ.' Therefore consider, What benefit have I found by Christ? I profess to believe the doctrine of the cross, but what good hath it done me? If I pretend it giveth me ease in my conscience, and doth not mortify my lusts, this is the fashion of hypocrites, who would have Christ pacify their conscience, and the world gratify their hearts beside. You will never find rest without taking on Christ's yoke and taking up his burden, Mat. xi. 29.

3. You are never dead to the world till the flesh be crucified; for they whose god is their belly will mind earthly things; and flesh must be crucified if the world be crucified, Gal v. 24, for the world is the provision of the flesh.

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4. Till you tame the flesh and grow dead to the world yon are under the power of Satan: 1 Peter v. 8, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.' The worldly and carnal are 'led captive by him at his will and pleasure,' 2 Tim. ii. 26, 2 Cor. iv. 10.

5. Your faith in Christ, love to God, and hope of heaven will still be questionable till you be more mortified to the world. What! do you believe in a mortified Christ? What similitude is there between you and him? a christian, and yet worldly! a christian, and yet sensual! a christian, and yet proud! It is as great a contradiction as to say, a believer, and yet an infidel. You that are given to pleasures, do you believe in Christ, a man of sorrows? You that are carried after the pomps and

vanities of the world, do you believe in Christ, whose kingdom is not of this world? You that are proud and lofty, do you believe in him who said, ‘Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly?’

So your love to God is questionable. What! love an invisible God, and yet dote so inordinately on visible things! A mind that is enchanted with the delusions of the flesh, can it be lifted up to God who dwelleth in another world? Can you love God, and do so little for him? Love him, and the world hath so much of your time, and strength, and care, and delight, and God so little? They are a very corrupt sort of men who are described to ‘be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God,’ 2 Tim. iii. 4. So far as we set our hearts upon these things, so far are they deadened and estranged from God. Can you love God when his favour, if not parted with or quite lost, is put to hazard for the world’s sake?

Your hope of heaven is questionable. What are you? whither are you a-going? Are you passing to heaven, and are so greedy of this world? Do you look and long for a better estate, that are so satisfied with your portion here, that seek so earnestly after present things, and so slightly and coldly after those blessed things which are to come? Who is the carnal fool but he that heapeth up treasure to himself, and is not rich towards God? Luke xii. 21. Doth he long for heaven that is so loath to depart, and maketh so little preparation for it, or giveth so little diligence to clear up his title or interest in it? To profess the hope of another life, and yet to be digging like a mole in the earth, is incongruous.

SERMON XIV.

Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.—PHIL. iii. 19.

HERE is a further description of evil-workers, to show why they should have no fellowship in their sin, either by giving them countenance or following their example, that they might not be involved in their ruin and destruction, ‘Whose end is destruction,’ &c.

In these words three things are observable—(1.) Their sin; (2.) The aggravations of their sin; (3.) The punishment.

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1. Their sin is ‘Minding earthly things.’

2. The aggravations are two, further discovering the nature of it—(1.) ‘Whose god is their belly;’ (2.) ‘Whose glory is in their shame.’

3. The punishment, ‘Whose end is destruction.’

1. Their sin, ‘They mind earthly things,’ which must be interpreted of their doctrine and practice; for they are considered as a carnal sort of christians, and as seducers of others by their carnal opinions.

[1.] By their doctrine. They corrupted the gospel, and obstructed the progress and power of it, by suiting it to their carnal ends. Such false teachers are elsewhere described by their earthly mindedness, where we are bidden to try the spirits: 1 John iv. 5, ‘They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.’ Their doctrine is a doctrine of licentiousness, calculated for secular interest, or a worldly design, to save themselves from persecution; and worldly-minded men follow them.

[2.] As to their practice, they principally respected their profit and ease, and the commodities of the flesh; so that if their doctrine had been true, their hearts were naught; as if a man should intrude into the ministry, and preach truth, but for worldly ends, not to work in the Lord’s vineyard, but to feed on the portion of the Levites; or if they pretend to love God and souls, it is but a net to catch riches, honours, and pleasures.

2. The aggravations of their sin.

The first is, ‘Whose god is their belly.’ They did in effect set up another god, preferring the things which belong to the belly and bodily life before the honour of God. You have a like description elsewhere: Rom. xvi. 18, ‘They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly.’ Under the pretence of being servants of God and Christ, they opposed God and Christ. They pretend to serve Christ, and love Christ, but indeed were acted only by their own fleshly ap petite; temporal ease and pleasure was all they sought after, not the honour of God and salvation of souls, but the satisfying their own sinful inclination.

The second is, ‘Whose glory is in their shame;’ that is, that they can avoid trouble, and live a life of pomp and ease, when others are afflicted.

Here observe two things—

[1.] How much human nature is distorted and depraved. Man fallen is but the anagram of man in innocency. As in an anagram, the letters are the same, but the order is inverted, so we have the same affections that innocent Adam had, but they are misplaced; our hatred is where our love should be, and our love where our hatred should be; and (that I may not carry the observation too far) our glory is there where our shame should be, and our shame where our glory should be; we are bold in sinning, but ashamed of Christ and strictness. You shall have some men glory in their oaths, and a graceless grace of rash swearing. Some glory in their new-fangled apparel, which is but an ensign hung out to show the vanity of their minds. Some will glory in painting or spotting their faces, which really is their shame. Others will boast of their base and brutish lusts, which certainly are things they ought to be deeply ashamed of.

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[2.] Observe how worldliness showeth itself in all the properties of it. We read, 1 John ii. 16, 'For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.' By the lust of the flesh is meant sensual pleasures; by the lust of the eyes, inordinate desire of riches; by pride of life, ambition, or affectation of honour and glory. Again we read, James iii. 15, 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.' The wisdom which descendeth not from God is the wisdom of the flesh; that is, earthly, such as carrieth us to the profits of the world; sensual, to the delights of the flesh; devilish, aspiring after greatness and esteem in the world; for pride is 'the condemnation of the devil,' 1 Tim. iii. 6; that is, the sin for which the devil was condemned. So here is covetousness expressed by 'minding earthly things;' sensuality, 'their god is their belly;' pride, 'whose glory is in their shame.' The fruit whereby the devil tempted our first parents, Gen. iii. 6, was 'good for food;' by that he tempted the lusts of the flesh; 'pleasant to the eyes,' and so came in the lust of the eyes; and 'to be desired to make one wise,' and that was the pride of life, affecting a higher condition than that wherein God had placed them. And with these kind of weapons he sets upon the second Adam, our Lord Christ, in the wilderness, Mat. iv., tempting him to the lusts of the flesh, when he would have him 'turn stones into bread;' to the lusts of the eyes, when, he 'showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;' to pride of life, when he persuaded him 'to cast himself down,' out of vainglory, and tempting God, to show some extraordinary miracle in his preservation. Well, then, there are more sorts of earthly-mindedness than one. A man may love the world that is sensual, as well as a covetous muckworm, because the profits of this life are but one branch of the enticing world. Many a sense-pleaser will think that he despiseth wealth, because he lavisheth it out freely upon his lusts; yet he may be earthly-minded for all that. Voluptuous living breedeth a senselessness of heavenly things, and choketh the good seed, as well as the cares of this world: Luke viii. 14, 'They go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life.' Yea, a man may love the world though he should contemn both riches and pleasures, because there is a third evil as dangerous to the spiritual life, and that is pride of life, or glorying in the flesh, or affecting credit, esteem, and reputation with men: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' It is destructive to faith.

3. The last thing is their punishment, 'Whose end is destruction.' Sinners gain little by their sin at last. We swallow the bait, but do not mind the hook: 'Whose end is destruction.' This is the end, not intended by them, but appointed by God as the wages of the carnal life. *Finis operis*, the end of the work; though not *operantis*, of the doer. Their punishment is the reward of their sin. By 'destruction' he meaneth they shall be punished by God with eternal damnation, called elsewhere 'destruction and perdition;' 1 Tim. vi. 9, 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many hurtful and foolish lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.' So Gal. vi. 8, 'For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.' Corruption is there opposed to eternal life. Though the substance of body and soul is not annihilated, yet that glory, pleasure, and gain wherein they

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placed their happiness shall then be consumed; and when all their comforts are gone, they shall for ever remain under the wrath of a highly provoked and then irreconcilable God.

Doct. Earthly-mindedness is the temper and disposition of such men who are for the present in a state of damnation.

Christians, I am upon a profitable point, though it be a terrible one; we cannot be cautious enough of earthly-mindedness, whether we consider the heinousness of the sin or the greatness of the danger. For your help I shall—

1. Show you what is earthly-mindedness.

2. The aggravations of this sin as they lie in the text.

3. The sore punishment appointed to it.

I. What is earthly-mindedness? for this is the crime charged upon these evil-workers, that 'they mind earthly things.' Now it seemeth hard to say that we should not at all mind earthly things. These are necessary to sweeten our pilgrimage, and to support us during our service. We carry about earthly bodies, that need daily sustentation. We have 'an earthly house,' that must be maintained, 2 Cor. v. 1; and the people of God are subject to the common necessities of an earthly life. Therefore surely God, that doth give us these earthly bodies, doth allow us in some sort to mind earthly things, and seek earthly things in some proportion, and with a due subordination to religion and godliness. In our passage to heaven we may mind them, for every wise man must mind his business; but yet they must not be minded only or chiefly.

1. Not only. So some mind them, scarce have any tincture of religion, or regard to life everlasting, but are of the earth, and speak of the earth, and savour only earthly things; aim at nothing but the good things of this world, that they may live in honour, and credit, and pleasure, and estimation with men; savour and love nothing but this; care for and breathe after nothing but this: 'God is not in all their thoughts,' Ps. x. 4. He speaketh of the worldly atheist, or earthly minded, as the former verse showeth: 'The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth,' They regard not whether God be honoured or dishonoured, pleased or displeased. So heaven is not in all their thoughts: Rom. viii. 5, 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit;' τὰ ἐπῖγεια, 'earthly things,' and τὰ σαρκος, 'the things of the flesh,' are the same: Col. iii. 2, φρονεῖτε, 'Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.' In the margin it is 'mind.' So John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life.' These are propounded as incompatible; but their affections bend to the wrong side, and so the one thing necessary is neglected: Luke x. 42, 'One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.' Their life is in a perfect opposition to these counsels and directions; they

set their affections on things on earth, mind the things of the flesh, are cumbered about many things, neglect the one thing necessary, labour for the meat that perisheth, slight that which endureth for ever, are dead to God and alive to the world, heap up treasure to themselves, and are not rich toward God, Luke xii. 21. All is done to please the carnal mind, nothing done to please God.

2. They must not be chiefly minded. The gross worldling is discovered by the only minding, the secret worldling by the chiefly minding, earthly things; the gross worldling is a practical atheist, the secret worldling is a carnal hypocrite. The rule is, that spiritual and heavenly things must be sought in the first place: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;' and we must trust God for other things, in the way of honest and diligent endeavours in the calling wherein God hath placed us. Well, then, the minding of earthly things must be determined by this, when religion is subordinate to the world, and not the world to religion; when the lean kine devour the fat. And though there be some minding both of earth and heaven, yet earth is more minded than heaven; and the honours, and pleasures, and profits of the world, jostle out better things, and choke the good seed; that though we do not cast off the profession of religion, yet we feel little of the power of it. Religion is an underling, it is so obstructed that it cannot bring forth its fruit with any perfection: Luke viii. 14, 'They are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.' But because this is a secret evil, and men easily distinguish themselves out of their convictions, we must a little more closely pursue this discovery, that we may find what is the first or chief thing that we mind and regard. That will be known by these things—

[1.] What is your chief end and scope? The chief end and scope must be God and heaven: 2 Cor. iv. 18, σκοποῦντες, 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal;' and Phil. iii. 14, διώκω κατὰ σκοπὸν, 'I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' What is the design of your lives, the main bent and drift of your conversations? Is it to please God, and enjoy God, or to heap up riches to yourselves? If God and the life to come only come in by the by, and be not your designed fixed end, which puts life into your endeavours, you mind earthly things. The end is that which cuts out your work, which formeth your thoughts, chooseth your employments, and by which they are constantly directed and influenced. A present worldly passion may prevail on godly men, but the world is not their great design and interest.

[2.] What is your chief work and business? Next to our scope, our work is to be regarded; first what you aim at, next what you labour for. If the great business of your hearts, and the endeavours of your lives, be about earthly things, you are earthly-minded. Surely our great business is to obtain salvation by Christ: Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' It is a dangerous thing to miscarry in so weighty a work. All the solicitude and care that we can possibly use is little enough: Acts xxvi. 7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night,

hope to come.' This is the top care, to which all others give place. But now, if the world engross our time, and strength, and care, and thoughts, and divert us from that necessary diligence and heedfulness with which soul-affairs should be pursued and attended upon; this we talk of, this we think of, and pursue with all our might, and seek most after, this constantly sets us a-work; surely this is most regarded by you.

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[3.] What is the chief joy and trouble of your hearts? Is it to have and want the world? If to have it: Luke xii. 19, 'I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy rest, eat, drink, and be merry.' If the world can keep you quiet in the midst of all the dangers of your soul, and you forget eternity, and can live a quiet merry life apart from God, yea, in the neglect of him, so it may be well with you here, and the peace and pleasure you live upon is more fetched from the world than God and heaven, this is a sure and undeceiving note that you mind earthly things more than heavenly, and prefer the honours, pleasures, and profits of the world before God and your salvation, than which there cannot be a worse temper of heart. The saints fetch their joy and solace from spiritual things: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased;' and Ps. cxix. 14, 'I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.' We must often ask ourselves what is the bottom and bosom cause of our comfort, quietness, and peace? Is it because you are well provided for, and live at ease in the world? or because God is reconciled to you in Christ, and because you hope to live for ever with him in glory, and have good grounds for this hope and confidence? Then it is well. A christian may know what he most mindeth, and, which is all one, what he most esteemeth and prizeth, by the grounds and reasons of his joy and trouble: Ps. xciv. 19, 'Thy comforts delight my soul;' 'Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled,' Ps. xxx. 7. If disappointment in the world be the cause of our trouble, and happiness in the world feedeth our solace and joy, surely we mind these things most. But more of this anon.

Having considered earthly-mindedness singly, we must now consider it in act or habit.

In act. Alas! a child of God is too worldly; he may have too great an esteem of earthly things, but doth not ordinarily mind them before God. The habitual bent and inclination of his will is to God and heaven. In particular acts he may carry himself too much like an earthly-minded man, but his heart is not turned to another happiness, for that is contrary to a state of salvation. No prevalent covetousness or voluptuousness or ambition possesseth his heart instead of God. There is a remainder of worldliness in the godly, as well as other sins; he may too much use the world, for the pleasure of the flesh more than for the glory of God; but yet this is not the scope and tenor of his life. He may sometimes desire a greater measure of riches, or honour, or pleasure, than is agreeable with his spiritual happiness; his desires of earthly things may be too eager, his cares about them too solicitous, his trouble too grievous; but he is still growing out of these distempers, and settling his soul to his constant bent, work, and joy. It is not a frame of heart that he can rest in; it is his trouble, and in time he gets above the distemper.

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II. The aggravations of this sin; and—

1. The first is, 'Whose god is their belly.' Earthly-mindedness is a renouncing of the true God, and setting up of base idols in his stead.

Now—

[1.] Here mark what is prized by the earthly-minded, the belly. Provision for the flesh is the sum of worldly happiness. Men that have the world at will get no more by it than bodily food and bodily clothing, which the poorest may attain to without so much ado. It is no great happiness whether our dung or excrements be of a finer or coarser matter, whether we have fewer or more dishes to our table, nor what a gay show we make with our apparel. Some have troubled themselves and the world to make themselves great; and what a sorry happiness have they at last! Hab. i. 16, 'Their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous;' a little good cheer and a merry life. They that want it live as well as they, and have more contentment. Are they the nearer to true comfort, or the further from the grave? So Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men of the world, who have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hidden treasures; they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.' They have a belly well filled and a back well clothed, which is but a sorry addition to their happiness. They use it not well, dispense it not to the glory of God, and so have not the true use of riches.

Object. You will say, There are men of great estates who will not part with anything for the necessary uses of nature, who will not afford themselves conveniences, but fare hard, go meanly, and are in debt to back and belly.

Ans. (1.) Covetousness is usually the purveyor for the flesh, and those that mind earthly things, their god is their belly: Rom. viii. 5, 'They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;' those that seem to deal hardly with the flesh, yet please it in the hoarding of wealth, though not in the spending of it.

(2.) If they fail in giving nature its due, yet they much more fail in giving grace its due; and so are twice fools, while they transgress both the laws of nature and of grace. They transgress the laws of grace while they do not lay up treasure in heaven, but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; and they transgress the laws of nature while they bereave their souls of good, and do not rejoice in their labour, and that portion of earthly things which God hath given them: Eccles. v. 18, 19, 'Behold that which I have seen; it is good and comely for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun, all the days of his life, which God giveth him; for it is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.' These deny that real benefit which is in a worldly portion, which is the supply of the bodily life, or a free and

comfortable use of the creature, denying the lawful use of those comforts to himself which God hath given him.

(3.) They lay it up for them that spend it on the belly; for usually God sendeth an heir that wasteth an estate profusely that was greedily and sparingly gotten; and as one goeth to hell in getting, so doth the other in spending it, till all this wealth revolve into other hands that will use it better: Eccles. ii. 26, 'To the sinner he giveth travail to gather and to heap up, that he may give it to him that is good before God.' God by his overruling providence disposeth it besides and against the purpose of the gatherer, even to those that fear him, making wicked men but drudges and purveyors for others. Wicked men built the ark, but Noah made use of it. One maketh a garment, and another weareth it: Prov. xiii. 22, 'The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just;' Job xxvii. 17, 'He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver;' Prov. xxviii. 8, 'He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.' The world will not believe it, but it is a certain truth that estates are ruined by sins of omission as well as commission; though they are not unjustly gotten, yet if they are not well improved for the glory of God and the good of others. Strange are the providential dispensations of God in disposing money, lands, and heritages, till they come into clean and bountiful hands. They are tenacious, sparing to make use of it; but God will put it into their hands who will divide and distribute for his glory.

[2.] This belly is made a god; that is, interpretatively, a man's god, which is his chief good and the last end of all his actions, and upon which all his care, thoughts, and endeavours run most. Thus do the earthly-minded upon the world and the belly, therefore here it is said, 'Their belly is their god;' and elsewhere that 'covetousness is idolatry,' Col. iii. 5, and the 'covetous man is an idolater,' Eph. v. 5. That is our god which is most valued by us, and for whose sake we do all things. Now, if we will do more for the world than for God, and more for the belly than for God, and can dispense with God's honour and glory for an easy and delicate life, and day after day, from morning to evening, do only take care for the flesh, and give earthly things those affections which are only due and proper to God, we make mammon our god, and the belly our god; here is our scope, work, and delight.

[3] How justly those are deprived of eternal salvation who do thus.

(1.) Partly as they put a vile scorn on God and Christ, who prefer the belly and bodily interest before him. These prefer the body before the soul, which yet is the immortal substance, and will survive the body, and may be rent from it sooner than they imagine: Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee;' or rent from the embraces of the unwilling body. They prefer time before eternity, since they make it their great business to have their will and pleasure for a while. If you will have your own will now, you shall not have it long: 1 John ii. 17, 'The world passeth away and the lusts thereof.' You love to please your appetite in meats and drinks, to spend your time in vain sports and pleasures, to be honoured and humoured now, to flow in wealth and

live in pomp, and would want nothing for the contentment of the flesh. But how long shall you have your will in these things? When death comes, will you Lave it then? When you lie in pain on your death-beds, expecting every hour to appear in another world, will you have it then? They prefer earth before heaven. They only mind the way, but never think of home. They are not strangers and pilgrims in the world, but inhabitants, and say, as Peter on the mount, Mat. xvii. 4, 'It is good to be here;' 2 Tim. iv. 10. 'Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world.' And should God save them against their wills, and bring them to a place they desire not? They prefer the world before Christ, and should they have benefit by him who do so lightly esteem the rock of their salvation? His servants prize him: Phil. iii. S, 'Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;' Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' His enemies despise him; to them he is 'a stone of stumbling,' 1 Peter ii. 8. Lastly, they prefer the belly before God, a little temporal interest before his favour, love pleasures more than God: 2 Tim. iii. 4, 'Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.' Honours more than God: John xii. 42, 43, 'Among the chief rulers many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' Profits more than God: 1 John ii. 15, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Surely then there is a just cause of men's damnation when they love the world more than God, Christ, and heaven.

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(2.) They that serve a base god cannot but be of a base spirit, and so can do nothing worthily and generously. Every man's temper is as his god is: Ps. cxv. 8, 'They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.' They have a dead heart, estranged from the life of God. The carnal life is a spiritual death: 1 Tim. v. 6, 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' Therefore God punisheth them with eternal death.

(3.) They are not only unfit for God, but opposite to him: Rom. viii. 7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' and James iv. 4, 'Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.'

2. The second aggravation, 'They glory in their shame,' that is, in their riches and worldly conveniences.

[1.] That which a man prizeth most he will glory in. Now for christians to glory in a life of pomp and ease is to glory in their shame. What a man prizeth most, he will glory in it, boast of it, be it wealth or honour, or wit and parts, or else the Lord: Jer. ix. 23, 24, 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord.' Man will be glorying in something or another, in that which he esteemeth his excellency. Glorying

signifieth the apprehension of the good of the thing we glory in, and our benefit by it; it is the content and joy which we take in any benefit, expressed to others, for the glory of God and their good. So Gal. vi. 14, ‘But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.’ True christians will renounce all carnal glorying; if they glory in anything, it will be in God and Christ. It is lawful, if it be a true excellency, to glory in the good things of God bestowed on them, as evidences of his love and approbation of them: 2 Cor. i. 12, ‘For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in this world, and more abundantly to you-wards.’ If it be for the glory of God and good of others; for it is the design of the carnal world to vilify the works of grace in the hearts of the sanctified. If it be for the glory of God: 1 Cor. xv. 10, ‘But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; for I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with. me.’ Or if it be for the good of others, to incite them to like experiences: Ps. xxxiv. 8, ‘Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.’

[2.] The true object of glorying is God and Christ: Jer. ix. 23, 24, ‘Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord;’ Jer. iv. 2, ‘Thou shalt swear, the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory;’ 1 Cor. i. 30, 31, ‘But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.’ To have all this in Christ is matter of glory.

[3.] Not only benefits, but disgraceful sufferings for Christ should be more to us than all the world: Heb. xi. 26, ‘Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt;’ Acts v. 41, ‘And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name;’ 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10, ‘Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.’

[4.] A mortified estate is a greater cause of glory than an exalted, because it is a far greater mercy: Gal. vi. 14, ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.’ Paul, if he were lord of all the wealth and honours in the world, he would not glory in them; if he had all the pleasures which the flesh can desire, he would not glory in them; if he had all the applause man can give him, he would not glory in that; but he would glory in the cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified to him, and

he unto the world. And James i. 9, 10, ‘Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low.’ The word is καυχάσθω, glory, that is, let him express his satisfaction and contentment that he is preferred by grace or humbled by grace. To have a weaned heart, whether our condition be high or low, is a greater mercy than we have in all the world, because of its tendency to everlasting happiness.

[5.] The carnal and unsanctified rejoice in earthly things, as pleasing their flesh; and so do the godly also, as far as flesh remaineth in them. But this is our weakness, and so really our disgrace. High thoughts of worldly pomp and greatness show how little we have of a christian spirit. A christian should affect a mortified heavenly life, and value himself and others by better enjoyments. A minister, if he glory in his greatness and honour, is not a preacher of the cross, but an enemy to it. It is a greater glory to him to be much in the spirit, much in labours, much in afflictions, than to live in pomp, and flow in ease and wealth, and enjoy great revenues. *In hoc successisti non Petro, sed Constantino,* saith Bernard to Eugenius—In this you succeed not Peter, but Constantine. Christ had not where to lay his head; his witnesses prophesied in sackcloth. Their true glory is to be mortified, holy, heavenly; not to affect grandeur and precedency; that is a disgrace to the preachers of the cross. So for private christians; they should value themselves and others by their grace rather than pomp.

(1.) Themselves. A christian should not glory in this, that he is wealthy, that he thriveth when others are in misery, and so God loveth him better than others. If a stalled ox had reason, would he be so senseless to think his master loveth him better than his fellows because his food is more liberally provided for him, when he is but fatted for the slaughter? As Haman was deceived in misconstruing the queen’s invitation of him to a banquet, as a matter of special grace to him, when she did it to have better opportunity to accuse him; so are these deceived in judging God’s intention, or the happiness of their condition. Have you dignities, honours, and high places in the world? Do you flow in wealth? Glory not in this as any part of your felicity; all may be blasted in an instant; it may be given you for a snare. Christ gave his Spirit to the rest of the disciples, but the purse to Judas, who was a robber and a thief. Miserable wretches, that shall perish to all eternity, may have more than you have. Are you applauded by men? Will this endear you to God, or abate the least part of your pain in hell? The greatest cause of rejoicing is that you have enough, without all this, in God. If you are advanced on the pinnacle, they that are below are on the safer ground; your wealth will not take away your guilt nor open heaven’s gates to you. Are you clothed with gorgeous attire? Glory not in this; the true ornament is grace: 1 Peter iii. 3, 4, ‘Whose adorning, let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great value.’ Pride is a greater shame than poverty. The emptiest person may have the best attire. It is not jour outside showeth your worth, no more

than a rich saddle and trappings show a good horse. All this is not matter of glorying or blessing yourselves.

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(2.) Nor value others. Those that have high thoughts of worldly pomp and wealth do not only bless themselves, but admire others for these things: Ps. x. 3, 'The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.' They slight the true christian, and have respect to him that weareth the gold ring and gay clothing: James ii. 1-3, 'My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.' They think it a fine thing to be high. And on the contrary, grace teacheth us to value the godly poor: Ps. xvi. 3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight;' Ps. xv. 4, 'In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.' They value a poor man that is godly above a rich man that is wicked, and have a hearty honour and respect for them above the greatest men in the world. When you think too meanly of the estate of poor believers, and admire the rich, you glory in that which should be no glory to a christian.

[6.] This is to bid defiance to your religion which you profess, and to glory in your shame, when you bless yourselves more for having an estate in this world than an interest in the promises. This is as if one that would be accounted a prudent grave man should glory that he hath found a pin. Alas! the world is too low to be a believer's glory; his higher hopes do cloud and disgrace all these things. Who is your Saviour? A crucified Christ. What is the glory of your religion, but mortification, as the blessed effect of his cross? To glory in any creature, as opposite to Christ and divided from Christ, is to glory in your shame. Carnal glory will shortly make those ashamed that use it. So also when you account a sinful retreat or escape from the cross to be better than disgraceful suffering, this is contrary to the temper of true christians. See Heb. xi. 26, Acts v. 41. Let others be ashamed of their master, their religion, their God, yet be not you.

III. The punishment. The carnal life endeth in everlasting destruction: 'Their end is destruction.'

1. It is good to look to the end of things. It maketh one wise: Deut. xxxii. 29, 'Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!' Lam. i. 9, 'She remembereth not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully;' Jer. xvii. 11, 'As a partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.' On the other side, Heb. xiii. 7, 'Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversations.' Oh, that we had the same thoughts now which we shall have when the end is come, when the mask is taken off, and all shows and fallacies cease, and things appear in their own colours.

2. Worldly pleasures will end in everlasting destruction: 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, ‘They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows;’ Rom. vi. 21, ‘What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of these things is death;’ ver. 23, ‘For the wages of sin is death;’ Gal. vi. 8, ‘He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;’ Rom. viii. 13, ‘If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.’ Therefore do not look what the carnal earthly life is now, but what it will be hereafter: 2 Cor. xi. 15, ‘Whose end shall be according to their works.’ We little think there is so much hurt, but, Rom. viii. 6, ‘To be carnally-minded is death.’ Now as you would avoid everlasting destruction, cherish these things.

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3. The punishment is the more dreadful, to give us the more help, and the more powerful argument against these pleasing lusts. It is sweet to please the flesh, but it will cost dear. We may counterbalance momentary pleasures with eternal pains; the pleasures are but for a season, but the pain is evermore. If the fearful end of this worldly course were more soundly believed or seriously considered, men would not so eagerly pursue present things. God would order it so that the joy and pain of the other world, which is matter of faith, should be greater than the comfort and pain of this world, which is matter of sense; for things at hand would prevail with us, if things to come were not considerably greater.

Use 1. Do we mind earthly things or heavenly? A man may speak slightly of earthly things, yet these possess our hearts and govern all our choices; for we speak from our convictions, but live by our inclinations; and it is more easy to tip our tongues than change our hearts. A man may be earthly-minded yet profess the belief, hope, and desire of another world; as the Israelites gladly would have Canaan, yet were loath to part with the garlic and onions of Egypt, or run the hazard of the wilderness. A man may be earthly-minded though he have some good affections to religion, but he hath greater and stronger to other things. The business is, which hath the mastery, and can check and control the other? A man may love the world who doth not use ill means to get it; but if his heart be set upon it as his portion, he is earthly-minded. You do not use unlawful means to be rich; but are you not discontented because riches flow not in upon you? You covet not what is unjust, but do, not you crave what is superfluous? You do not snatch at what is another’s, but do you well improve your own? Men sin in not giving what they should, as well as in getting what they should not. You are not ravenous, yet is not the gain of wealth more sweet to you than that of grace, and your desires after earthly things far greater than after God, Christ, and heaven? You say you are only good husbands; but while you are good husbands, are you not bad christians, neglecting religion to follow the world, scraping all you can, but doing little or nothing for God? In short, if you would not mind earthly things—

1. Do not fix them as your scope: 1 Tim. vi. 9, ‘They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare,’ so as to be wholly intent upon get ting wealth. Not he that is, but he that ‘will be rich.’

The devil hath you upon the hip when you resolve to make that your scope, care, and work. Be sure the world be not your scope, but the pleasing, and glorifying, and enjoying of God: Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple;' Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.'

2. Let not this be your great work and business: Mat. vi. 24, 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon;' Prov. xxiii. 4, 'Labour not to be rich;' that is, so as to jostle out other business which is more necessary. It is worldly things that thrust out heavenly meditations, and worldly business that straitens God's interest in your hearts and families, in praying and instructing your families, so that family prayers are none or cursorily slubbered over, they having other things to mind. The business of the world is not your principal business; it may take up more time, but should not take up more of your hearts. They must have the world, come what will come of their immortal souls. Think often of your great necessities, to get a sinful condemned soul acquitted, a guilty conscience eased, a naughty heart changed, a disordered life reformed, a title to heaven assured: 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.'

3. Let not earthly things be your great delight; that in the want of them you be not overtroubled, or in the enjoyment of them overpleased: 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 'But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; 1 Phil. iv. 12, 'I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need;' Ps. lxii. 10, 'Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.'

4. When your estate is yet to be made or gotten, let your desires be modest. When men have enough already, they would have more. As a river, the greater it groweth by receiving in little brooks, the wider and deeper it weareth the channel; so outward things, the more they are increased, the more men enlarge their desires; they would be a little higher in the world, a little better accommodated; and when they have that, then they must have a little more, and so seize upon all things within their grasp: Isa. v. 8, 'Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth;' and so the lust groweth with the possession. Earthly-mindedness is a fire that increaseth, the more wood you put thereon: Eccles. v. 10, 'He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase.' Therefore we must be content with such things as we have: Heb. xiii. 5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have.' We must bring

our minds to our estate, rather than our estate to our minds, or else we shall never be content hereafter. Estate will not do it, if grace do not do it. The way is not to increase our substance, but moderate our desires.

5. Moderate your cares about these things: Mat. vi. 25, ‘Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your bodies, what ye shall put on.’ Trust yourselves with God; consider his general providence to all creatures: ver. 26, ‘Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.’ And consider his particular providence as a father: ver. 32, ‘Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.’ So Phil. iv. 5, 6, ‘Let your moderation be known unto all men: the Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God;’ 1 Peter v. 7, ‘Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.’ Be careful of your duty, how to manage your affairs most innocently, both in your general and particular calling; but be not careful about events, be not anxious about the issue, which is God’s part to determine. When you have done your duty, you should not be further careful about it. God knoweth what is best for you, and how much of worldly prosperity you are fit to enjoy, and to Lim must the whole business be committed.

6. Look to yourselves. In using an estate we bewray our earthly mindedness when the world is used more for the service and pleasure of the flesh than the honour of God. It is used for the service of the flesh when all our end is to live in pomp and pleasure, or that we and ours may be great in the world. It is used for God when they are instruments of piety and charity, to serve the Lord, and benefit others, and to do good, and further our own salvation. The scripture speaketh much of the use: Luke xii. 21, ‘So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God;’ Luke xvi. 9, ‘Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations;’ Eph. iv. 28, ‘Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.’

7. Be willing to resign them up to Christ, when the enjoyment of them is inconsistent with your fidelity to him. Be not unwilling to let go all your earthly conveniences, at least to hazard them for Christ: Luke xiv. 33, ‘Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.’ We esteem them too much when we prefer them before Christ and our salvation, or strain conscience for the world’s sake, or betray our peace, or wound our souls, rather than endure anything when God calleth us thereunto. If we will lose nothing for Christ, and upon the hopes of the other world, we can expect nothing from him.

Use 2. To dissuade us from earthly-mindedness.

To this end consider—

1. You must shortly die and come to your account, and according to the account you give, and the preparation you have made, you must live in endless joy or misery. When we come to die, it is not the possession, but the use, will comfort us. We can carry nothing with us into the other world but the comfort of a good conscience: Eccles. v. 15, ‘As he came forth of his mother’s womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.’ A worldly, wealthy man, when he has made his will, and left all his estate, to such a son such an inheritance, to such a daughter such a portion, to such a friend such a legacy, what hath the poor man left for himself? If he hath not grace, what hath he left to carry with him but the anguish and misery of a guilty conscience, and the expectation of worse to come? Oh, poor miserable creature! when he must bid good-night to all the world, and all things take their leave of him, what a sorry comfort will that be that he hath, once gotten great things, and possessed great things here in the world! But if he hath used it well, his works follow him.

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2. Consider the danger of abundance. An estate may be too great for us to manage, as Saul’s armour for David, 1 Sam. xvii. 39. It is harder to go to heaven: Mat. xix. 24, ‘It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.’ A moderate condition of life is freest from ensnaring temptations. Abundance of all things without any want disposeth to a forgetfulness of God. Greater estates expose men to greater troubles and cares: Eccles. v. 11, 12, ‘When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes? The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.’ But chiefly our account is greater: Luke xvi. 2, ‘Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.’ Compared with Luke xii. 48, ‘Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.’ They must give an account for more opportunities of doing good; they have a greater reckoning to make.

3. See by faith those sure, great, and glorious things which are infinitely more worthy your love and labour. The soul is never cured but by diversion. Nothing doth so powerfully quench our carnal pleasures, or inclination to earthly things, as a desire of, or a delight in, higher and better things: Col. iii. 2, ‘Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.’ These things are in two contrary balances; the mote the heart is given to the one, the other gets the less. Moses, Heb. xi. 25, ‘chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.’

4. Think often of your great necessities: Luke x. 42, ‘One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.’

5. Keep a daily jealousy of yourselves. It is a great part of your religion to be ‘unspotted from the world,’ James i. 27. This will never be without watchfulness, these things do so soon taint us; therefore see how you improve all for God and to eternal ends. Take account often whither the course of your life tendeth, whether to the world or to God and heaven. Because we are not watchful

over ourselves, the holy and jealous God watcheth over us, and preventeth our doting on the world by sharp afflictions.

6. Pray often that God would sanctify the labours of your calling, and the enjoyments of the world: 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5, ‘Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanks giving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.’ Prayer blesseth all our enjoyments to us.

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SERMON XV.

For our conversation is in heaven.—PHIL. iii. 20.

HERE is the opposite carriage of sound believers, and the reason of it. The false christians minded earthly things, and the true christians had their conversation in heaven. The people of God and the people of the world are of divers, dispositions; the one are under the power and influence of the wisdom of the flesh, and the other are under the government of a heavenly mind. The natural life in them is overruled by grace. Now our way should be with the wise above; not with the worldly wise who mind earthly things, but with the godly wise whose conversation is in heaven.

The word πολίτευμα, which we translate ‘conversation,’ noteth our manner of living as burghers and citizens, not of earth, but of heaven; that is the city where we are free, and have the right of citizens, though we dwell on earth. Many that dwelt out of the city of Rome had the *jus civitatis Romanae*, the privileges of the city of Borne belonging to them; as the privilege of being a free man of Rome belonged to one that lived in Judea: Acts xxii. 28, ‘And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, I was free born.’ So we, though we are not in heaven, yet carry ourselves as belonging to heaven.

Doct. That a good christian should behave himself as a denizen of the heavenly city. I shall show you—(1.) What it is; (2.) Why.

I. What. I will open that in these considerations—

1. That heaven is a city. A city is taken for three things—

[1.] A place fit for a comfortable and safe habitation.

[2.] For a political society and community living in that place, or at least belonging to it.

[3.] For the condition and estate belonging to that place and community. All these respects are proper here.

[1.] A city is put for a place or habitation, consisting of many houses; for multitudes and vicinity of buildings make a city in this sense. So is heaven a city, a place fitted and furnished from the creation of the world to be the habitation of the blessed; and so it is called ‘a city which hath foundations,’ Heb. xii. 10, because it standeth on the eternal love of God, Mat. xxv. 34, the everlasting merit of Christ, Heb. ix. 12, and his unchangeable covenant: 1 Peter i. 15, ‘The word of God endureth for ever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.’ The best things in the world stand upon an earthly foundation, which soon mouldereth away and faileth. We and all things about us are subject to great uncertainties. If a man be but two or three years absent from an earthly city, he will see a new face of things when he cometh again, all things are altered and changed from what he left them; but in heaven there is the same face of things to all eternity. Here we have no μένουσαν πόλιν, ‘no abiding city,’ Heb. xii. 14. Again, this city is said to be ‘prepared for us,’ Heb. xi. 16. It is fitted by the goodness and love of God. He had not done enough to answer his love in the covenant if he had not prepared a better place than the world to be the mansion and residence of his people. To be a God to any is to be an infinite and eternal benefactor. Our Saviour proveth the resurrection from these words, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,’ Mat. xxii. 32.

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[2.] Sometimes it is taken for a political society and community, or a corporation under one magistracy or governing power, and ruled by the same laws, and enjoying the same common privileges and immunities. So it is said, Eph. ii. 19, ‘Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;’ Heb. xii. 22, 23, ‘Ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.’ This is a part of our happiness, that we and the holy angels and blessed saints make up but one community that shall for ever serve and praise the Lord.

[3.] It is taken for the condition and estate of those societies which all the members enjoy there, and the same common privileges; the estate is glorious and everlasting. In the city of God there are eternal honours, riches, and pleasures, peace, safety, full and enduring joy; nothing is wanting which the heart of man can desire; the estate is answerable to the place and company, full and perfect happiness. Well, then, here are all things which may be comprised in the name of a city; here is habitation, society, and estate. The habitation is heaven; the society, saints and angels; the estate, perfect peace and eternal happiness, none of which can be found in the world. It is true they that are in their pilgrimage are not admitted to the full of these privileges till they come home to their own city and country. We are not yet capable of reigning with God, and being admitted into his immediate presence. But though the possession of our full privileges be deferred, with patience we must wait for it; partly because we have a title by God’s grant; the new covenant is the charter of this corporation, and it will in time bring us to heaven, as it hath done others before us; partly because if the time of our pilgrimage seem long and tedious, it will shortly expire, and then beginneth

our everlasting rest; partly because, besides actual right to eternal life, we have here some first fruits of this blessed estate. That part above have the full possession of it, but we have the first-fruits; we have justification, and immunity from God's wrath and curse: Rom. viii. 33, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.' We have adoption: Eph. i. 5, 'Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.' Sanctification: Eph. v. 25, 26, 'Christ hath loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it.' Peace of conscience: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' The use of ordinances, which may put us in mind, and quicken us to seek after the country to which we do belong. So that this is the city of God.

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2. That believers have a right to the heavenly city. By nature we are of another corporation, of the earthly society, not belonging to the holy city of God, but to the kingdom of Satan, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel and the city of God: Col. i. 12, 13, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.' It was the mercy of God to translate us into another state and society of men. He found us unmeet, as being under the curse and power of Satan, dead in trespasses and sins; hut he drew us out of this corrupt estate, changing our hearts, and pardoning our sins, and by a strong hand rescuing us from the power of the devil, that he might put us under the blessed government of Christ; and then 'we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,' Eph. ii. 19; and Heb. xii. 22, 'We are now come to the city of the living God.' While we are in the way, as soon as converted, upon our sincere faith in Christ we are admitted and incorporated into this blessed city. Not only at last in the close of our days, but now when our hearts are turned to the Lord: Eph. ii. 6, 'He hath made us sit together with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' We have a right, though not full possession. Christ is entered, and sat down as head of all the faithful.

3. Being made burgesses of heaven, our manner of living must be suitable; partly because it is the wisdom of God to place all things in their proper places. As in nature, so in a way of grace; light bodies are uppermost and heavy bodies below; so also in a way of grace. Sometimes we read that heaven and glory is prepared for us, Mat. xxv. 34; and sometimes that we are prepared for heaven and glory; Rom. ix. 23, 'Vessels of mercy which he hath afore prepared unto glory.' There must be a suitableness between the receiver and the thing received, and therefore we must be made meet for this blessed estate. From heaven we received our first spiritual being, and there is the final consummation of it, and there we must converse, and thither we must tend. And partly out of gratitude on our part. Our lives must suit and agree with our heavenly calling: 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'Walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.' We must live as those that have a present right, and one day shall have full possession. Shall God advance us to such an estate, and shall we lie grovelling in the dirt, as if we had not such high and blessed hopes, and slight all this mercy and goodness?

4. This suitable manner of living consists partly—(1.) In the exercise of those graces which belong to this blessed estate; (2.) In the constant use of the means, whereby we may attain it; (3.) In such a course of living as suiteth with the properties of it.

[1.] There are certain graces which belong to it, which are given to us for that end and purpose. It is an unseen felicity, and therefore requireth faith to believe it. It is a future felicity, and therefore requires hope to expect it. It is our chief felicity, and therefore requires love to desire it.

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(1.) We must certainly believe this blessed estate in the world to come. Faith is at the bottom of all, and therefore deal seriously with your hearts: John xi. 26, 'Believest thou this?' Most men here talk of it; take it up from the common report by a human credulity, but are not settled in the firm belief of it by the illumination of the Holy Spirit: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' This faith goeth before affection, and affection to heavenly things before mortification to earthly things: Heb. xi. 13, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' Are you verily persuaded that there is eternity at the back of time? that God intends such great things for penitent believers? Surely men's boldness in sinning and coldness in. holy duties showeth their faith is not firm and sound. Sense telleth you that here is no abiding city, for we have seen the ruin of so many castles, palaces, cities, states, and kingdoms, which formerly flourished in great splendour, power, and strength, that now lie in the dust and do not appear. We need not tell you, you must die; graves and skulls show you that; but faith only can tell us there is an abiding city to come, and we must believe it before we can seek after it. Therefore can you depend upon Christ's fidelity and the truth of his promises for the happiness of the world to come? Why, then, if you believe as christians, do not live as infidels. If heaven be not a dream, let not your godliness be but a vain show. We have Christ's word for the reality of it; and for his fidelity, we may be assured that he would not delude us with vain hopes: John xiv. 2, 'In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you.' Wherefore should God flatter a worm, or what need he to court creatures into an imaginary happiness? Surely there is a quiet resting-place prepared for saints in the heavens. God never told us of anything but it came to pass. He told the old world of a flood which should drown the ungodly, and that was a thing as much unseen as heaven and hell is by us: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.' Those that accepted his warning fared well, and others were drowned in the flood. He told the old patriarchs of Christ's coming in the flesh; and rather than go back from his word, the Son of God must come and die. God, that hath kept touch with the world hitherto, will not fail at last. Thus should you rouse up a languid and drowsy faith.

(2.) We must look for this blessed estate by hope, which is acted by serious and heart-warming thoughts. A believer is not already in heaven, but his better part is there; his heart and mind are there, and he expects one day to be there glorified: Titus ii. 13, ‘Looking for the blessed hope;’ Jude 21, ‘Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life;’ and here in the text, ‘From whence we look for a saviour.’ Surely they whose minds and thoughts are strangers to heaven do not live in the world as if they were in heaven. Can a man look for any great benefit, and not think of it? It is against the common experience of mankind. If you were adopted to a rich inheritance, would you not think of it? And do they expect such a glorious estate that never look up all the week long, or have such slight thoughts as rather damp and put out this holy fire than kindle it and keep it alive in you; rather shun all sober and lively thoughts of the life to come, lest they should awaken them out of their security, and that dull form of religiousness wherein they please themselves? Oh, therefore think often and much of that glorious estate, when you shall enjoy the endless sight and love of God, and live with all his blessed ones, and praise and serve him to all eternity. Can you travel one whole day toward such a city, and never think of the place you are going to? Is it your drift to get home, and shall home be never seriously thought of? Have we thoughts enough and to spare for other things, and none for Christ and heaven? If the carnal are delighted in minding earthly things, the souls of the godly should much more be heavenly. Surely if your conversations be in heaven, you would oftener think of it. The great instrument of the soul, next to sound belief, is serious consideration, not cursory and heartless thoughts, but such as are pressing, deep, and ponderous.

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(3.) Love bends our desires that way, as well as hope sendeth our thoughts thither. And besides looking, there must be longing; and where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. If you have laid up treasure in heaven, you will be there in heart and mind, in affection and thoughts: Col. iii. 2, ‘Set your affections on things above, and not on things that are on earth.’ That place is your home where you desire to be. If heaven be your home, you still groan and long to be there. But it is the world that is your home, and heaven a strange place, when you are loath to go out of the one, or get into the other. Yea, believers, such as love the world, they do not prize it, they do not love it; but they that believe it long after the enjoyment of this city move than for anything in the world. Have you the heart of christians, and love the world more than heaven? Is any happiness like the enjoyment of God? or do you meet with any such company upon earth as you shall have in heaven? Here we live mixed with hypocrites and unbelievers, as the wheat with the chaff, obnoxious to the calamities of the earthly life; and shall not all this wean us from a vain and vexatious world, that we may long to be at home? What is it tempts you, maketh your desires so cold? Is it the enjoyment of a plentiful portion in the world? It is a curse to be ‘written in the earth,’ Jer. xvii. 13, as it is our felicity and joy to have our ‘names written in heaven,’ Luke x. 20. Which city is best in your account, and where lieth your portion, in the fruition of the world or the vision of God? Ps. xvii. 14, 15, ‘From men which are thy hand, O Lord; from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose bellies thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave

the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' Surely it is not the partial fruition of God maketh you so loath to depart, for those kind of enjoyments do not divert you from God, but draw you to him; having a taste, you will long for more. Earth is not heaven when it is at best, nor can you find Mount Sion or the city of the living God in the wilderness. Oh, therefore, if you have any love to God, long for heaven, where you have most of God. Here you have his presence with you, but you are absent from him: 2 Cor. v. 8, 'We are willing rather to be absent from the body, that we may be present with the Lord.'

[2.] In the constant use of the means whereby we may attain it. There is no coming to the end of the journey but by the way, nor obtaining the happiness but by the means. The great difficulty of a christian lieth not so much in a respect to the end as to the means. There is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity, that they may believe it and accept it as their happiness, look and long for it as such a happiness doth require. But we have a quick ear for offers of happiness, whilst usually we snuff at the conditions of duty and obedience as troublesome. Paul had a great desire of the happiness, yet he doth not stick at the means: 'If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead,' Phil. iii. 11. All would be blessed, but they do not come to this resolution, 'If by any means.' Balaam could say, Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his;' but he loved the wages of unrighteousness. If wicked men are said to despise eternal happiness, it is not as happiness, nor eternal; they like happiness well enough, for all that love themselves would be happy; nor as eternal, for man, that hath lost the right object of his desires, hath not lost the vastness of them; he would be happy for ever; but it is in conjunction with the means that they dislike it. Thus the 'Israelites despised the pleasant land, and murmured in their tents,' Ps. cvi. 24, 25. What ailed them? The land was a good land, flowing with milk and honey. Ay! but the spies had told them of the giantly strength and stature of the men. Heaven is a good place, but the strictness of holy walking is disliked. We must submit to use all holy means to obtain it. What are they? We do not now speak of the title, but the conversation: Rom. ii. 7, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.' When we walk in God's way, when our actions plainly tend to heaven. The believers of the old testament 'declared plainly that they sought a country,' Heb. xi. 14. How? By resolving to seek till they find; by being content to be pilgrims in the world, and not giving over till they saw some place of eternal rest. This is the fault of most christians, their actions do not declare plainly that they are for God and heaven, nor doth the course of their lives show it. If they are tending thither, then two things will show it—continuance, and patient continuance, in well doing.

(1.) Continuance. When we walk in all holy conversation and godliness. Men's end is seen in their constant course, when in all their actions they study to please God. They believe there is such an estate, and they know the excellency and glory thereof, and therefore would not for all the world weaken their hopes, or darken and cloud their interest, nor offend that God from whom they expect

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it: 1 Cor. xv. 58, ‘Always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.’ A christian aimeth at heaven in all his business, civil and sacred: Acts xxiv. 15, 16, ‘And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.’ He goeth about his earthly business with a heavenly mind; in his attendance upon God in the ordinances: Acts xxvi. 6, 7, ‘And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.’ It is to get more of God and heaven into his heart; more of the first fruits, more of his title and interest, more preparation of heart, new excitement of affections to God and heaven. He heareth that his soul may live; he prayeth that he may live; receiveth that he may take these pledges of heaven out of God’s hand. He heareth the word, be cause there are the promises of eternal life, or directions in the way that leadeth thither. He prayeth, that he may come as near as he can to his Father, and have as much familiarity with him as a soul dwelling in flesh possibly can have. He cometh into the assemblies of God’s people, because they are the favourites of heaven.

(2.) Patient continuance, whatever temptations he meeteth with to the contrary: Rom. viii. 18, ‘But I reckon that the sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us;’ 2 Cor. iv. 17, ‘For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’ These things do not greatly move him. It is for heaven, so that a christian is still travelling to God, improving all business and all conditions to this end, comforting himself with these hopes; so that he is either living for heaven in seeking it, or upon heaven by the joy and hope he deriveth from thence; he is still acting for this blessedness, or encouraging himself by this blessedness, because he expecteth, one day to be glorified with God; thence he fetches his solaces and supports. This carriage is not by fits, but it is their constant course: ‘Their conversation is in heaven.’

[3.] The course of our living must suit with the properties of this happy estate. (1.) It is a great happiness; (2.) It is a pure happiness; (3.) A happiness that lieth in heaven.

(1.) It is a great happiness, and therefore must not be slightly sought after. No slight thing will become God and heaven; all zeal and diligence is necessary to be exercised. There must be seeking: Col. iii. 1, ‘Seek things above;’ Heb. xi. 14, ‘They seek a country.’ Working: Phil. ii. 12, ‘Workout your salvation.’ Labouring; there must be diligence to get what we seek: John vi. 27, ‘Labour for the meat that endures.’ Watching, Luke xxi. 36. Striving: Luke xiii. 24, ‘Strive to enter in at the strait gate.’ Pressing hard: Phil, iii. 14, ‘I press toward the mark.’ We seek it because we want it; here we have it not. We work and labour for it, because heaven will not come with a cold wish, or a few faint and feeble or heartless endeavours. Is this becoming everlasting glory? Is this all we do for God and heaven? We watch, that we may keep up our heavenly affections, and be found in a constant preparation at Christ’s coming: 2 Peter iii. 14, ‘Give all diligence, that you may be found

of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.' We strive because we meet with difficulties within and without; without are temptations, and within are corruptions. And we press forward that every day we may be a step nearer. The life of a christian is a continual motion and nearer approach to the heavenly city. If we do thus, this is to have our conversation in heaven, when the thoughts and hopes put life and vigour into our graces and duties.

2. It is a pure happiness, not a Turkish paradise, but an immaculate and sinless estate; to see God and be like him. Therefore then our conversation is in heaven, when we purify ourselves yet more and more: 1 John iii. 2, 3, 'Behold, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as he is pure.' We expect to be presented faultless before the presence of his glory, Jude 24. Therefore now we strive every day more to be without blame before him in love. Christians have a carnal notion of heaven if they look only upon it as a state of personal contentment. No; it is not that alone, but a state of exact conformity to God; and the more pure and holy you are, the more heaven-like are your conversations; as heaven is the perfecting of that life which is begun here by the Spirit.

3. It is a heavenly happiness; and therefore true believers should be drawing off their hearts from earthly things, that they may wholly breathe and aspire after heavenly things. Worldly and sensual inclinations turn us to another happiness, and make the heart dead and sense less. We seek our heaven and happiness here in the world, rather than in the salvation of the blessed: Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' Because he lived a life of pomp and ease; he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. If we enlarge ourselves in this kind of life, we discharge God from giving us any other happiness. You shall have riches, you shall have honours, because you do so greedily seek after them, but you shall have no more. Sure it is the mortified, self-denying conversation that becometh the citizens of heaven; for they do not seek for their happiness here, but elsewhere: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' The citizens of this world must make a fair show in the flesh, to be somebody here, have such provision for their sensuality, or they are comfortless; but the citizens of the other world seek to excel in grace, to be filled with the wisdom that is from above, to entertain communion with God, to get more assurance of his love; for this manner of living suiteth with their hopes. They mortify their members which are upon earth, but seek to cherish and increase the graces of the Spirit which come from God, and lead them to God.

Reasons why.

1. They are made for eternity, and God has given them an immortal spirit that will never perish; and therefore they cannot be satisfied with things that perish in the using. An immortal soul cannot

be contented with a mortal happiness: Eccles. xii. 7, ‘Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God that gave it.’ The make and constitution of man showeth the estate he was made for. Some things were made for heaven and not for earth, as the angels, who are pure spirits; and some things for earth and not for heaven, as the beasts, who have bodies, but a material spirit. Some things were made both for earth and heaven, as man, who hath a mortal body and an immortal spirit. He was made for earth, the place of bodies, in his passage; for heaven as his home, which is the region of spirits. Now the children of God observe the cause for which they were made, and for which they were sent into the world; and therefore regard present things only in their passage, and prepare themselves for the upper place of their abode. The whole drift of their conversation tends that way; that is the estate most in the eye of their faith, hope, and love; they believe it, look and long for it, and prepare for it.

2. They are new made or born again, and the tendency of the life of grace is to God and heaven: 2 Peter i. 4, ‘Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust.’ It is the divine Spirit which is the true Spirit, which carrieth them so far above the world to things to come. The sanctifying Spirit formeth us for this very thing: 2 Cor. v. 5, ‘Now he that hath wrought us to this self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.’ He frameth and fitteth men in this life for a state of glory. The heart of a christian is more and more suited to the happiness promised in the gospel; and as they are fitted for it, so they are inclined to it. A christian is born from above, and seeks to get thither. As all things tend to the place of their original, or have a propensity to the place whence they came, as fire and air work upward—you cannot keep them down—so the new nature has a new tendency. Fishes desire to be in the water, and fowls in the air; they have a peculiar nature to carry them to those places. They that have an earthly and worldly nature are all for the world, and relish nothing but the pleasures of the world. Our souls naturally are inclined to earthly things, but being renewed, have a tendency to heavenly things. Love, which is the heart of the new creature, inclines us to be with God and Christ: Phil. i. 23, ‘Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ;’ 1 Thes. iv. 17, ‘And so shall we ever be with the Lord;’ Col. iii. 1, ‘If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above,’ &c. So it inclines us to perfect grace, and freedom from sin, and full likeness to God, never to dishonour God more; as little seeds by degrees work through the thick clods of earth, and grow up to stalk and flower. In short, the illuminate soul can only discern these things; the sanctified soul is inclined to them.

3. There is no condition of rest and tranquillity here in the world; so that a christian is in effect driven hence by the relics of sin, multitude of temptations, manifold afflictions. Though the new nature be strongly inclined to God and heavenly things, the old corrupt nature, having the advantage of things present, would sorely tempt us from him. Therefore God ordereth our condition so that we find little else but occasions of groaning in the world. Within we find the relics of sin, and that

maketh us long and wait. If any had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul much more; yet he complains not of that, but of in dwelling sin: Rom. vii. 24, ‘wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?’ A very beast driven to a place where there is neither ease nor rest will groan under it; but yet temptations on every side molest us and trouble us, and afflictions also. How soon and how often is our worldly happiness interrupted, even then when we think ourselves past all hazards and fears of change! Ps. xxx. 6, 7, ‘In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.’ No man ever slept upon a carnal pillow but had his rest disturbed before his nap was over. It is tedious for us to think of such a mutable condition; but let us look upon God’s design in it. God ordereth it that we may always think of our remove, and prepare ourselves to rest in our proper place.

Use 1. To press us to this constant and earnest pursuit after heavenly things. Let thoughts, conferences, discourses, actions still show that you are for God and heaven. When you are alone, oh, think of heaven, where your God and Christ is, and where you in a little time hope to be. When you are in company, comfort one another, warm one another with discourses of heaven: ‘With these words,’ saith the apostle. When you are doing anything for God, let heaven put life into your endeavours; doing anything in the world, let heaven regulate and measure your actions; do it so as you may be true to your great end. When you are suffering anything, loss of estate, credit, and esteem in the world, if it be for heaven, it may be the better borne: I have a better and a more enduring substance. Look not to the state in which you are, but that into which you are a-going. In short, be sure you do not want this evidence that your conversation is in heaven.

Motives to enforce it.

1. You are bound to it by oath in baptism: Col. iii. 1, ‘If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.’ You are bound to such a heavenly life; you are planted into the likeness of Christ’s death and resurrection. The sacramental resurrection enforceth the obligation; the real resurrection enforceth the effect.

2. The more heavenly you are in your lives, your right is the more evident, and you are more ready for possession. You are in the next meetness: Col. i. 12, ‘Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.’ A man reconciled to God and sanctified is in a remote meetness; but the heavenly-minded, the heavenly walkers, are in the next preparation. The first meetness gives us a right, the next meetness a ripeness, like a shock of corn that comes in in its season.

3. This heavenly conversation doth more honour God in the world; when we carry ourselves as men of another world, we do the better convince them of the reality of our profession and hopes. By your serious diligence you condemn the world: Heb. xi. 7, ‘Noah condemned the world.’ Make the world wonder: 1 Peter iv. 4, ‘They think it strange you run not with them into the same excess

of riot.' Awaken the world to think of God: 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, 'Wherefore we pray always for you, that God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you.' Christ is glorified and you rewarded.

But what is this heavenly conversation? When we so believe as to prize it, so prize it as to seek after it in the first place.

[1.] Do we believe it? Surely they that are drowned in the cares of the world and voluptuous living have no sense of the world to come. That is known by mortification rather than confident presumption: 1 John v. 4, 5, 'And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'

[2.] Do we prize and esteem it? for nothing is sought and laboured for but what is prized. Do we prize it, not with a speculative, but practical esteem? Rom. ii. 18, 'Thou approvest the things that are excellent.' The practical esteem is that which draweth our hearts. Is it our treasure? Mat. vi. 19, 'Lay up treasure in heaven.' Do you esteem it comparatively above all other things? Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'Sell all to buy the pearl of great price.' All is nothing in comparison of this blessed estate. Do you esteem it copulatively, cross and crown, means and end? Ps. cvi. 24, 'They despised the pleasant land, and believed not his word;' Phil. iii. 11, 'If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead.'

[3.] Do you seek it? What do you do for it? Our great business in this life is seeking after heaven. Many would be glad their souls might be saved at last, but we cannot believe they are in earnest. Where is that seeking, watching, striving, working, that serious diligence, those lively endeavours, that conscionable care for obtaining so great a benefit? What! seek it, and have no heart to pray for it, hear and meditate of it? Alas! for seeking, watching, working, striving, men are as far from these as they are like to be from heaven itself.

[4.] Do you seek it in the first place, so that all other works and labours are but by the by and subordinate to this? Alas! how can you say so, when religion is looked upon by the by, and you are out of your element when you are employed in the duties of it? You cannot endure to be long held to prayer, or hearing the word; your hearts are not suited to these things.

SERMON XVI.

From whence also we look for our Saviour and Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.—PHIL. iii. 20.

HERE is the reason and encouragement of the heavenly conversation. Why do believers behave themselves as belonging to that city? Because from thence we look for a Saviour.

Doct. That the earnest expectation of Christ's second coming doth both bind and encourage the saints to have their conversations in heaven.

I shall handle the point in this method—

1. Touch upon the truths contained in the words of the text.

2. How all these do draw up the thoughts and affections of believers to God and heavenly things.

I. The truths contained and implied in the text are these—

First point. That Christ is corporeally and locally in heaven, and not upon earth. Here is his spiritual presence: Mat. xxviii. 20, 'And lo, I am with you to the end of the world;' but there is his bodily presence: Acts iii. 21, 'Whom the heavens must receive until the restitution of all things.' He is there, because he hath business to do there—(1.) To intercede with God; (2.) Powerfully to administer the mediatorial kingdom for the comfort of the elect, and destruction of his adversaries.

1. To intercede with God: Heb. ix. 24, 'He is gone into the holy place not made with hands, there to appear before God for us;' that is, before the throne of the supreme judge, that, by representing his blood shed, he may procure remission of sins for penitent believers. As the high priest under the law, when the sacrifice of atonement for the whole congregation was slain and burnt without the camp; the high priest was to present himself before the mercy-seat with blood and a sweet perfume; so the Lord Jesus having offered up himself a sacrifice of atonement, is gone into the holy place: 'Not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us,' Heb. ix. 12. There is some little difference among interpreters about the time of his entrance, whether at his solemn ascension, forty days after his resurrection, when he was taken up into heaven, or else immediately upon his death, when he had given up the ghost, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst from the top to the bottom, and his soul, separated from the body, and commended into his Father's hands, entered into paradise; then it seemeth our great high priest did enter into heaven, for it may more properly be said that he entered into heaven with his blood, when his soul was separated, than when his body was risen and made immortal, and both body and soul jointly ascended. The sacrifice of atonement was not complete till the blood was presented before the throne of God in the inner sacrary; so then Christ did present himself as slain in heaven before the supreme judge, as having suffered death, and satisfied justice for the sin of man. Now whether the first or second way of entrance, certain it is he is now in heaven interceding for us.

2. Powerfully to administer the mediatorial kingdom.

[1.] For the comfort of the elect, and to gee the fruits of his purchase accomplished to them: Eph. iv. 10, ‘The same also that ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things;’ that is, supply his people with a large and plentiful measure of the gifts and graces of his Spirit. His presence there is far more beneficial to us than if he were here upon earth; yea, not only beneficial, but necessary, as being the means to apply his merits, and confer the mercies purchased by his sacrifice.

[2.] For the destruction of his enemies: Ps. ex. 1, ‘The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool;’ Heb. x. 12, 13, ‘But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.’ His person is in heaven above molestation and abuse; his reign and government is opposed in the world, but by degrees it gets ground upon opposition.

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Second point. That at the end of time Christ will come from heaven and judge the world. Reason saith he may come; faith, that he shall come. Reason saith he may come; these principles are evident, that man is God’s creature, and therefore his subject; that man hath failed in his subjection to his creator and lord; that, having failed, the holy God may justly call him to an account. Of this man is sorely afraid: Rom. i. 32, ‘Who knowing the judgment of God, that they that do such things are worthy of death,’ &c.; for reason telleth us that God, who is our creator, is also our governor; and if our governor, then he is our judge; and as such man feareth him. Now this judgment is put into the hands of Christ, who is our lawgiver, who gave us this healing law for the reparation of mankind, and to set them in joint again that they may live unto God. And the lawgiver is the judge; and that he hath a right to be lawgiver and judge. God hath justified his call, in that he raised him from the dead: Acts xvii. 31, ‘Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he raised him from the dead.’ Faith saith that he will come. What shall I say? Angels foretold it: Acts i. 10, 11, ‘And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus that is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.’ The devils tremble at it: Mat. viii. 29, ‘And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?’ The saints departed long for it: ‘How long, Lord, holy and true?’ Rev. vi. 10. The prophets proclaimed it; from Enoch downward it hath ever been kept up in the church: Jude 14, 15, ‘And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodlily committed, and all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.’ And the apostles inculcated it everywhere; yea, above all, our Lord hath assured us of it: John xiv. 2, 3, ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye

may be also.' And he hath instituted the Lord's supper to keep up the remembrance and expectation of it: 1 Cor. xi. 26, 'For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come.'

But doth the apostle refer to so long a while, and not rather speak of our coming up to him, which is nearer at hand, than his coming down to us, which is so far off?

1. Not to infringe the doctrine of the saints' happiness as soon as they die, for we presently receive the salvation of the soul, but lest any should doubt of it, on this occasion let us clear that. The soul returneth to God: Eccles. xii. 7, 'The spirit shall return to God that gave it.' It is with Christ: Phil. i. 23, 'I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better;' 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' Luke xxiii. 43; as the wicked are in hell: 1 Peter iii. 19, 'The spirits in prison.' So the 'spirits of just men are made perfect,' Heb. xii. 24. As soon as 'we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord,' 2 Cor. v. 8. The 'beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom,' Luke xvi. 22; Luke xx. 37, 38, 'Now, that the dead are raised, Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto God.' All things, both in heaven and in earth, are said to be reconciled to God by Christ, Col. i. 20, the universality of the elect, whether already glorified or yet upon earth. It cannot be meant of angels; they were never reconciled, because never any breach between God and them.

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2. The apostle mentioneth this time, because till then our own salvation is not perfect nor complete for body and soul. The whole church is not perfected and brought together. Then we shall have many privileges that we had not before.

[1.] It is a day of manifestation: Rom. viii. 19, 'For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' All is now hid; Christ is hid, and the saints are hid. Their life is hid: Col. iii. 2, 'Our life is hid with Christ in God.' Their glory is hid: 1 John iii. 2, 'Now we are the sons of God, but it cloth not appear what we shall be.' But then all shall appear, the persons, their relation to Christ, the glory he will put upon them: 'We shall appear with him in glory;' as Moses told the rebels, Num. vi. 16, 'To-morrow the Lord will show who are his.' Jesus Christ will appear in all his royalty and glory, as the great God and Saviour of the world: we shall put on our best robes. In winter the tree appeareth not what it is; the sap and life is hidden in the root; but when summer cometh, all is discovered.

[2.] It is a day of perfection. Everything tendeth to its perfect state, so do the saints. They cannot be contented to be still as they are; therefore this day is the great motive to them. Then they shall have perfect holiness, perfect freedom from sin, and all the fruits and effects of it. Christ is then a perfect Saviour. He saveth us now in part, but then he saveth us to the utmost. Body and soul are then united and perfectly glorified, and fitted to praise God in heaven. Our Saviour cometh to make an end of what he hath begun. Our souls are made perfect before, but then our bodies are freed

from corruption. All christian privileges are then perfect: Eph. iv. 30, ‘Ye are sealed to the day of redemption;’ Eph. i. 14 ‘Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession;’ Luke xxi. 28, ‘Then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth near.’ Regeneration is then perfect: Mat. xix. 28, ‘Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’ Adoption: Rom. viii. 23, ‘We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.’ Justification: Acts iii. 19, ‘Repent, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord.’ Our judge on his tribunal shall absolve us as with his own mouth, and as it were crown us with his own hands.

[3.] It is a day of congregation or gathering together. The saints are now scattered; they live in diverse ages, countries, towns, and houses, and have little comfort and knowledge one of another. Then all meet in one assembly or congregation: Ps. i. 5, ‘The congregation of the righteous.’ There is the great rendezvous. Now God’s children are scattered up and down where they may be most useful; as stars do not shine in a cluster, but are dispersed up and down the heavens. Then all the four winds shall give up their dead; then the wicked shall be herded together, as straws and sticks are bound in a bundle to set one another a-fire; adulterers together, drunkards together, bound in bundles: Mat. xiii. 41, 42, ‘The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ So the godly shall meet in a congregation, and never separate more. We cannot enjoy one another’s fellowship in this life, because God hath service for us in diverse countries; therefore the saints are groaning for that happy day. In a wreck, those that are got ashore are longing and looking for their companions. In short, here the tares are mingled with the wheat. Jacob’s cattle and Laban’s cattle are together; but then they shall be separated, and for ever live apart.

[4.] It is a day of glorification: Mat. xxiv. 30, ‘They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory;’ when Christ shall get himself a glorious name in the final destruction of all his enemies. He got himself a glorious name when he drowned Pharaoh in the sea; what will he do when he casteth all the wicked into hell? Christ showeth his majesty every day, but we have not eyes to see it; our eyes are dazzled with worldly splendour, but then all mists shall vanish. The time shall come when God shall be dishonoured no more, and sin shall have an end. Here God hath not his perfect glory from us nor in us, as passive objects or active instruments. Objectively: Eph. i. 12, ‘That we should be to the praise of his glory.’ If man say nothing or do nothing, the work will speak for itself. As active instruments: Mat. v. 16, ‘Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.’ Now both ways will God be more glorified by us actively, as we shall laud him and praise him for evermore without weariness or distraction. Objectively: 2 Thes. i. 10, ‘When he shall be glorified

in his saints, and be admired in all them that do believe.' Passively, as more of God is seen in them at that day than ever could be thought of.

Third point. That to true christians he will come in the quality of a saviour; not as a rigorous judge to condemn us, but as a saviour to free us from all misery.

1. It showeth the way of our getting to heaven. It is in a way of salvation, which is the recovery of a thing or person lost; so Christ came to seek and to save that which is lost; as a physician saveth another that cureth him of a disease which otherwise would be mortal. The shepherd saveth the sheep that snatcheth it out of the lion's mouth. A prince that rescueth the captive subjects saveth them out of the enemy's hands. There are none brought to heaven but by a saviour who recovereth us out of our lost estate, saves us from sin, and all the consequences of sin, that maketh us everlastingly blessed. Thus he saveth us *satisfactione, merito, et efficacia*—by satisfaction, merit, and power.

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[1.] By satisfaction he saveth us from the guilt of sin, the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, which is our great encouragement to wait for his coming: 1 Thes. i. 10, 'To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who hath delivered us from wrath to come.' We could never have heart nor hope to think of his coming beneficial to us without this.

[2.] By his merit he procureth the favour of God, and all those blessings which are bestowed upon the people of God. Having expiated sin, he obtained the grant of pardon and life in the new covenant. He hath purchased for us the image and favour of God and eternal happiness: 1 Thes. iv. 9, 10, 'For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.'

[3.] By way of efficacy and power, inasmuch as by his Spirit he doth effect and work in us all those things which belong to salvation; so it is said, Titus iii. 5, 'He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;' 2 Tim. i. 9, 'He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling;' Heb. v. 9, 'He is the author of salvation.' There are many adjunct causes, but he is the principal: 'We are saved by his life,' Rom. v. 10. The merit of his humiliation, the power of his exaltation.

2. I shall show what is the work of his second coming. It is to perfect our salvation. Then he shows himself a saviour indeed when he giveth us eternal life and our full happiness. The high priest, after he had been within the veil, was to come out again and bless the people; so Christ shall appear the second time: Heb. ix. 28, 'To them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.' If we continue waiting and looking, and do rest upon his undertaking, and in the meantime be performing the duties required of us, he will come as a saviour.

3. This coming is certainly and earnestly looked for by the godly. It is good to observe how differently this coming of Christ is entertained. It is questioned by the atheists; it is dreaded by the

wicked and impenitent; but it is lovingly expected by the godly. For the first, see 2 Peter iii. 3, 4, ‘There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying, Where is the promise of his coming?’ They would eternally enjoy the pleasures of the present world, and therefore labour to banish out of their hearts all thoughts of this great day, and take up all obvious prejudices, to smother the belief of it. They would be glad in their hearts to hear such news, that Christ would never come. Now their wishes easily commence into their opinions. Christ’s second coming is their horror and torment, which they would willingly get rid of. For the second, it is dreaded by the wicked and impenitent: Acts xxiv. 25, ‘Felix trembled’ when Paul ‘reasoned of judgment to come.’ There is reason for it; for Christ cometh to them as a terrible judge: 2 Thes. i. 8, ‘In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ That coming is described as light and as fire. To the third, to the godly, it is not matter of terror, but joy and delight; not like the handwriting on the wall to Belshazzar, but like comfortable tidings to the waiting soul. They look for it, Titus ii. 13, they long for it, 2 Tim. iv. 8. He cometh to them as a saviour, to put an end to all their miseries.

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But more particularly let us explain this looking. It implieth faith, hope, and patience. Faith addeth certainty to hope, hope earnestness to faith, and holy love strength to patience. For because we believe and hope, we patiently wait for the coming of Christ; or rather take in love also, and make patience an act of hope.

[1.] Faith is the ground of this looking; because we believe the promise, therefore we determine that ‘he that shall come will come, and will not tarry,’ Heb. x. 37. Faith seeth the certainty of Christ’s day afar off, for it is ‘the evidence of things not seen;’ as Rebecca espied Isaac at a great distance. It looketh upon Christ as if he were on his way, and maketh the believer stand ready to meet him and welcome him. In the eye of faith it is sure and near, and as so apprehended worketh on the soul.

[2.] Love. The saints love Christ though they never saw him. They have heard much of him, felt much of him, tasted much of him, and therefore love his appearing, long for his coming: Cant. viii. 14, ‘Make haste, my beloved, and be like the young hart or roe upon the mountains of spices.’ Christ is not slack, but the church’s affections are strong. They have a love to Christ himself, who at his appearing is to be glorified. They have a love to the church in general, which is that day to be adorned as a bride for her husband, and fully to be freed from all sins and troubles; love to themselves and their own happiness, which is that day fully to be perfected: Rev. xxii. 20, Christ saith, ‘I come;’ and the church, like a quick echo, saith, ‘Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.’ It taketh the word out of Christ’s mouth. Christ’s voice and the church’s voice are unisons. Christ speaketh in a way proper to him, in a way of promise; and the church speaketh. in a way proper to her, in a way of prayer. This is her last suit, ‘Even so, come.’ You will say, This is the desire of the church in general; but doth every believer so desire it?

Ans. The part followeth the reason of the whole, and the same spirit is in all the faithful. ‘The Spirit and the bride say, Come.’ The Holy Ghost breedeth this desire. The meanest and weakest, that tremble at their unpreparedness, have some inclination that way. Can a man desire that Christ should come into his heart, and not come to judgment? There may be a drowsiness and indisposition, but no total extinction of the desire of meeting with Christ.

[3.] Hope. Because we believe it and we desire it, therefore we expect it. Only in the looking of hope you may discern contrary affections; as first, there is both rejoicing and groaning. Rejoicing: Rom. v. 3, ‘We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.’ Groaning: 2 Cor. v. 2, ‘In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;’ ver. 4, ‘We that are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened.’ They rejoice, being under hope, groan because they have not yet attained. We rejoice because the estate to come is so excellent, and we groan because the estate present is so miserable. We rejoice because certain; we groan because we are yet conflicting with difficulties, and are but making out of our claim and title. Once more, there is a desiring and yet a waiting, and hope is described by both. By desiring, which showeth our esteem of the benefit, and earnestness to enjoy it; by waiting or tarrying the Lord’s leisure: both are consistent: ‘Waiting for and hasting to the coming of the Lord,’ 2 Peter iii. 12; προσδοκῶντες καὶ σπεύδοντες, contrary words, but coming from the same grace. We render it, ‘hastening unto the coming,’ but it is only σπέυδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν, ‘hastening the coming.’ Hope would fain enjoy, yet there is a time for labours, difficulties, and troubles. The hope exciteth both the longing expectation and the patient waiting: 1 Thes. i. 3, ‘Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope;’ Rom. viii. 25, ‘If we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.’ The time seemeth long, but the reward is sure, therefore we must wait God’s leisure. In short, there are desires which quicken us to use all means to attain it; there is patience to wait God’s leisure while we are exercised with difficulties; therefore the saints are described to be such ‘as wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus,’ 1 Cor. i. 7; 1 Thes. i. 10. It is made the end of our conversation; we desire, yet wait our time to enjoy the glorious blessings which God hath promised.

II. Why this should draw up the believer’s thoughts to heaven and heavenly things.

1. Because Christ is in heaven, and therefore we must be heavenly. He is our adamant or loadstone: Col. iii. 12, ‘If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.’ Members must not be severed from their head. The love which christians bear to Christ should be such, that their affections should be set on the place where he is, and the things which are in it, and flow from it and tend to it All this should be dear to a christian; and so it enforceth a heavenly conversation. Love is an affection of union: it desireth to be with the party loved; therefore love to Christ is not satisfied with the present estate, it would be with Christ, and in that state and place where it may have most union with him.

2. Because he cometh from thence to bring us thither. His business at his second coming is to translate us into that heavenly city: John xiv. 3, ‘I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.’ Therefore now we should behave ourselves as candidates of eternity. His whole design is to bring us to that place where he is. Mortification is thence interred: Col. iii. 1, 5, ‘If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Mortify your members which are upon earth.’ All holiness and godliness of conversation: 2 Peter iii. 11, 12, ‘Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God;’ Titus ii. 12, 13, ‘Teaching us, that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.’

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3. That he cometh as a saviour; as one—

[1.] That hath done enough to save us from sin and misery, and the flames of hell. Despair crippleth our endeavours. If we could not comfortably hope for heaven, we should never labour for it. But now, ‘Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto everlasting life,’ Jude 21. Though we be sinners that need a great deal of mercy, we may expect it, and so be encouraged to labour for it. We are engaged by our relation to him.

[2.] He cometh then as a saviour to us; we are his people. There are two relations with respect to the day of judgment—master and husband.

(1.) Master. Good servants wait for their master’s coming: Mat. xxiv. 46, ‘Blessed is that servant whom, when his lord cometh, he shall find so doing.’ Here we have our vales, but then our wages: ‘Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.’ Christ doth not come empty-handed to his faithful servants. Well, then, the servant that doth expect his master’s coming, will ply his work: 2 Tim. iv. 1, ‘I charge thee before God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his coming and kingdom.’

(2.) As our husband; that is a sweeter relation: ‘The bride saith, Come,’ Rev. xxii. 17. We are contracted to Christ now, but then is the day of espousals. A wife that looketh for her husband’s coming puts all things in readiness.

4. The looking inferreth a heavenly conversation.

[1.] There is faith in it. Faith, resting upon the promises of God, is assured and fully persuaded of the fruition of glory in God’s time. If it be so, whither should our thoughts, words, and actions tend, but to this blessed estate? otherwise our practice will be a manifest contra diction to our faith. You believe there is a God and a life to come, and thereupon promise to renounce the devil, world, and the flesh; but you live as if you were in league with the devil, world, and the flesh, and at defiance with God and heaven; and so have ‘a form of godliness,’ 2 Tim. iii. 5? Do ye believe in

Christ to bring you to God and everlasting glory, when your heart is another way, and you live as strangers to the heavenly mind, and have truly an unheavenly conversation. Either you must renounce the faith or your carnal conversation. If you take on the profession of the one to countenance the other, you wrong God and your own souls, and double your sin.

[2.] As there is love in it. If you love Christ, and do not desire to be with him, you go about to reconcile contradictions. As she said to Sampson, Judges xvi. 15, 'How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?' That is a strange love to be content to be still away from the party loved, and to sit down satisfied with the present happiness.

[3.] Hope. We do place our blessedness in heaven, and yet fly from it as a misery; long and look for that which we have no mind to enjoy. Surely hope withdraweth our minds from, and moderateth our fears and cares about them. Looking, as it noteth a desire or a patient expectation, deadeneth our hearts to the world.

(1.) As a desirous expectation. These vehement desires and groans after an estate of happiness breed sincerity, and endeavours to make it our main scope that we may be approved and accepted of Christ at his coming.

(2.) Patient expectation. This engageth to perseverance, or bringeth forth 'fruit with patience,' Luke viii. 15. The reward is yet to come, in the meantime we are pressed with a multitude of temptations, persecutions, remainders of sin. There will a time come when we shall be freed from sin and sorrow for ever. We have God's word to assure us of it; therefore we must content ourselves in God's will. It is his will and pleasure we shall stay a little while longer and suffer more. He might require a far longer time of trial to give us so great a reward, but it is but a short time between our regeneration and full possession.

Use 1. To press you to look for Christ from heaven as a saviour.

To this end—

1. Seek reconciliation, and be at peace with God: 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Wherefore, seeing we look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace.' Others tremble at the mention of his coming; the guilt of sin maketh this day terrible to us. When you have gotten, an interest in Christ, and some sure and comfortable hope of absolution, you will cheerfully expect his coming; then he cometh as a saviour: Job xix. 25, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.' He cometh as a saviour, not as a severe judge. If you have made your peace with him, there will be a happy meeting at the last day.

2. Be not only reconciled, but renewed and sanctified, as well as justified; for 'The Spirit and the bride saith, Come,' Rev. xxii. 17. The Holy Ghost, by residing in the hearts of the faithful, breedeth this desire. Nature saith not, Come; this is a disposition above nature. Carnal nature saith,

Stay away still. If it might go by voices, whether Christ should come or no, would carnal men give their voice this way? ‘Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.’ The voice of corrupt nature is, ‘Depart,’ Job xxii. 14. They are of the mind of the devil: ‘Jesus, thou Son of God, art thou come to torment us before the time?’ If thieves and malefactors might have the liberty to choose whether there should be an assizes, do you think they would look for, and long for the time of its approach? Till we are renewed we have no inclination to or desire of these things.

3. Labour for some measure of consolation as well as sanctification: Rom. viii. 23, ‘Ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.’ The first-fruits are the beginnings of heaven. These being but a little, bear a like proportion with eternal glory, as the first-fruits with the harvest, and do assure us as an earnest of full possession. Well, then, as Daniel looked towards Jerusalem in his prayers, Dan. vi. 10, so let us often look to heaven, and remember we have a saviour there, who will one day come from heaven.

Use 2. Prepare for it, make all things ready. There must be strict and heavenly walking, that we may ‘have boldness in that day, and may not be ashamed at his coming,’ 1 John ii. 28. Causes of shame are either nakedness: 2 Cor. v. 3, ‘That we may not be found naked,’ that is, destitute of all grace. Folly, or perverse or unadvised choice, when we are blinded by the delusions of the flesh; or when we make a worldly choice, this will appear to be folly and shame: Luke xii. 20, ‘Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; and then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?’ Or hypocrisy, when our cheating and fair pretences shall be discovered: Mat. xxii. 12, ‘Friend, how earnest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? and the man was speechless.’ Or unfaithfulness, when we have not discharged our trust: Luke xix. 22, ‘Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.’ Or unthankfulness for great benefits, such as we have received by Christ: Rom. ii. 4, ‘Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and long-suffering?’ Despising not only the mercies of common providence, but the blessings of the covenant: Heb. ii. 3, ‘How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?’

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But who will have boldness at that day? Such as are united to Christ: Rom. viii. 1, ‘There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.’ Such as are by that union assimilated and made like Christ: 1 John iv. 17, ‘That we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in the world.’ If we continue in that blessed and gracious estate faithfully, without defection and apostasy: 1 John ii. 28, ‘And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.’ That are not ashamed of Christ’s despised ways, but while we are in the world do faithfully promote his kingdom: Luke ix. 26, with xxi. 16, ‘Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his glory.’ Who persevere in the conflict: 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of

righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.'

SERMON XVII.

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby lie is able even to subdue all things unto himself.—PHIL. iii. 21.

IN the context the apostle showeth the different course of living observed by the true and false christians, 'They mind earthly things,' but 'Our conversation is in heaven.'

Now he giveth two reasons of the heavenly life—

1. One is taken from their expectation of Christ's coming.

2. What he will do at his coming to translate us into the heavenly city and to fit us for it, 'He shall change our vile bodies.'

In which words observe two things—

[1.] The glory which Christ will put upon his saints at his coming, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.'

[2.] The ground of hope, which may facilitate the belief of this blessed condition, 'According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.'

In the first branch observe—

1. The body is spoken of.

2. The body is represented under its double estate and condition.

[1.] What it is now, 'A vile body.'

[2.] What it will be then; it shall be 'fashioned like unto his glorious body.'

3. The nature of this change; it is not substantial, but accidental, imported in the word 'transform,' or fashion; it shall be altered, not in substance, but in fashion and qualities; we shall have a body still, an organised body with different members; not only a glorious body, but the same body.

1. The body is spoken of—

[1.] Because the soul is made happy and perfect before: Heb. xii. 23, ‘To the spirits of just men made perfect.’

[2.] Because the great temptation to draw us off from the heavenly life is the love of the body and the interests of the bodily life; either indulgence to things pleasing to the body, or fear of troubles and persecutions. Indulgence to things pleasing; thence we have that caveat, Rom. xiii. 14, ‘Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.’ Nothing doth more extinguish all hopes and apprehensions of the life to come than carnal and sensual pleasures. Therefore, that we might not indulge ourselves in a liberty of enjoying every tempting pleasure of this mortal life, he showeth us what care Christ will take of the body, what glory he will put upon the body. Fear of troubles and persecutions, that may infringe the happiness and interest of the bodily life: Luke xii. 4, 5, ‘Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say, Fear him.’

[3.] He speaks rather of the happiness of the body, because this hindereth our glory; for there is no place for our earthly and corruptible bodies in the heavenly city: 1 Cor. xv. 50, ‘Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.’ Flesh and blood, corruptible and earthly as now it is, cannot enter into heaven; therefore, to remove this doubt or fear, he showeth that Christ shall change this vile body.

2. The body is represented under its double estate, what it is now, and what it will be then. Now its present condition, it is a ‘vile body.’ This is mentioned to show the greatness of the change. However it is now for the present, it shall be in a blessed and glorious estate hereafter; as to its future estate, it shall be a glorious body. Mark the two opposite terms; now it is a body of vileness, then of glory; these are the two opposite states of the body.

3. The nature of the change; it is not a change of the substance, it is a body still; but in quality, it is now made like the body of his glory, the body which Christ had after the resurrection, and now hath in heaven, the body of his glory.

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Secondly, The ground of hope from the power of Christ, ‘According to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.’ This is added lest any should think this change impossible; it is a thing incredible to flesh and blood. They mocked when he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection, Acts xvii. 32. Of all articles of the christian faith, *durius creditur*, saith Tertullian, it is most difficultly believed. Therefore the apostle referreth us to the power of God. The power of God is that which faith pitcheth on in the general: Rom. iv. 21, ‘Being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was also able to perform.’ And in particular, faith is helped and relieved by the consideration of God’s power in the doctrine of the resurrection: Mat. xxii. 29, ‘Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.’ And the power exercised herein also is produced to warrant and encourage faith in other difficulties. He believed even God who quickeneth the dead,

and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Well, then, in this God will show his almighty power, by which he is able to do what he pleaseth; and creatures must not by their vain disputes set limits and bounds to the creator's power.

Doct. That Jesus Christ at his coming will so change these vile bodies of ours that they shall become glorious bodies, and fit to be placed in the heavenly city.

In discussing this point—

1. I shall consider the state of the body as it is now.

2. What our bodies shall be at Christ's coming.

3. I shall prove that these same vile bodies which we now carry about do then become glorious bodies.

4. What grounds there are to facilitate our hopes and expectations. I. What the body is now; he calleth it a 'vile body;' this must be

a little explained.

1. It is vile in respect of its original; it was made out of the dust of the ground: Gen. iii. 19, 'Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt return.' That curious frame which we see and admire so much, it is but dust well coloured and moulded up into a comely shape. The matter of which it was made was the dust of the earth. All elements meet in mixed bodies, yet in gross and heavy bodies, such as man's is, earth is predominant. This showeth the wisdom and power of God at first, that he could make such a curious frame of dust. We read in the plagues of Egypt, that the magicians could not bring forth lice out of the dust of the ground, Exod. viii. 17-19; yet God raised from thence such a noble creature as man is. But it doth much more set forth the wisdom, and goodness, and power of God, that this vile body shall at length become a glorious body, and these corruptible and earthly bodies shall be made spiritual and heavenly, and a clod of earth shall shine like the sun for brightness.

2. As to its constitution, when it is at the best it is but a frail tabernacle, and liable to death and corruption. Our 'foundation is in the dust, and we are crushed before the moth,' Job iv. 19. The matter that we are made of is not brass, or iron, or stone, or stiff clay, but dust, which hath no coherence or consistence, but is easily dissipated and scattered with every puff of wind; so is our dusty tabernacle with every blast of God's displeasure: Isa. xl. 24, 'He shall blow upon them, and they shall wither.' We are poor, weak, and mutable creatures, that easily fail and disappear.

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3. It is a vile body in regard of sustentation and support. He bringeth food for them out of the earth: Ps. civ. 14, 'He bringeth forth grass for the cattle, and green herbs for the service of man.' Things bred there and nourished there feed us. As the body is framed out of the dust of the earth, so from the earth it is supported. Meat and drink, and such kind of accommodations, continue and

repair this house from day to day; we are forced to shoar up a ruinous tabernacle, which is ready continually to drop down upon our heads.

4. It is a vile body in regard of the many miseries to which it is obnoxious: Job xiv. 1, ‘Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.’ Life is but short, but long enough to lay us open to many calamities. There are some common miseries which are incident to all mankind during the bodily estate, but the godly are often exposed to a vilified, persecuted, and calamitous estate: John xv. 19, ‘Because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.’

5. It is a vile body, because it is subject to many diseases, aches, and pains. Job and Lazarus had their sores; all have their infirmities to keep them humble. Paul’s thorn in the flesh: 2 Cor. xii. 7, 9, ‘And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. Therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.’

6. It is a vile body, because it is not only the soul[4] of diseases, but often made the instrument of sin. We are bidden to keep our ‘vessel in sanctification and honour,’ 1 Thes. iv. 4, meaning our body; but how many use it only for a channel for lusts to run in, or a strainer for meats and drinks to pass through, oppress nature, and make the body more vile by their brutish lusts and affections?

7. It is vile in death. The body that was dust in its composition will shortly be dust in its dissolution: Eccles. xii. 7, ‘Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return to God that gave it;’ that is, be resolved into the matter of which it was once made. It is said of a prince, Ps. cxlvi. 4, ‘His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.’ The greatest potentates in the world are of kin to the dust of the ground, and at length are gathered to the earth from whence they had their beginning.

8. More vile after death. When the soul, the inhabitant, is gone, when it becometh a breathless trunk, it must be removed out of sight; it must be buried in some little pit and hole of the earth, where it may be hidden, to keep others from being offended or infected with its rottenness, stench, and putrefaction: ‘That I may bury my dead out of my sight,’ saith Abraham concerning his beloved Sarah, Gen. xxiii. 4. The presence of our bodies then is noisome to our dearest friends that most loved us.

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This should be often thought of by us—

[1.] To humble us who are but dust and ashes as to our composition, constitution, and dissolution: Gen. xviii. 27, ‘Who am I, that am but dust and ashes, that I should speak unto the Lord?’ ‘All the

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[4] Qu. ‘seat’?—ED.

nations are but as the dust of the balance unto God,' Isa. xl. 15. What should we be proud of? should we glory in the nobility of our birth? We are made out of the dust of the earth as the worms are; yea, the worms are of the elder house, for every creeping thing was made before man. Of our beauty and strength? Prov. xxxi. 30, 'Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain.' That part we glory in is but dust, and will be dust. Or in pomp of living? 'High and low shall lie down in the dust alike, and the worms shall cover them,' Job xxi. 26. All of us have bodies subject to the necessities of nature, to the infirmities of nature, to the decays of nature, to the diseases of nature, which will at length totally prevail over us.

[2.] If our bodies are vile bodies, let us not seek the present good of the body as our chief happiness. If anything keep us from heaven, it is the love of the body, which should rather invite us thither, for hereafter our bodies shall be in their best estate. But alas! most men spend their time in caring for the body, to gratify it with daintiness in feeding, costliness in clothing; all the business of their life is to cherish, deck, and adorn proud rottenness. Now in a body over-cared for usually there dwelleth a neglected soul. This is to adorn the house and slight the inhabitant, to embroider the sheath and let the sword rust, to pamper the mortal body and quite neglect the immortal spirit.

[3.] To comfort those that are decaying more and more as to the bodily life, who are subject to continual pains and diseases, or, as Gaius, have a healthy soul in a sick and crazy body, 3 John 2. Why, here it will be a vile body; it cannot be helped. Beauty will be wrinkled with age, and strength fail and be invaded by diseases. The eternal spring and vigour of youth we look for in the other world.

II. The future condition of our bodies: 'We shall have glorious bodies, like unto his glorious body.' Here let us a little consider what glory Christ will put upon the body, and how Christ will qualify it and fit it for eternal life.

1. It shall be immortal and incorruptible: 1 Cor. xv. 42, 'It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.' Christ will adorn them with immortality and impassibility, that we never may decay, nor be liable to sickness, weakness, and troubles, nor any defects, but endowed with all the perfections a body is capable of.

2. For clarity and brightness it shall be like Christ's glorious body. Therefore it is said, 1 Cor. xv. 43, 'It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.' Christ's body shines with light and brightness, a glimpse whereof we had in the transfiguration: Mat. xvii. 3, 'And he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light;' and Christ in Rev. i. is represented as the sun in its full strength. His body is wondrous, glorious, now in heaven. When he appeared to Paul, he could not endure the light that shined to him, Acts ix. Oh, what a glorious time will it be when the body of Christ shall appear, and all the saints with him in glory!

3. It shall be a spiritual body: 1 Cor. xv. 44, ‘It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.’ Now how is it a spiritual body?

[1.] The least in it is that it shall be subject to the spirit. As the soul while it is subject to the flesh is called carnal, so the body while subject to the spirit is termed spiritual; it is the full consummation of the new birth: John iii. 6, ‘That which is born of the Spirit is spirit! All is spirit then without any mixture of the rebelling flesh. Certainly the infusion of the life of grace is called ‘the first resurrection,’ as it carrieth a conformity to this estate.

[2.] It standeth in no need of natural supports; there is no food, raiment, marrying, or giving in marriage: Mat. xxii. 30, ‘But they are as the angels of God in heaven.’ There they live not as husbands and wives, but as the pure spiritual angels; we shall not stand in need of meat, drink, and sleep, as now we do. Now what a blessed thing is it to have either privilege, to have bodies wholly obedient to the spirit, and bodies that are not subjected to present necessities!

III. That these same vile bodies shall be changed into glorious bodies.

1. I prove it from the nature of the resurrection. It will not be a resurrection unless that which fell rise again, and that which was dead be revived. Therefore the same bodies which were buried in the grave shall be raised up. If the same body were joined to another soul, or the same soul united to another body, it would not be the resurrection of the same man. Neither at the latter day do we expect a new creation, but a restitution; not a production of a new body, but the raising of that which we had before. These houses of clay, these habitations of flesh, must again receive their old inhabitant. Nothing dieth but the body, and when we died we died in no other body but our own, and therefore we cannot be said to revive and rise again, but in our own flesh, and in our own body.

2. I prove it from the testimony of scripture, which is full and pregnant to the purpose: John v. 28, 29, ‘Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.’ Who shall come forth? They who are in the graves; that is, men with respect to their bodies, the same bodies wherein they lived on earth, and which were laid in the grave. So again, Job xix. 26. 27, ‘And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.’ ‘In flesh ‘showeth the reality, ‘my flesh’ showeth the identity and propriety; it is not a stranger’s eye, another eye, but ‘these eyes’ shall see him: Rom. viii. 11, ‘He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.’ So that it is this mortal body which is quickened, and which at the resurrection becometh spiritual and incorruptible. Once more, 1 Cor. xv. 53, ‘For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.’ Not that another body shall succeed in place of this, but this very body shall be changed; not in substance, but qualities. So

here in the text, ‘Who shall change our vile bodies;’ not a body which was never ours, nor never vile, but the same body that was once ours, and was once vile. Again, Rev. xx. 13, ‘And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.’ But if the same bodies did not rise, neither the sea nor the grave would give up their dead. That shall rise again which the grave giveth up, which the sea giveth up; therefore the same body which was buried shall be revived. Thus the scripture is full in the proof of it, as of the resurrection, so of the resurrection of the same numerical body.

3. From the final cause of the resurrection, which is that every one may be judged, and receive according to the things done in the body: 2 Cor. v. 10, ‘For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.’ The things were done in the body, and therefore not only the soul but the body must be punished and rewarded. As Tertullian pleadeth, Should Marcion be raised up for Valentinus, and the peccancy of one body be punished in another that never offended?

4. From the pattern of Christ; such a body as Christ had in the resurrection and ascension, such bodies shall we have: ‘For our vile body shall be made like his glorious body;’ and he rose as ‘the first fruits of them that slept,’ as the representative head, 1 Cor. xv. 20;’ And he that raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus,’ 2 Cor. iv. 14. Now the body in which Christ rose was the same body which was assumed of the virgin, which was nailed to the cross, laid in the grave; and with the same body he entered into heaven, and there remaineth the same according to substance and lineaments that it was here upon earth, only changed in qualities. So our bodies remain the same in substance, only freed from the quality of its abasements, and endowed with glorious qualities fit for the heavenly estate; and look, as the decays and reparations of our bodies do not make them cease to be the same bodies we bring with us into the world, so neither the change they undergo by death, nor the glorious qualities wherewith they are endowed when raised again, do make them other bodies for substance than now they are.

IV. What grounds there are to facilitate our belief and hope of the resurrection.

1. It is a work of omnipotency. We are apt to say, How can it be that when our bodies are turned into dust, and that dust mingled with other dust, and hath undergone many transmutations, that every one should have his own body and flesh again? Why, consider the infinite and absolute power of God, and this will make it more reconcilable to your thoughts, and this hard point will be of easier digestion to your faith. To an infinite power there is no difficulty at all. The text saith, ‘According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself.’ How much can God’s power outwork our thoughts? For he were not infinite if he might be comprehended. We are no fit judges of the extent of his power. Many things are marvellous in our eyes which are not so to God, Zech. viii. 6. Therefore we must not confine God to the limits of created beings, or our

finite understandings. Alas! our cockleshell cannot empty an ocean; we do no more know what God can do than a worm knoweth a man. He that made the world out of nothing, cannot he raise the dead? He that made such multitudes of creatures out of the dark chaos, hath he for gotten what is become of our dust? That Almighty, he that gave life and being to that which before was not, cannot he raise the dead? He that turned Moses's rod into a serpent, and from a serpent into a rod again, cannot he raise us out of the dust into men, and turn us from men into dust, and from the same dust raise us up into the same men and women again?

2. We have relief from the justice of God. All nations will grant that God is, and that he is a rewarder of good and bad. Now in this life he doth not dispense these rewards. Many instruments of public good are made a sacrifice to public hatred, and wicked men have the world at will; therefore there is a judgment when this life is ended; and if there be a judgment, men must be capable to receive rewards and punishments. You will say, So they are, by having an immortal soul. Ay! but the soul is not all of man; the body is a part, it hath had its share in the work, and therefore it is most equal to conceive it shall have its share in the reward and punishment It is the body which is gratified by the pleasures of sin for a season, the body which hath endured the pain and trouble of faithful obedience to Christ; and therefore there shall be a resurrection of the just and unjust, that men may receive according to what they have done in the body. God made the whole man, and therefore glorifieth and punisheth the whole man. The apostle urgeth this to the godly: 1 Cor. xv. 29, 'Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead rise not at all, why then are they baptized for the dead?'

3. God's unchangeable covenant-love, which inclineth him to seek after their dust after it hath been so long buried in oblivion. God hath taken a believer into covenant with himself, body and soul; therefore Christ proveth the resurrection from God's covenant-title: Mat. xxii. 31, 32, 'But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' To be a God to any is to be a benefactor: Gen. ix. 26, 'And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem.' Not blessed be Shem, but blessed be 'the Lord God of Shem.' To be a benefactor belongs to an infinite eternal power; if he had not eternal glory to bestow upon us, he would not justify his covenant-title: Heb. xi. 16, 'Wherefore he is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.' Now God is a benefactor not to one part only, but to their whole persons. Their bodies had the mark of his covenant upon them, their dust is in covenant with him; and where ever it is disposed, he will look after it; their death and rotting in the grave doth not make void his interest, nor cause his care and affection towards them to cease.

4. The redemption of Christ, which extendeth to the bodies of saints, as often interpreted in scripture, as where Christ speaketh of his Father's charge; this was a special article in the eternal covenant: John vi. 39, 'And this is the Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath

given me, I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day;' not so much as a leg, nor a piece of an ear. Christ hath engaged himself to this; he is the guardian of the grave; as Rizpah kept the bodies of Saul's sons, 2 Sam. xxi. 10. Christ hath the keys of death and hell; Christ hath the charge of the elect to the very day of the resurrection, that he may give a good account of them when all perils and hazards are over, and may not lose so much as their dust, but gather it up again. Where the intention of his death is spoken of: 1 Thes. v. 10, 'Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him;' that is, whether dead or alive, for they that are said to be dead in the Lord, are said to be fallen asleep. Whether we live here or die, we should live a spiritual life here and an eternal life in glory hereafter. So where the obligation is urged: 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.' There would be no consequence if Christ had not purchased the body as well as the soul; and Christ will not lose the least of his purchase. If he exact duty from the body, you may expect glory for the body. So redemption is particularly applied to the body: Rom. viii. 23, 'Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.' The body is bought with the blood of Christ.

5. The honour which is put upon the bodies of the saints.

[1.] They are members of Christ: 1 Cor. vi. 15, 'Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.' The members of Christ shall not remain in death, but certainly be raised up again. When a godly man dieth, the union between soul and body is dissolved, but not the union between him and Christ. As Christ's own natural body in the grave was not separated from his person, and the hypostatical union was not dissolved. It was the Lord of glory that was crucified, and the Lord of glory who was laid in the grave; so the mystical union is not dissolved between Christ and his people, who are his mystical body, when they are dead; as some read the place, Isa. xxvi. 19, 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.' They are Christ's body though dead in the grave.

[2.] They are temples of the Holy Ghost; therefore if thy body be destroyed, it shall be built up again: 1 Cor. vi. 19, 'Know ye not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost?' As Christ redeemed not the soul only, but the whole man, so the Spirit in Christ's name taketh possession both of body and soul. The body is cleansed and sanctified by the Spirit, as well as the soul, and therefore it is quickened by the Spirit: Rom. viii. 11, 'But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' The Holy Ghost will not leave his mansion or dwelling-place. The dust of believers belongeth to him, who were once his temple; so it is a pledge of the resurrection.

Use 1. Is exhortation to all holy conversation and godliness; and that you may not carry it beyond the matter in hand—

1. Do not debase the body by making it an instrument of sin. It is sacrilege to profane and prostitute that which is holy to a common use. As Belshazzar bid defiance to the God of heaven by quaffing and carousing in the cups of the temple, so do you pollute that which is holy if you defile your bodies by uncleanness and intemperance, which are members of Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost, in covenant with God, and in time to be glorified for ever. When you make your members weapons of unrighteousness, Rom. vi. 13, it is contrary to your covenant dedication, to the honour God putteth, and meaneth further to put upon the body. Do but consider, when lust hath spent our strength, and carnal projects and practices have wasted our spirits, how can we look for the recompense of a glorious reward, a blessed resurrection? Do these believe such an estate that put the body to so vile an use? What! with these eyes to see the Redeemer, which are windows and inlets to sin? Think you that God will put honour upon that body which they dishonour so much? Sure they think their bodies shall never rise again, that care not to what uncleanness they do abuse them.

2. Do not offend God to gratify the body or preserve any bodily interest. Love to the body and the bodily estate proves often an occasion of sinning. Men first mistake self, and then misplace it; they mistake self, thinking themselves more concerned as a body than a soul; yea, farther, prefer the conveniencies of the body before the body itself; and they misplace self when they value these things above the conscience of their duty to God. To please the body they forfeit the comfort and happiness of the soul, as when to gratify a pleasing lust they run the hazard of eternal torments, Mat. v. 29, 30. Or to save the body, when as we should suffer the loss of life, or limb, or an estate for a good conscience. Oh, consider, whatever your loss be in this kind, it will be repaired. He that healed Malchus's ear, he can restore yourselves to yourselves again, though for his sake you suffer bodily tortures. Surely a man that believes the resurrection of the body should not fear though exposed to fight with beasts at Ephesus, 1 Cor. xv. 32, though ready to be torn in pieces by an enraged multitude: Heb. xi. 35, 'And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.' To escape upon God's terms, they rejected the deliverance offered by the enemies, and believed the resurrection offered by God; they might have come off body whole, but not heart-whole. In the intermission of their tortures, being advised to yield, they did believe there was a resurrection to an immortal glorious blessed life, which would recompense their pains with eternal pleasures. Nay, if the trial should not be so high; if for a more plentiful life, and to live at large, men should dispense with a principle of conscience. This should not be; if you love your bodies, your bodies shall be well enough; if you can trust the fidelity of Christ, never leave his service, nor abate anything of your strictness, to please the flesh.'

3. Do not spare the body to do God service. A believer, if he look backward or forward, upward or downward, seeth no reason to spare the body. Backward, what pains did Christ endure in his body? his face spit upon, his hands and feet nailed to the cross, his head crowned with thorns; in his lifetime neglected: 'he bore our sins in his body on the tree;' and shall we be so tender and delicate of our bodies as not to endure a little pains for God's sake? Forward: 2 Cor. v. 1, 'For we

know if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in. the heavens.' A poor house of clay, though that be crumbled into dust, it is better to be worn out with labour than eaten out with rust: Acts xxvi. 7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' At the day of judgment it will be no grief of heart that we have lived faithfully, painfully, in the exercise of godliness, in fasting and praying, and labouring for God; though it have deprived your bodies of some pleasures which others take, that live a life of pomp and ease, and in carnal delights; when they are full of horror and amazement, you will have your reward. These eyes which are often lifted up in prayer shall see your Redeemer; those knees which are made hard like a camel's hoof by your daily addresses to God shall be softened; those spirits which are wasted in godly exercises shall amply be repaired. Upward, I hope one day my body shall be in heaven, and there is the place of my rest: Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours.' The soul will remember the body, as Pharaoh's butler did Joseph: I had strength, and was willing to spend it for God. Downward: 'Fear him that is able to cast both body and soul into hell,' Mat. x. 28. There are pains inflicted immediately on the body; how much better is it to take a little pains now!

Use 2. Is to put us upon self-reflection. How shall we know that this will be our condition, that our bodies shall be raised up to the fellowship of this glory?

1. If we be partakers of the first resurrection. There is the resurrection of the soul from the power of sin, and the resurrection of the body from the power of death. They that have part in the first resurrection, over those 'the second death hath no power,' Rev. xx. 6. The resurrection to the life of holiness and the resurrection to the life of glory have an intimate connection the one with the other; and the life of grace is put as the remedy against our death by sin: Rom. iii. 10, 'The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.' The sting and hurt of death is taken away when, upon account of Christ's righteousness, we are made partakers of his Spirit. Our conversation is one sort of quickening and resurrection, and maketh way for the other, the quickening and raising of our bodies. Therefore, is the life of grace begun? is the body and soul made a temple of the Holy Ghost, the place where he manifesteth his power and presence? Rom. viii. 11, 'If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in you.' He that hath once honoured the body by his presence will not suffer corruption always to remain upon it.

2. How doth this life discover itself? Are you like Christ? 1 John iv. 17. If you are such in the world as he was in the world. The change of a christian beginneth in his soul, first changed there into the image and likeness of Christ, and then his body is made like unto his glorious body. Christ beginneth with the soul, but he endeth with the body. Therefore that a christian should look after, to be like Christ in holiness, and then he will be like him in glory, to be such as he was, and to walk

as he walked, to be humble, useful, and fruitful, and then God will take care for other things which belong to our happiness. Is our soul ennobled with his image? do we resemble Christ here more and more?

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3. You may know that your bodies shall be raised to the fellowship of this glory by the use you put your bodies unto. If we pamper the body, altogether provide for the satisfying its lust, you choose your heaven here, and slight the happiness which God hath intended for it in another world. Some proclaim their atheism, ‘Let us eat and drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we shall die.’ But you secretly cherish it while you serve your lusts in a more cleanly manner, withhold your hearts from nothing that can satisfy and please your lusts. Will you know whither you shall go, to heaven or hell? Rom. viii. 13, ‘If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;’ and Gal. vi. 8, ‘He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.’ Do yon gratify or crucify the flesh? Flesh-pleasers are flesh-destroyers. For the present you dishonour the body, which should be the temple of the Holy Ghost, and which one day he will make so glorious; and for the future you destroy the happiness of the body. Well, then, if for love to your body you follow only its present lusts, and care only for the things of the body, you act the greatest enmity and hostility against your own bodies that is imaginable; for fleshly lusts do not only war against the soul, but the body also, and destroy that part which they seem to gratify.

4. If you look, and long, and prepare for a better estate: 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, ‘For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.’ There will be an earnest waiting for this glory. Certainly God will never bestow it upon us against our wills, nor without our consent; there must be an earnest desire and a serious preparation. Those that cannot endure to hear of a remove would be always here; they are satisfied with what is now, and cannot part with it for what is to come. We groan chiefly for the intimate presence of our souls with Christ, and some unwilling Bess ariseth because we are loath to part with the body; but if we are sure that in due time we shall have the society of the body in glory, why should we hang back? These beloved friends, which part with so much pain and grief, shall meet together again with pleasure and joy; therefore we should overcome our natural inclinations to the present life.

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SERMONS UPON PHILIPPIANS I. 21.

SERMON I.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—PHIL. i. 21.

PAUL had professed his indifferency to life or death, so Christ might be glorified by either; either by his ministry or martyrdom; his aim and scope was Christ's glory. Now how God would use him to such a purpose he was altogether unconcerned, and professeth, if he might have his option and choice, he would give the case back again to God to determine it as it might be most for his service and glory. Now here he beginneth to debate the case, and showeth in what respects life and death were valuable. If you put life in one scale and side of the balance, there is his service in the gospel; if death in the other side, there is eternal profit: 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'

Here I shall show—

1. Why he desired life, 'To me to live is Christ.'

2. Why he submitted to death, 'To die is gain.'

[1.] The purpose and business of the present life is Christ's service.

[2.] The gain and profit of his death is the perfect enjoyment of Christ; if he did live, he should preach Christ; if he did die, he should go to Christ, and remain with him for ever.

I must not dissemble it that some read the text thus, 'Christ is gain to me both in life and death, whatsoever falleth out.' This interpretation, though not unsuitable to the context, yet it doth not run so smoothly, and cannot be so easily wrought out of the Greek tongue as our translation.

I shall treat of the purpose and business of life; ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς. The infinitive of the verb is put for the substantive, τὸ ζῆν for ζωή, my life is Christ. Now Christ may be said to be the life two ways—as the principle or as the end. As the principle: Gal. ii. 20, 'Christ liveth in me.' Secondly, as the end and scope; so here he is both author and end. As we live in him and by him, so we live for him and to him. The latter supposeth the former. Our tendency is according to the principle by which we are acted. That life which we have from Christ is used for Christ; his meaning is, that the service and honour of Christ was the scope and business of his life.

Doct. That the great end and business of a christian's life should be to honour and glorify Christ.

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I argue it thus—

First, We have life from him, and therefore it will be to him. I speak it not of life natural, but spiritual. The tendency of it is to Christ, from whose influence we receive it; the end is according to the principle. We live in Christ, to Christ. A supernatural influence causeth a supernatural tendency. Carnal men, that act by their own life, live upon their own root, bring forth fruit to themselves, make it their business to please the flesh. Water riseth no higher than its fountain, and

the fruit is always according to the influence of the root; but they that are ingrafted into Christ, they live out of themselves, and therefore do not live for themselves, but that their heavenly Father may be glorified, John xv. 8. It is the application of the parable of the vine; as rivers run into the sea from whence their channels are filled, so doth grace cause all the issues and outgoings of the spiritual life to return to Christ from whence they came.

Secondly, I argue from the right Christ hath to our service. We are his by every kind of right and title. If we were at our own dispose, we might live as we list; but no creature is *sui juris*, its own, to use as it will, much less the saints: Rom. xiv. 7-9, 'For no man, of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.' The apostle is there pressing to unity, notwithstanding lesser differences. The saints do not always agree in the means, by reason of the difference of light. They all agree in the scope; they do all things to the Lord, that is, the Lord Christ; for he speaketh of his dying and rising again. Now this he argueth from Christ's right, because we are the Lord's, which is acknowledged and improved to this end by the saints. Christ hath a right over all; weak and strong christians all agree in this, and wholly surrender themselves to Christ's use, living and dying. A whole christian is Christ's; take him in his person, his relations, conditions of life, and all his concernments, he is Christ's, and therefore to him to live is Christ.

To make this more clear, let us examine the several titles Christ hath to a believer.

1. By creation. So Christ hath a right to us, together with the Father and Spirit. He made the world: Heb. i. 2, 'Hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.' Men and angels were the work of his hands.

In creation three things are considerable—

(1.) The absolute right it gave him; (2.) The intention of the Creator; (3.) The obligation left upon the creature.

[1.] The absolute right that accrueth to him from hence. The creature is wholly and solely of him and from him, and of nothing else in the world, and therefore is wholly and solely his to dispose of. There is nothing ours, but his. What joint or member of the body, or faculty of the mind, was by thyself bestowed upon thyself, or made by thy direction and request? It was all made by God out of nothing, therefore it is all his. Thy tongue is not thine own to speak what thou pleasest, nor thy heart thine to think what thou pleasest, or covet what thou pleasest, nor thy hand to do what thou pleasest, nor thy feet to go whither thou pleasest. We neither made nor can keep any of these things longer than God willeth, and therefore they must be employed for him. Self love is God's prerogative. He alone can love himself and seek himself, because he alone is without obligation

and dependence; but no creature was made terminatively for itself, to live to itself, for he that made it hath a right to all that we are and have; and to use ourselves other wise than for his glory, ultimately and terminatively, it is to rob God of his property, and defeat the great owner of his right in us. But that is not all I would speak under this head, that God has a right, but he has an absolute right, such as no other can have. They distinguish in the civil law of a twofold dominion. There is *dominium jurisdictionis et proprietatis*, the dominion of jurisdiction over men, or reasonable creatures, who are only capable of passive jurisdiction or government. The dominion of propriety respects other things, as beasts and things inanimate. This is more absolute than the former; for a man may dispose of his own goods more absolutely than of those things over which he hath only a jurisdiction; as, for instance, a potter hath more power over his clay than a man over his beast, more power over his beast than his slave, over his slave than his free servant, and a man hath more power over his servants than a prince over his subjects. Now both these kinds of dominion hath God over us, not only that of jurisdiction, but propriety; and hath a more absolute power over us than the most absolute monarch, not only over his subjects and slaves, but over his goods and lands; for they did not make these things, but acquire a right, being made. A civil right cannot be so great as a natural, and no such natural right that any man hath. A man hath not such a power over the vineyard which he hath planted as God hath over the creatures which he hath made. The husbandman can not make a vine, but he may set it and dress it; but God made us out of nothing. Nor is the power of the potter such over his clay, for he only giveth shape by art, but God gives our whole being; therefore he hath an absolute power to use us as he pleaseth. I may do with my own as it pleaseth me.

[2.] The next thing in creation is the intention of the Creator. God would not let fall his right. There is nothing made by any one but he expects some use and service for it. It is irrational to do a thing be cause we will do it, without any purpose. God being a rational agent, must have an end, and he could have no end but himself, his service, the declaring of his own glory: Prov. xvi. 4, ‘He hath made all things for himself.’ No creature was made for itself, but all for God. They are from him and for him: Rom. xi. 36, ‘For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.’ Some things God made immediately for himself, as men and angels; other things for himself ultimately and terminatively, but immediately for man’s good. And indeed the whole creation, except the angels, are subjected to our dominion or created for our use. The heavens, though not under our dominion as the beasts, yet were created for our use; the lower heaven to give us breath, the middle heaven to give us light and heat, the highest heaven for our dwelling-place. The sun shineth for us, the winds blow for us, the water runneth for us, so the earth is settled for us. God is the ultimate result and issue of them, but they were made for us immediately. But man’s obedience and service he hath reserved by a special command unto himself. He that by creation gave a being to all things, imposed an end upon them. Now this is the end imposed upon men, that they should more immediately dispose of themselves to his service and glory. Our end was not to eat, drink, trade, sleep, enjoy pleasures and honours, but to serve and honour God. That is our end ultimately and terminatively, and therefore that should be our main business. All other things keep their end for

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which they were created; the sun to enlighten the world by day, and for that end he still serveth; the moon and stars to rule the night; therefore if we were made for this purpose, to know, love, fear, obey, and serve God, this should be our business and scope; to do otherwise is as unnatural to us as it is for the sun not to shine or the stars not to convey their light and influence.

[3.] Besides the right and intention of the Creator there is an obligation left upon the creature to love and serve him that created us, namely, as he showed more love to us than he did to any other creatures except the angels. He gave being to other things, to man his image. Now the whole use of an image and picture lieth in the resemblance. We do not answer the dignity put upon us in our creation if we do not resemble the wisdom, purity, goodness, and mercy of God, which we can only do by living to him. We deface that which God intended for a glory to man, and cast it away as a thing nothing worth. He made man lord of all things, Gen. i. 26; and the psalmist noteth it, Ps. viii. 6, 'Thou hast put all things under him.' Subject to our dominion, or created for our use; and shall we not serve him that hath made the whole course of nature to serve us? All the creatures are at work for us night and day, for a poor worm of six feet long; and shall not God be honoured and served for this? We are troubled if the creatures do not serve us, if the course of nature be varied, if the sun do not shine in its season, and showers of rain in their season; and why are we not troubled if we do not serve God? There is no debt from the creatures to us; they serve us only by the bounty and appointment of God. We are not only appointed to serve him, but indebted to him. In our constitution every member of the body is an obliging mercy; if we want any one sense, and could meet with a person that can restore it, as the loss of an eye or an arm, how would we love and honour him! And will not you remember your Creator, who gave them to us at first?

2. Preservation, by which the title of creation is daily renewed and reinforced. Now Christ is interested in all this, as all things in heaven and earth are gathered together in him: Eph. i. 10, 'That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.' Ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι, is the apostle's word, as the words of a speech are recapitulated and summed up that they may not be lost. And if we consider the creature's mutability, and how every moment we are in danger to be lost, preservation is as beneficial as creation. We are continued by his providential influence every moment in our being and operation, as the beams are by the sun: Acts xvii. 28, 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being;' Heb. i. 3, 'And upholdeth all things by the word of his power.' Things were not made that they should act and subsist of themselves, as the house abideth when the architect is gone; therefore we are bound to serve him every moment: Neh. ix. 6, 'Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all.' And he doth not this out of necessity, but of his own free will. If God should turn you off for preservation to yourselves, what would you do to keep yourselves from falling into nothing? If you live, and act as your own men, is not God disengaged from providing for you? As he that leaveth his master's work is no longer reckoned as a branch of the family, but left to live upon his own calling.

3. Redemption. This giveth a proper right to the second person: 1 Cor. vi. 20, ‘For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.’ They are not yours, but God’s. To make this consideration the more effectual, let us consider—(1.) The right; (2.) The price.

[1.] Let us consider how there accrueth to Christ a right by redemption. God had a right in us by creation, a fair and full right, which we could not make away by sin. We had indeed sold ourselves unto God’s adversary for enjoying the pleasures of the flesh: Isa. lii. 3, ‘Ye have sold yourselves for nought.’ Though we could not alienate our selves by any covenant, implicit or express, from God’s dominion of jurisdiction over us, yet we did renounce his service; so that God was no otherwise our lord than a king over rebels and traitors, who may withdraw their allegiance, yet cannot abrogate and make void his jurisdiction. This right that God had in us did only move him to take vengeance of us, as the right of a prince to chastise the rebels, and reduce them by strong hand to their obedience. We had interest in his gracious protection; so that now to restore us, not only to his service, but favour, Jesus Christ came and made satisfaction, and therefore is said to purchase us to God, Rev. v. 9; and therefore this should highly oblige us to serve him. God lost no right by the fall, but we lost privilege; it was a right that was comfortable and beneficial to us, and therefore we are not our own, but his, by all the laws of equity.

[2.] Consider the price that was paid for us. The apostle Peter gives us an account of that: 1 Peter i. 18, 19, ‘We were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.’ The greatness of the price doth argue his full propriety in us. That which was bought with silver and gold gave the buyer an interest in the thing or person so bought, not only in lands, but servants; as if a man had bought another out of captivity, or he had sold himself, all his time, strength, and service belonged to the buyer. Yea, the dominion was so absolute, that the servant had no plea against his master if he had died by his stripes after a while, ‘He is his money,’ saith the law, Exod. xxi. 21. But now we are bought with the blood of the Son of God, and therefore what degree of service can be answerable to so great a price? Judas sold our Saviour at a cheap rate, for thirty pieces of silver; but before God’s tribunal it was blood of a higher price; and as to us, the indignity and cheap price that was put upon him maketh the obligation the greater; therefore we should wholly bend ourselves to promote his glory.

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4. By conquest. Prisoners of war were theirs that took them till they paid their ransom. The apostle alludeth to it: 2 Peter ii. 19, ‘For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage;’ Rom. vii. 14, ‘Sold under sin.’ We are Christ’s by conquest: Col. i. 13, ‘Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.’ By strong hand: Luke xi. 21, 22, ‘When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil.’ Indeed this conquest is sweet, for it is not a captivity, but a rescue; as Abraham pursued after the

kings that took Lot prisoner, Gen. xiv., and rescued him, and would have nothing for his pains but the liberty of the persons. So that it is a blessed conquest, but yet such as giveth Christ an interest in us, as David got an interest in Michal, Saul's daughter, by slaying Goliath.

5. Actual possession. When we are united to him by the Spirit, our property in ourselves is quite destroyed by our union with Christ; so that our bodies and souls are not our own to dispose of, but his. Thence the apostle: 1 Cor. vi. 15, 'Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.' Christ hath a right in everything that is a christian's; it is actually seized upon by the Spirit.

6. By resignation and voluntary consent. When Christ taketh hold of us by his Spirit, we take hold of him. Christ maketh over himself to us, and we give up ourselves to him, every interest and concernment to him: 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Cant. ii. 16. We are so. It is the time of spiritual marriage between Christ and the soul. We give up all to him, every interest, relation, concernment; and this must not be retracted in word or deed. Therefore unless we mean to retract our vows, and deal treacherously in the covenant, we should live as those that are Christ's: 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'But first gave their ownselves to the Lord;' 2 Chron. xxx. 8, 'Yield yourselves to the Lord.'

Thirdly, The third reason is taken from the value of his service. Life is only then worth the having when we may honour Christ by it, otherwise not. For a man that hath an interest in better things to desire life merely for itself, is foolish; for it is better to be with God, Phil. i. 23, πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρεῖττον, 'by much more the better.' For a saint to live here with so much trouble and molestation is no eligible thing; but yet if Christ hath any use for us, we must be content. David prayeth for life, but still in order to service: Ps. cxix. 17, 'Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word.' Paul loved his work rather than his life, and preferred obedience before safety: Acts xx. 24, 'Neither count I my life dear unto me, so I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' So that was David's hope in the prolongation of life: Ps. cxviii. 17, 'I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord.' Further opportunities to honour God. This is that which maketh life to be life indeed, communion with God in Christ. It is not he who lives longest and most plentifully, but most serviceable to God's glory, that makes life to be life indeed.

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Use 1. To persuade us to make it our business to honour Christ, to advance him. It doth not only concern public persons, such as Paul was, but every private christian.

To this purpose I shall—(1.) Give you directions; (2.) Motives.

1. You must close with him by faith, and use him to the end for which God hath appointed him: 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, 'That our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him.' Now when did you close with him by faith? Faith has a double office—it

accepts Christ from God, and presents Christ to God. It makes use of him in all our converse with him; it accepts Christ in the word, and maketh use of him in prayer. In the word God offereth him to you as Lord and Saviour, to give you repentance and remission of sins. Now when you consent to God's terms, this is to believe in him. Take heed you do not make light of Christ, as those did, Mat. xxii. 5, 61 ὁι δὲ ἀμελήσαντες; they slighted, disregarded, neglected him; they had other business to mind. 'No; this is your work, your hearts should be set on it. After long traverses you must say, as Laban, Gen. xxiv. 50, 'The thing is of the Lord.' I can say nothing against it. I will see what Christ will do for my soul; oh, that I may be found in him! It presents Christ to God: Eph. iii. 12, 'In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.' You gather heart and confidence by dealing with God in his name. All religion lieth in a coming to God by him, Heb. vii. 25, but that coming is not meant of one duty, but the principal aim and purpose of the soul in all, rejoicing in God.

2. Consecrate and dedicate yourselves to Christ's use: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' There is the foundation of our obedience: 2 Cor. v. 8, 'But first gave their own selves to the Lord.' You owe yourselves to him, and therefore you give up yourselves to him; as Paul said to Philemon, ver. 19, 'Thou owest unto me even thine own self.' Lord, I am thine. Your business is first to take Christ, but then to surrender yourselves to his use.

3. Use yourselves as those that are Christ's, that is, improving your time, and estates, and strength, and relations, and talents, and interests for his glory. A good christian would have nothing, but he would make some advantage of it for Christ's use, and this will be seen by checking temptations upon this account: 1 Cor. vi. 15, 'Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot?' This body is Christ's, this time which I misspend is Christ's, this money is Christ's; hereby you own God's impress upon you. 'Holiness to the Lord' should be written upon all things, Zech. xiv. 20. And it is known by contrivances, how you shall honour Christ by your place, your relations: Neh. i. 11, 'Grant him mercy in the sight of this man; for I was the king's cupbearer.' He had improved his place for God. God hath advanced me, made me a minister, a magistrate, a master of a family, given me a great estate. What are the workings of your hearts? 2 Sam. vii. 2, 'I dwell in a house of cedar; but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.'

4. Honour him by the holiness of your conversations, when you walk so as remembering that Christ's honour lieth at stake, at another rate than others do: 1 Cor. iii. 3, 'They walk as men.' We have higher advantages, and hopes, and obligations upon ourselves than others have. Wherein do you differ? Mat. v. 46, 'What do ye more than others?' Both for matter and aim, your business should be so as to bring Christ into request with others: 1 Peter ii. 12, 'Having your conversation honest among the gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.'

5. By all your enjoyments, temporal and spiritual, let Christ be endeared to you: 1 Cor. iii. 21, ‘All things are yours, because you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.’ All mercies swim to you in his blood. Get actual possession of an evangelical right, sanctified by Jesus Christ As to quickening enlargements, it is a sign you have them from Christ when you honour him and esteem him the more for them: John xvi. 14, ‘He shall take of mine, and glorify me.’ It is a sign the Spirit of Christ dwelleth and worketh in us when all that enlightening, quickening comfort and refreshing which we have is used to the glory of Christ.

6. When you are willing to undergo any trouble, and count it an honour to suffer for Christ’s sake. To die for Christ, saith Ignatius, is greater than to be monarch of all the world: Acts v. 41, ‘And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his sake,’ ὅτι κατηξιώθησαν ἀτιμασθῆναι; that they were so far dignified as to be disgraced for Christ. *Cur non me quoque torque donas?*—Why don’t you honour me with a chain also? said one. Suffering is a privilege: ‘To you it is given to suffer for Christ,’ Phil. i. 29.

Motives.

1. Consider you are not your own, but under another lord. All disorder cometh from looking upon ourselves as our own men: Jer. ii. 31, ‘We are lords, and will not come at thee;’ Ps. xii. 4, ‘Our tongues are our own; who is lord over us?’ Prodigals will say, I spend nothing but my own. The covetous will say, ‘Shall I take my bread and my wine,’ &c.

2. We have owned Christ’s right in baptism. There the hands of consecration passed upon us: 1 Peter iii. 21, ‘Baptism doth also now save us; not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.’ You that have professed the christian religion, you rescind your baptismal vow by a loose life. Your parents consecrated you to Christ, and you will not stand to it.

3. There will a day of accounts come, when the great God of recompenses will reckon with you: Jer. li. 6, ‘For this is the time of the Lord’s vengeance; he will render unto thee a recompense;’ Luke xix. 23, ‘At my coming I will require mine own with usury.’ If there were no day of account, we are so much obliged; but there is a day of inquiry what portion you had; thus much time, thus much estate. What a poor account will most be able to make!

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4. The utility and profit of it as to present comfort and final reward.

[1.] For the present an interest in Christ’s intercession: John xvii. 9, 10, ‘I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine: and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.’ Those who glorify Christ on earth, he is pleading their cause in heaven. You are his factors, he is your advocate. It is a sweet thing to have our Redeemer speak well of us behind our back; when we are praying, to have him pleading, Father, this is one that glorified me. He makes a good report of you in heaven.

[2.] Hereafter it will turn to a good account, whatever it cost you for the present. David's companions in the wilderness had hard ser vice in the wilderness, and little wages; but when David was crowned in Hebron, they were all advanced to offices and places of power and trust. We may meet with many a frown, and hard entertainment in the world, but we shall not repent it in the day of Christ's royalty. There is a notable passage, Mat. xix. 27, 28, 'Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That ye who have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones.' What had Peter to forsake? A net, a cottage, a fisher-boat; a great all! But we are apt to think much of what we part with for Christ's sake; a little scorn, a disgraceful word, some paring of our maintenance; presently we say, What shall we have therefore? We need not seek another paymaster; Christ will not be behindhand with us ἐν παλιγγενεσία, 'in the regeneration.' Surely we do not think often enough of the general renovation of all things; if we did, we would glorify God more. If you live to Christ, you shall live with Christ, enjoy his company in heaven.

SERMON II.

To die is gain.—PHIL. i. 21.

I COME to the benefit of death, 'To die is gain.' Some refer it to martyrdom, as if the gain would be to Christ. In his life he would glorify him by preaching, in his death by martyrdom. It is true, in this sense, 'to die is gain,' no loss to the church, but an advantage, and making for her increase. *Sanguis martyrum est semen ecclesiae*—The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. And God's honour is thereby promoted: John xxi. 19, 'Signifying by what death he should glorify God.' It is so said concerning Peter's martyrdom. It is for the glory of the truth, when they are ready to seal it with their blood, and to stand to the defence even to the death. It is an evidence of the truth of God's promise, when they can hazard all in hope of the accomplishment of them; and it commendeth God's service when we are willing to please him, though with the loss of all. But this cannot be meant, for it is not usual to call anything we do or suffer for God gain to him; and it suiteth not with the context, where his service in the gospel and his eternal interests are put in competition; not the glory that Christ had by his life, and the glory Christ might have by his death, those are not the things that come in competition, but his service and glorious estate in heaven; his own unspeakable joy and comfort, that is the gain he meaneth.

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Doct. Whosoever dedicate their lives to Christ will find death itself to be great gain and advantage to them.

Death is theirs, because they are Christ's, devoted to his use and service, 1 Cor. iii. 22. It is theirs, that is, it conduceth to their use and benefit; their gain, and not their terror; an enemy to nature, but a friend to grace. In this sense it is said, Eccles. vii. 1, 'The day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth.' It is meant of those that leave a good name and a good savour behind them; for so the whole verse runs, 'A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of one's death better than the day of one's birth.' The name of the wicked rotteth, but the name of the godly is a sweet perfume; when the matter of the perfume is burnt, the scent remaineth behind them; for so when the person is gone, the savour of a good name liveth and remaineth behind them. Now to these is the day of their death better than the day of their birth, not only in that respect of name and reputation which increaseth after death, when their failings are 'buried with them,' and removed out of sight; but generally it is better with them, in regard both of sin and misery. In regard of sin, they are born in sin: Ps. li. 5, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;' but die in the Lord; are laid to sleep in the bosom of Jesus: 1 Thes. iv. 13, 14, 'I would not have you ignorant concerning them that are asleep; but if you believe that Jesus died, and rose again, so also they that sleep in Jesus,' &c. Born unclean, but die perfect. In regard of misery, birth lets us into troubles: 'Man is born to troubles, as the sparks fly upward,' Job v. 7. It is natural to us, as the ascending of light bodies and the descending of weighty and heavy bodies; but death delivereth us out of them. In the grave there is rest: Job iii. 13, 'I shall lie still and be quiet; I shall sleep and be at rest.' Not only a privative rest, or a cessation of troubles, but a positive rest, a blessed enjoyment of God: Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.' These scriptures confirm the point.

In the illustration of it I shall perform three things—

1. Show that presently upon dying, man is capable of this gain, or of a blessed estate.

2. I shall show you what this gain is.

3. That it is proper and peculiar only to those that dedicate their lives to Christ.

I. This is strongly implied, if not expressly asserted in this place, that as soon as he dieth man is capable of great gain, for otherwise the whole reasoning would fall to the ground, which is mainly built upon supposition of his gain. There are a sort of men in the world so drowned in sense that they cannot believe things to come, either questioning the immortality of the soul, or else, which is a step to it, asserting the sleep of it, and all because they so fancy it to be tied to the body as that it cannot exercise its functions and operations with out it. Those that deny the being of the soul, or abiding of it after the body is dissolved, I shall deal with them in another place. I shall only speak now to those that grant the abiding of the soul, but in a deep sleep, without any sense or feeling of good or evil. I must show the falsehood of this opinion, or else all I shall speak will be to no purpose.

First, That the soul is distinct from the body, and is not merely the vigour of the blood, appeareth by scripture, reason, and experience.

1. In scripture we read that when man's body was organised and framed, God 'breathed into him the spirit of life,' Gen. ii. 7. The life of man is a distinct thing from this mass of flesh that is proportioned into hands and feet, head and belly, arms and legs, bones and sinews; and this life of man, whatever it be, it is such a life as implieth reason, and a faculty of understanding, and willing or choosing: 'In him was life, and this life was the light of men,' John i. 5. It doth riot only enliven this flesh, but discourse and choose things at its own pleasure; a life that hath light in it. It is distinct from the body in its nature, being a substance immaterial, and not capable of being divided into parts, as the body is; for it is a spirit, not created of matter, as the body was. The body was framed out of the dust of the ground, and therefore can be resolved into it again, but the spirit was immediately created by God himself out of nothing; therefore the scripture saith, Eccles. xi. 7, 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it;' where the body, that was dust in its composition, shall be dust in its dissolution. There is described the first and last condition of the body in regard of its material cause, and the soul is described in the kind of its being; it is a spirit, or an immaterial substance; its author, God, gave it. He framed the body too, but not so immediately. In ordinary generation, our natural fathers are distinguished from the Father of our spirits, Heb. xii. 9. And by its disposal; when the body returneth to dust, the soul returneth to God. The saints resign it: Acts vii. 59, 'They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'

2. It is distinct in its supports. The body is supported by outward means and the help of the creature, but the soul is supported without means, by the immediate hand and power of God himself. The body is patched up with daily supplies from without; as it was made out of the earth, so is its food brought out of the earth: Ps. civ. 14, 'He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that he may bring forth fruit out of the earth.' And its clothing; but the soul needeth none of these things.

3. It is distinct in its operations. There are certain operations of the soul wholly independent upon the matter; as understanding and willing, for they agree to God and angels, who have no bodies: and there is no proper instrument in the body by which they should be exercised, as sight by the eye, hearing by the ear. Nay, it understands not only corporeal things, which are received by the ministry of the senses, but spiritual things, as God and angels, who have no bodies; and it can reflect upon itself; therefore it hath operations proper and peculiar to itself, so that it doth not depend upon the body.

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4. It is distinct from the body.

[1.] As to weakness and perfection. The soul perisheth and decayeth not with the body. When the body droopeth and languisheth, the soul is well, yea, best, and better than it was before. There

are distinct periods of time beyond which it is impossible to add a cubit or hair's breadth to one's stature; but the soul is ever growing forward to its perfection; and multitude of years, though they bring on much weakness, yet increase wisdom, Job xxxii. 7. Yea, the soul is strongest when the body is weakest. Dying christians have manifested the highest excellency under bodily infirmities; and when least of the life of nature, most glorious expressions of the life of grace: 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.'

[2.] As to pleasure and pain, joy and comfort. When all the joy of the body is gone, the joys of the soul are enlarged; as when the bodies of the martyrs on the rack were under torturings, their souls have been filled with inward triumphings, and their consolations: 2 Cor. i. 5, 'For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ.' When the flesh is scorched, their souls are refreshed.

5. They are distinct in the commands God hath given about it Christ hath commanded us to 'take no thought for the body,' Mat. vi. 25, but he never commanded us to take no thought for the soul, rather the contrary: Deut. iv. 9, 'Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently.' The great miscarriage of men is, because they pamper their bodies and neglect their souls. All their care is to keep up their bodies in due plight, but never regard their souls, which were more immediately given them by God, and carry the most lively character of his image, and are capable of his happiness.

Secondly, The soul is not only distinct from the body, but can live and exercise its operations apart from the body. There are many arguments from reason to prove the immortality of the soul; but let us consider scripture, which should be reason enough to christians. That it can do so appeareth by that expression of Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 2, 'I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth), such an one caught up to the third heaven.' If Paul had been of this opinion, that the soul separated from the body is void of all sense, he must then have known that certainly his soul remained in his body during this' rapture, because, according to this supposition, in that state alone could he see and hear those things which he saw and heard. And that argument is not contemptible to prove the possibility, where among other things it is said, 'Death cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ.' Therefore the soul liveth in a state to enjoy him, and in a sense of God's love to us, and our love to him.

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Thirdly, That the souls of the saints not only can live apart from the body, but actually do so, appeareth from scripture. First take a passage next the text: Phil. i. 23, 'For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.' Ἀναλύσαι is to be dissolved; it giveth us the right notion of death; it is not a destruction of the godly, but the separation of the soul from the body, dissolving of things before conjoined, when the soul is set at liberty from the fetters and captivity wherein it remained in the body. That was it he desired, to set sail for heaven.

But how can it be πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον, by 'much more the better,' if the soul were deprived of all sense and feeling, and did remain in a dead sleepy estate? Is it not better for a gracious man to wake than to sleep, to work than to be idle and sit still, to use the faculties granted us by God than to lie in a senseless condition? What profit is it to be with. the Lord, and not to enjoy his company? or not to know where we are? Oh, it is better to have our present knowledge of Christ and service to him, and those sips and tastes of spiritual comfort which the present state will admit, than to lie in such a stupid lethargy, without all understanding or spiritual sense. It would be a loss of happiness for Paul to be dissolved, when his body should lie rotting in the grave, and his soul without all fruition of God. What can be imagined to be a happiness, but to be eased of present labours? God's people are wont to reckon much of their present service and enjoyment of God, though accompanied with afflictions. Surely Paul would never be in a strait, if to be only reduced into a condition of stupid sleep, without the enjoyment of God, wherein we do nothing, feel nothing. God's people, I say, are wont to prefer the most afflicted condition with God's presence above the greatest contentment in his absence: 'If thou go not up with us, carry us not up hence,' Exod. xxxiii. 15. Better be with God in the wilderness than in Canaan without him. So that this drowsy doctrine, which puts the soul in such an inactive estate, cannot be endured, wherein souls departed enjoy no more happiness than stocks and stones, or inanimate creatures, till the resurrection. So 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' Surely if the soul slept till the resurrection, they should not say, when this house is dissolved, but when this body is raised, and this tabernacle is restored. When they desire to part with the body, it is not for want of love to their bodies, but out of love to their souls. Paul could have wished mortality to be swallowed up of life, that the mortal body might have gone to life with the immortal soul. It were absurd to long for the dissolution of that state in which we feel the love of God and Christ to us with joy unspeakable and glorious, only for an estate where there is no sense of God, or Christ, or itself, or celestial and heavenly things. It followeth afterwards, ver. 6, 'Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.' We should rather be absent from him when out of the body, and have no understanding, no love, no communion with him. The next place is Luke xxiii. 43, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' saith Christ to the good thief. By paradise is meant heaven. See 2 Cor. xii. 4. What he calls the third heaven, ver. 2, he calls paradise, ver. 4; an allusion, not to ordinary gardens, as Eden, or that garden which Adam dressed in innocency. Christ saith he was in paradise in regard of his soul, for his body was to be laid in the sepulchre. His divine nature is not intended, for so he was always in heaven: John iii. 13, 'No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven.' Now this soul of Christ, when separated from the body, was it destitute of all sense, yea or no? Can any christian think so of their blessed Lord and Saviour? Surely then it is not contrary to nature that the soul act or feel out of the body. He promiseth the penitent thief he shall be with him. Surely he speaketh it to comfort him, and this comfort was not to commence till sixteen or seventeen

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hundred years afterwards, if the soul slept till the resurrection. To evade the place, they refer σήμερον, 'to-day,' to λέγω, 'I say, I say to-day;' but the pointing in the Greek copies showeth otherwise. The sense is otherwise, for it is Christ's answer to his desire, 'Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' But now Christ, to encourage him, promiseth more than was asked, as God usually doth abundantly above what we can ask or think: I will not defer thy desire so long. None can imagine the words to be a denial, or that Christ would put him off to some hundred years after. Christ's *hodie,* 'to-day 'answereth his *quando,* 'when,' in that parable, which must be supposed to speak according to the current of those times: Luke xvi. 22, 'The beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom;' in the twinkling of an eye, or the turning of a thought. A great comfort when you come to die; in a moment angels will carry you to Christ, and Christ to God. Agonies of death are terrible, but there are joys just ready; as soon as you are loose from the prison of the body, you enter into your eternal rest; the soul flieth hence to Christ to be where he is. In short, men are in their final estate as soon as they die; they go to their own place: wicked men to the prison of hell, 1 Peter iii. 19; good men to 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 23. Would those things be said of them if they did lie only in a dull sleep without any life, light, joy, or act of love to God? Now present sleep is a burden to the saints, as it is an interruption to their service.

II. I shall show what that gain is which blessed spirits departed do enjoy. I confess we should rather labour to obtain it than scrupulously to define it. When we get up thither, we shall understand it better.

Here I shall show you—(1.) What this blessed state is; (2.) The comfortable adjuncts of it; (3.) That we lose nothing but what is made up.

1. What it is.

[1.] Privatively.

(1.) A freedom from all misery. Death is a haven of rest after storms and tempests: Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they rest from their labour.' Here the church's name is 'O thou afflicted and tossed with tempests!' but there is our haven. Here, alas! are tossings and shakings: Job xiv. 1, 'Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.' It is well they are few, because so full of trouble. A tired man would fain go to rest. Nay, it is for our profit that there are troubles (it being so natural to us to be led by sense), to imbitter our present estate; but there are no more then: here there are not only outward afflictions, molestations, death of friends and dear relations, sorrow, crying, sighing, pains; but then 'God will wipe away all tears from our eyes,' Rev. xxi. 21. But also there are inward troubles by reason of doubts, temptations, corruptions, defects, and weaknesses. How many cloudy days doth a christian pass over in the world! What damps of heart, conflicts with Satan! But there we enter into our master's joy, Mat. xxv. 21. There is no serpent in the upper paradise.

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(2.) Freedom from sin: then sin shall be wholly subdued when they die, for death is the last enemy, 1 Cor. xv. 26. If sin continued after death, death would not be the last enemy. There we are brought to God as a proof of Christ's death: Eph. v. 27, 'That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such, thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish;' Jude 24, 'And to present you faultless before the presence of his glory;' Col. i. 22, 'To present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprovable, in his sight.' Alas! what a trouble have we with sin! Rom. vii. 24, 'wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' If any man had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul had; in perils often, whipped, scourged, imprisoned, stoned. Oh, but this body of death! His lusts troubled him more than scourges, and this captivity to the law of sin more than prisons. We are sinning here while others glorify God. Here we are born in sin, and after the new birth much corruption still remains in us. *Dejectum, non ejectum*; sin is cast down, not cast out. But death works a perfect cure; it puts off all our sins at once.

[2.] Positively.

(1.) The vision of God: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'But now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then I shall know even as also I am known;' 1 John iii. 2, 'But we know when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Here we know little of him, only his track, shadow, picture; but there face to face. In the church there is only hearing of him by the ear, but in heaven there will be seeing. Now we know God only by hearsay, but see him not; still τὸ θεῖον is ἀκατάληπτον, the divine nature is incomprehensible; angels clap their wings, and cover their faces. Finite cannot comprehend infinite, no more than a cockle-shell can the ocean.

(2.) The full fruition of God. Here, 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory;' but there much more: 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall be. like him, for we shall see him as he is;' by it we become like him. In a stamp impressed, the wax receiveth only the form and figure, without any real quality, as a golden seal leaveth no tincture of gold, nor a brazen seal the property of brass. In a glass, besides figure and proportion, there is a representation of motion, but no other real qualities. But here, as iron in the fire seemeth to be fire, we are like him in holiness and happiness. There is in God τὸ μακάριον καὶ τὸ ἀγαθον, happiness and holiness; these are communicated to us.

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(1*st*.) In holiness; we love him everlastingly, as God loveth himself. Moses, by conversing with God, his face shone. We love little because we know little. To love God out of a participation of the same nature, the lowest is to love him out of interest, the highest out of a principle of holiness; not because good and bountiful, but because holy. While sight is weak, holiness is weak; and while holiness is weak, love is imperfect; for holiness is nothing in effect but love. We wander after other things, but this love is expressed by receiving, delighting, lauding, praising him for evermore.

(2*d*.) In happiness; for there is as much fruition of God as we are capable of: Rom. viii. 18, 'Glory revealed in us.' There God is all, here there is no room to receive him, no faculties to behold his glory, no means to convey it.

2. The comfortable adjuncts of it.

[1.] The place, which is very glorious. The pavement and nether part, we cannot look upon it without wonder; but the seat of the blessed is much more glorious, as the holiest of all exceeded the out ward court. Here we are in the place of our service; how pleasant soever our seat be, there is inconvenience, a mixture of winter and summer, sickness and health, life and death; it is a middle place between heaven and hell, and hath a mixture of both. The best contentments are mixed with dregs, but there is pure contentment without any sorrow at all.

[2.] The company: Heb. xii. 22, 23, 'But ye are come to mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,' Besides God, and Christ's human nature, there are an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Heaven is no solitude; there is company enough, good and blessed company. What a joy will it be to behold Christ's glory, angels and archangels ministering to him; to see the first parents of mankind, Adam and Eve, and the blessed patriarchs! Mat. viii. 11, 'They shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Enoch and Elias, the two persons that were translated into heaven in an extraordinary way. See Paul with his crown of righteousness upon his head; our friends with whom we mingle souls. Between this blessed company there is great love; every one is loving, and every one is lovely. The apostle telleth us that when faith and hope cease, love remaineth; not only as terminated on God, but as terminated on the saints. They shall not only love God above all, but love one another with a most pure and perfect love. They shall love God more than themselves, and others as themselves. As the loops of the tabernacle did couple the curtains one to another, so dear love unites the glorified saints. No more strife between Luther and Zuinglius, Hooper and Ridley, Calvinists and Lutherans; not to come nearer home, and mention those invidious names which are set up as flags of defiance to divide us into several herds and factions. And as mutual love, so there will be mutual honouring one another, and rejoicing in one an other without envy, according to the honour God puts on them. Their will is perfectly conformable to God's, rejoicing in each other as their own. Those two querulous words, *mine* and *thine*, will no more set us at variance; for one hath not the less comfort because another hath more; as a great multitude hear a speech, one hears not the less because another hears it with him; or the sun shines on a multitude, every one hath all; or as in a chorus of voices, every one is partaker of another's voice as well as his own: Neither are they set together as mute spectators and mere strangers. There is a communion between the blessed spirits. Paul when he was rapt into the third heaven, heard ἄῤῥητα ῥήματα, unutterable words, words not fit to be uttered, 2 Cor. xii. 4, which is not lawful or possible. He doth not speak so much of what he saw, but heard.

God revealed himself to Moses by sight, Exod. xxiii., to Paul by hearing. We cannot intrude into those secrets, to know what and how this communion is maintained; but somewhat we may guess at; holy and gracious conferences concerning the wisdom of God, his decrees, the works of his power, the riches of his grace, the fruits of Christ's death; as in Christ's transfiguration, Luke ix. 31, 'They appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.' To meet with holy prophets, and tell them now all is come to pass, now all hazards and dangers are over, certainly a sweet communion it will be; as travellers when they come into their inn talk of the dirtiness of the way. Only here now I shall inquire whether the saints know one another in heaven, fathers their children, and children their fathers, husbands their wives, friends their acquaintance; yea, those that never saw one another's faces?

Ans. Yes, but not after the flesh, in a carnal natural way: Mat. xxii. 30, 'They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.' But they rejoice in one another in a spiritual way, as they are related to Christ. Though it be a double contentment to see that our relations do increase the number of blessed spirits, it is not to be imagined there will be a perfect oblivion of all things. Memory is not abolished, but perfected; for those that never knew one another in the flesh shall then know one another. Adam knew Eve in the state of integrity, though he never saw her before: Gen. ii. 23, 'And Adam said, This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.' So when restored to a perfect state; the disciples knew Moses and Elias, though they had never seen them, Mat. xvii. 3. We shall be suddenly enlightened to know them in that great council of souls; being of the same company, we shall know our fellows. In that parable of Dives and Lazarus, Luke xvi., there is a representation of the everlasting estate. Abraham knew Lazarus, and the rich glutton knew him in Abraham's bosom. Ministers shall have knowledge of souls they have gained to Christ: 1 Thes. ii. 19, 'For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?' Such as were converted, edified by him. Such believers are welcomed to heaven by the poor whom they have relieved: Luke xvi. 9, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' Angels do not only know themselves, but all the elect whom they are to gather from the four winds, Mat. xiii. 41. It is more probable they shall know one another.

III. That we shall lose nothing but what shall be made up.

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1. Do we lose friends? There are better in heaven; our best friends love us not so dearly as every one doth there. This is the true communion of saints; we have communion not only with one or two, but all; now two or three berries on the top of the uppermost bough. It is well if two or three mortified humble christians can meet together, and breathe out their souls in supplications: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name.' There is an innumerable company; there is none but such. Here saints and hypocrites are mixed and blended together in promiscuous herds, there none but the wheat is gathered into the barn. There will need no fears and suspicions, no unclean enters there. Christ, that giveth entrance into heaven, cannot be deceived; there they are perfect.

Our communion is often interrupted by our infirmities; here full of contention or clashing, there all agree in the same aim and the same work; and this union and communion is constant without end; now often diverted by present weaknesses and intervenient occasions; we must break off company and societies, if not affections; there we shall never part, but always be praising God.

2. Is it ordinances we lose? There the Lamb shall be the light of the new temple. We shall study divinity in Christ's face; that will be our bible, there we shall drink of the fruit of the vine new with Christ, Mat. xxvi. 29.

3. Communion with God. Then 'we shall ever be with the Lord,' 1 Thes. iv. 17. There will be no cloud on that day.

4. Service and opportunities of glorifying God. We shall be more active to his praise. The instrument will be perfectly in tune. Here we often jar, there will be no spot or blemish, Eph. v. 27.

5. Comforts of this world, they are of use in our passage and we must possess as if we possessed not, 1 Cor. vii. 31; but there we are free from all needs. No man complains, when he is recovered out of a disease, that he has no more need of physic.

Use 1. To commend Christ's service to you. If you have dedicated your life to the flesh, then death will be bitter: Gal. vi. 8, 'For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.' A man should consider all things with respect to his latter, end, that he may have the same notion of things living and dying. But Christ's servant, what comfort shall he have when he goeth hence to his master? John xii. 16, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be.' Oh, follow him; you will not repent of it at last. Believe this that is spoken; if you did believe, surely you could not be so slack in his service: John xi. 26, 'Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, though he die yet shall he live. Believest thou this?' Did we strongly consider and soundly believe these truths, Christ would have more servants than he hath. Oh, then, there is a great deal of profit in Christ's service as to present comfort and final reward.

Use 2. A meditation for the dying. We should hear for the time to come, and not only hear, to learn to live by the word, but learn to die. To make you willing to die, consider, death is not a loss, but a gain. You leave earth for heaven, misery for complete happiness, a temporal life for an eternal; a shed is taken down that a palace may be raised up in its stead; you exchange a lease for an inheritance, and hard service for perfect freedom. Death is terrible upon a natural and legal account, as it puts an end to our present comforts; and upon a legal account, as it is attended with sin: 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin.'

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Use 3. To confute their fondness that would divide these two. Many would have death to be gain, but do not take care to live to Christ. Alas! that is a foolish thought. You would have comfort, but you deny duty; you would live to the flesh, yet die in the Lord. God might have customers more than enough for heaven upon these terms. To die to you will be loss: 'Son, remember that thou in

thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' You cannot expect to go from Delilah's lap to Abraham's bosom. No; you go from pleasure to pain, from your friends to devils, from opportunities of grace to torments and inflicting of punishments, from your house to the prison of hell.

Use 4. Comfort concerning departed friends. Will you envy at their preferment, whine and murmur at their gain? If you loved them indeed, you would be glad when it is well with them; and where can it be better for them than in heaven, in the bosom of Jesus Christ? The soul is there. You leave the body in the grave, but Christ will not leave it there: 'Thou fool! that which thou sowest lives not except it die.' Oh, then comfort you one another with these words.

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SERMONS UPON 2 THESSALONIANS I.[5]

SERMON I.

So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all the persecutions and tribulations which ye endure.—2 THES. i. 4.

WE still stick in the preface and introduction into this epistle, where in the apostle signifieth his singular love to the Thessalonians, manifested in two effects—first, that he had given thanks to God for them, ver. 3; secondly, gloried of them among other christians, in the text So that in the words observe—(1.) The form and manner of the commendation; (2.) The matter of it.

First, In the manner—

1. The person commending, 'We ourselves.' In the former epistle he speaketh of their faith as praised by others: 1 Thes. i. 8, 'In every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything.' Now he justifieth the common fame by his own testimony; he himself approved their constancy. (1.) *Laudavi a laudato*. It is easy to deceive the credulous multitude, but to deserve esteem of those who are best able to judge is a comfort to us. (2.) The fame of their receiving the faith was spread by others, but when they were in a confirmed estate of grace, Paul himself ventureth to give them his word and testimony, 'We ourselves,' &c. Where grace is eminent and notorious, it may be praised without suspicion of flattery. (3.) To keep up the value of our testimony, that it may add weight and credit to those that receive it. There was much in this, 'We ourselves.'

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5 The doctor began this chapter at the third verse, on which he preached five sermons, that are printed in volume [xvii. of this edition], containing the growth and increase of faith, from the nature, properties, examples, and instances of it in scripture.

2. The act of praising, ‘We glory in you,’ καυχῶμεν. Glorying imports—(1.) Exultation or rejoicing of mind; (2.) The outward expression of it, by word of mouth or speech. The one cometh from the apprehension of some excellency, good, or benefit; the other from a desire that others may know how we are affected with it. But did this glorying become apostolical gravity? Yes; for—(1.) It was for the honour of God; for before he speaketh of the praising of them, he speaketh of his giving thanks to God, from whom they received these gifts and graces. He doth not challenge the glory as due to himself and his labours, but ascribeth all to God. (2.) For the encouragement of the Thessalonians. We ought to give a testimony to others that deserve it, not to curry favour with them, but to encourage them to perseverance in the way of God. (3.) For the example of others and the edification of the church; for he propounded them as a pattern of imitation. (4.) For his own comfort; he gloried in them as the seal and fruit of his ministry: 1 Thes. ii. 20, ‘For our joy and glory are ye in the Lord.’ For these reasons, when the work did first speak for itself, did Paul add his testimony.

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3. The persons before whom, ‘In the churches of God.’ Not in profane assemblies or common meetings, but where the people of God were met together to worship God and receive spiritual benefit. They are called ‘churches of God’—(1.) Because God instituted and founded them: Acts xx. 28, ‘Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.’ (2.) There God is worshipped and acknowledged: Ps. xxii. 3, ‘He inhabiteth the praises of Israel.’ (3.) There he manifests his power and presence: Eph. ii. 22, ‘Built up to be an habitation of God through the Spirit.’

Secondly, The matter of his praise: their eminent graces—(1.) Mentioned and specified; (2.) Heightened by their grievous temptations.

1. The graces wherein they excelled, faith and patience. Before it was faith and love, now it is faith and patience. These two are often joined; as Heb. vi. 12, ‘Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises.’ So Phil. i. 29, ‘To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake.’ Faith goeth before suffering, for the sufferer must first be a believer; but when God calleth to it, both must go together. So Heb. x. 35, 36, ‘Cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; for ye have need of patience.’ As if confidence and patience were but one and the same thing, at least very much of kin.

2. The grievousness of the temptations wherewith these graces were exercised: ‘In all the persecutions and tribulations which ye endure.’ (1.) In the term ‘all’ there is a multiplicity implied. (2.) And in the words, ‘persecutions and tribulations,’ the grievousness of their temptations. They were not only persecuted or brought into trouble, but the persecution took effect. ‘Persecution’ noteth the attempt of their adversaries, and ‘tribulation’ the success; their trouble was not only endeavoured but effected. Therefore it is said, Rom. viii. 35, ‘Shall tribulation, or distress, or

persecution?' (3.) In the word 'endured 'is intimated that with great patience they bore these troubles, and yet continued firm and constant in the faith.

This latter branch I shall insist upon; and observe—

[1.] That tribulations and persecutions do often befall God's dearest and choicest servants.

[2.] That a constant unconquered patience under persecutions and tribulations is a sign and fruit of a strong faith; and so it suiteth with what I lately handled concerning God's goodness and growth of faith.

Doct. 1. That tribulations and persecutions do often befall God's dearest and choicest servants: 2 Tim. iii. 12, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;' Acts xiv. 22, he 'exhorted them to continue in the faith, saying, That through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.' We must enter into the kingdom, and ordinarily it is through many tribulations.

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1. That we may be conformed to our Lord, and pledge him in his bitter cup. Christ was a man of sorrows, and there would be a strange disproportion between him and us if we should altogether live in delicacy, ease, and pleasures: Col. i. 24, ὑστερήματα Χριστοῦ, 'That I may fill up what is behind of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh.' There are Christ's personal and Christ's mystical sufferings. The sufferings of Christ personal are complete and meritorious; they need not to be filled up; but Christ mystical, 1 Cor. xii. 12, the sufferings of Christ mystical are not complete until every member of his mystical body have their own allotted portion and share. Some drops of the storm light upon us; the whole tempest did beat upon him. The apostle, to animate christians to suffer constantly and patiently, telleth us that the captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings, Heb. ii. 10. Those that will partake with Christ in his kingdom must partake with him in his sorrows, at least resolve to do so, and fare as he fared. If you have a high esteem of Christ and low esteem of yourselves, you will easily consent to submit to the will of God herein, even to carry the cross after Christ. Paul counted all things but dung and dross that he might know Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings, Phil. iii. 10. There is a great deal of sweetness and spiritual comfort in suffering after, for, and with Christ; and we should count all things dung and dross to gain this experience. It is comfort enough to a gracious heart that he is made thereby more like his lord and master.

2. It is for our trial. Faith is most tried in afflictions. We have not ordinarily so clear a proof of the strength and growth of grace in us as then: 1 Peter i. 7, 'That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.' We have spiritual advantage by our trials. Faith is discovered to be sound and saving: this is, and should be, of more worth to a gracious heart than the best gold on earth. A man may be deceived at other times, and think that faith strong which a trial discovereth to be weak; as Peter: Mat. xxvi. 35, 'Though I should die with thee, yet I will not

deny thee.' We can hardly believe ourselves to be so weak as we afterward find ourselves to be. A man may doubt, and think his faith weak, which a trial discovereth to be strong, Heb. x. 32; and Heb. xi. 34, 'Out of weakness were made strong;' pusillanimous at first, sinking under their fears, yet wonderfully strengthened by God. To those that have faith, to know they have it, and to be assured of it by a sensible trial, it is a greater benefit than much worldly treasure.

3. That the excellency of our spiritual estate may appear, which can afford us joy under the saddest temporal condition: John xvi. 33, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me you shall have peace.' A little will keep us comfortable and quiet. When all things succeed well with us in the world, we live partly on the creature, partly on God; as it is easy to go down the stream when we have wind and tide, but to row against the stream, to bear up when we have waves and winds against us, that requireth much strength: 2 Cor. i. 5, 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ.' This will sweeten the bitter waters, like the wood in Marah, or the meal in the pot of Coloquintida. Without these sufferings we should not know so much. A drop of this honey will sweeten the bitterest cup we can drink of. In Christ we find all matter of joy, peace, and comfort.

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4. We need these sufferings: 1 Peter i. 6, 'Ye are in heaviness for a season, if need be.' We need these things to mortify our pride, to reduce us to more close walking, Ps. cxix. 57, to tame our flesh, which is apt to wax wanton. Even those sufferings which are principally for Christ tend to the weakening of sin also, and are as vinegar and sour sauce to that luscious estate which we are apt to surfeit of. The honour, worldly wealth, and power of God's children do so strangely corrupt them, that when they get uppermost they make lamentable work in the world, and disgrace themselves and their profession. So that these persecutions and tribulations become a necessary part of God's discipline. Great and long prosperity doth pervert the best; castigations are therefore probatory.

Use 1. Information.

1. With what thoughts we should take up the stricter profession of christianity, namely, with expectations of the cross. Many think they may be good christians, yet all their days live a life of ease and peace, without any trouble or molestation. This is all one as if one should list himself a soldier and never expect battle, or as if a mariner should go to sea and always expect a calm; so unreasonable it is for a christian to expect no occasions of self-denial. No; all that will go to heaven had need be prepared and resolved. We must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, or else we shall be soon foundered and halt, Eph. vi. 15. You must allow for sufferings, and resolve upon the voyage whatever storms we meet with.

2. What fools they are that take up religion upon a carnal design of honour, ease, and plenty in the world. You may do so for a time, but the trials will come. There are inconveniences attend a true uniform zeal in the most peaceable times; but now and then Christ cometh with his fan throughly

to purge his floor; therefore unless we can follow a naked Christ upon unseen encouragements, either we call that religion which is not religion, or else make way for a shameful retreat and change. The summer friends of the gospel, or those painted butterflies that flutter about it in the sunshine of prosperity, must expect a winter will come. Christ doth not invite his followers with promises of honour and riches, but rather telleth us of the cross, and persecution, and tribulation, of the worst at first, to discourage hypocrites, who cheapen and taste, but will not buy; to forearm his people that they may not be offended, that they may be willing to suffer these things when the Lord sees fit. Now whether they come or no, we must be prepared. God never intended Isaac should be sacrificed, yet he will have Abraham lay the knife to his throat, and make all ready.

3. How much they mistake that cannot endure to have their ears scratched with the remembrance of the cross, as if it were a lesson out of season, now when the profession of christianity is generally received in the christian world.

[1.] The warnings are frequent in scripture. And do we think the whole burden was laid upon the primitive christians, that we might profess christianity at ease? John xvi. 1, 'These things have I told you, that you might not be offended.' As Augustine, *Ep. ad Victorianum*—We pretend to believe the scriptures when we read them, and yet complain when they are fulfilled.

[2.] Though it be a pure calm for the present, and you see little need or use of this doctrine; they that have no sore care not for the salve: but there are strange revolutions in the world. The Shunamite, that stood in no need of the prophet, 2 Kings iv. 13, was fain to be beholden to the prophet's man, 2 Kings viii. 5. Such vicissitudes there are in human affairs.

[3.] It was never so well with the world but somewhat of Christ is made matter of dispute; and disputes beget interests, and those interests create animosities and hatreds, and hatreds troubles. Many, where they could not bring the world to the gospel, would bring the gospel to the world; and when they had contrived this discreet and middle course (as they thought), that should serve the turn for heaven and earth too, this begot the greatest contests in the christian world, and hath been the occasion of massacres, blood, and mischiefs in popery, which is christianity disguised into a worldly thing.

[4.] Forearming and preparing for troubles helpeth the other parts of christianity; for it is the means to cause us sit loose from the creature, and to introduce that weanedness and mortification which is so serviceable to the practice and power of godliness. We can hardly discharge duties unless we prepare for troubles. Unless we get a habit of patience, we are not ὁλόκληροι, James i. 4; and that which is lame is soon turned out of the way, Heb. xi. Christ can hardly be master of our persons unless he be master of our interests. We have them from his bounty, and therefore for his service do forego them when he calleth us thereunto. Martyrs are required in the time of the church's peace, as well as persecutions, to mortify our pride and worldliness, to tame our flesh; that if the occasion be wanting, the will to suffer any thing for Christ may not be wanting. Our salvation and

heaven can not be purchased at too dear a rate, Acts x. 39. You can be no losers by Christ, Heb. xi. 35.

4. It informeth us that if this be not our lot and portion, we ought the more to bless God, and to be the more careful in the duties which belong to the season, and in years of plenty lay up (as Joseph did) for a time of famine and scarcity.

[1.] Be the more strict and holy: Acts ix. 31, 'When the churches had rest, they were edified, walking in the fear of God.' When we are not called to passive obedience, our active obedience should be more cheerfully performed. But is it indeed so? Our fathers suffered more cheerfully for Christ than we speak of him, and went more readily to the stake than we go to a sermon or the throne of grace. But yet it must be so, for our peace and comfort will cost us more in getting; therefore unless we abound in the love and work of the Lord, we are like to be in the dark as to our eternal interests.

[2.] We must be more mortified to the world; for he that liveth a flesh-pleasing, a sense-pleasing life, is but ripening himself for apostasy, James iv. 4. He that will be a friend to the world will be an enemy to Christ. How can they that prize worldly prosperity and sensual satisfaction so much ever induce their hearts to part with these things? None are corrupted with prosperity but they are as much dejected with adversity: 2 Peter i. 6, 'To temperance patience.' These befriend one another. A man that shutteth up himself much with God can the better bear a prison; and he that is contented with a little can trust God in the loss of all.

[3.] He that aboundeth in charity, and is willing to communicate this world's goods to him that needeth, will the sooner venture all in Christ's hands: Gal. vi. 10, 'Do good while you have opportunity.' He that neglecteth or slighteth a command will murmur against providence when that is taken from him by force which he would not willingly give.

[4.] Diligence in holiness; for the martyr must have all the preceding graces, poor in spirit, meek, merciful, hungering after righteousness, pure in heart, &c., Mat. v. 1-12. You begrudge a little pains for God, how will you expose the body to all kind of sufferings? *Melior est impatientia boni—Tertul*.

[5.] If you cannot digest lighter afflictions, how will you bear greater? If you cannot bear with a scoff, a frown, or scorn, or resist the counsel of carnal friends, how will you bear the loss of life itself? There are private persecutions as well as public; therefore father and mother are put into the catalogue, and brother and sister, Luke xiv. 26. If you cannot endure a disgrace, a loss of preferment, how will you endure rapine, torture, and the fiery trial, &c.? 'If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how canst thou contend with horses?' Jer. xii. 5.

Doct. 2. That a constant and unconquered patience under many persecutions and tribulations is a sign of a strong faith; for this is the evidence that the apostle produceth, that their faith grew exceedingly.

1. I shall show what is patience.

2. What of faith is manifested by it.

3. The reasons why this is the fruit and evidence.

I. What is patience? A contented endurance of painful evils. It is either moral or spiritual. The moral virtue is when, by such arguments as human prudence furnisheth us with, we harden ourselves to bear the evils that befall us in that honest course wherein we are engaged. The spiritual grace is the fruit of the Spirit, and we bear these evils from divine principles to divine ends. It concerneth a christian to see whether it be nature or grace that beareth him up under his troubles. The grace of patience, as it is wrought in us by God, who is therefore called 'the God of patience,' Rom. xv. 5, so it fetcheth its strength from the word of God: Rom. xv. 4, 'That we through the patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.' Now scriptural arguments are fetched either from the will of God, who appointeth us to this conflict, 1 Thes. iii. 3, or from the glory of God, which is promoted thereby, Phil. i. 20, or else our final happiness, James i. 12, or from the example of our Lord Jesus Christ; who 'suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps,' 1 Peter ii. 21. Now these arguments will hold us more closely to our duty, and beget another kind of patience than mere nature can attain unto.

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This patience, which is the grace, may be considered—(1.) Barely as tried; (2.) As tried with many and long afflictions.

1. Barely as tried. Some give up at the first assault. Impatiency of adversity is the character of the stony ground; and it is said, Mat. xiii. 21, 'When tribulation or persecution ariseth for the word, by and by he is offended.' They do not stand long when God cometh to try their sincerity; this argueth no faith. Others hold up against the first brunt, but begin to be tired and wax weary in their minds, Heb. xii. 3. This argueth weak faith, which must be strengthened; it hath not ἔργον τέλειον, James i. 4. We must tarry till the perfection of patience be more thoroughly discovered.

2. As tried with many and long afflictions. Many: Heb. x. 32, πολλὴν ἄθλησιν; and divers trials, James i. 2; this is great patience. Long evils: Col. i. 4, 'Strengthened with all might, unto all patience, and long-suffering, and joyfulness.' Long-suffering is patience extended. The perfection of grace is not discovered till put on many and great trials. Many cannot bear any evil; they have no faith. Some hold out in slighter temptations for a while; they have weak faith. But the constant and unconquered patience is the fruit of strong faith. Thus I have shown what patience is.

II. What of faith is manifested by it? All kinds of faith—(1.) Assent; (2.) Consent; or (3.) Confidence.

1. Assent; for we must believe the truth with a divine faith before we can suffer for it; a probable human faith will not be sufficient. How can we endure all those afflictions and trials for supernatural things, which merely depend upon divine revelation, unless we be firmly persuaded of the truth of them? The cause for which we suffer is the gospel; the comfort and support which we have in suffering is the hope of eternal life. Now both adherence to the cause and the hope of the reward are built upon assent, and receive their strength from the strength of assent: Acts xiv. 22, 'He exhorteth them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.'

2. Consent, or fidelity to Christ in our covenanted duty, Mat. xvi. 24. In great afflictions we are tried whether we love anything above Christ: Mat. x. 37, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.' The resolution of this consent is the thing tried, whether prepared to endure anything for Christ's sake, Acts xxi. 13. It is easier to discourse of patience than to exercise it in time of trial; as it is easier to build a castle in time of peace than to defend it in time of war. Unless we overcome the devil, world, and flesh, as well as renounce them, we cannot be faithful to Christ; unless we more and more get this deadness to the world, weaken this softness, delicacy, and impatiency of the flesh, &c.

3. Confidence, or relying upon God's promises, which are our great support in all troubles and tribulations. Two sort of promises—(1.) That God will enable you to bear them; (2.) That he will graciously reward them. First, enable you to bear them, 2 Tim. i. 12, 2 Tim. iv. 18, 1 Cor. x. 13. Thus faith supporteth us. Secondly, that he will graciously reward them. Christianity is nothing else but a life of faith and hope, quickened by future promises; especially in our afflicted estate. Faith receiveth all its strength from a sense of the world to come, Rom. viii. 18, 2 Cor. iv. 17. A heart in heaven is fortified against all evils below. When we are suffering with the church militant, if we can but look up to the church triumphant, we shall see all made up to us that we can lose or suffer here.

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III. The reasons.

1. Faith is the grace that is most struck at in our tribulations; therefore they are called 'the trial of our faith,' James i. 3, δοκίμιον πίστεως. And when Christ telleth Peter that Satan had desired to winnow him as wheat, he saith, 'I have prayed that thy faith fail not,' Luke xxii. 32; that is, be not conquered by his terrors, so as utterly to forsake the faith. Satan's spite is at faith, and God permitteth it for the trial of our faith; and therefore if a man know the strength and vigour of it in time of tribulation, then ordinarily he hath a clearer proof of the truth and strength of that grace than at other times.

2. It is the grace that is of most use to us in such times. Nothing can bear us up but faith: 1 Peter v. 9, 'Whom resist, steadfast in the faith;' adhering to the truths of the gospel, and depending upon the promises thereof, that we neither quit our duty nor our confidence: Eph. vi. 16, 'Above all, taking the shield of faith,' &c. As long as our belief is firm, we are guarded as with a shield. The shield defendeth the body and all other pieces of the armour, and beateth back those violent and piercing temptations whereby Satan would shake our constancy. It engageth the almighty power of God and Christ for us, and is the life and vigour of all other graces. Three benefits we have by it—

[1.] It keepeth us, that we do not for these things question the love of God: Isa. xlix. 14, 'But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me.' Thus did the people lament themselves in the time of their long and tedious captivity, as if God had no regard to them. So Ps. lxxvii. 9, 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious?' We think God hath no love, no fatherly care over us, or question our adoption, Heb. xii. 5.

[2.] Take no sinful course for our escape: Ps. cxxv. 3, 'Ifet not them put forth their hand to iniquity;' ver. 5, 'As for them who turn aside to crooked paths, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.' It should not shake our constancy, and persuade us to do as wicked men do: Isa. xxviii. 16, 'He that believeth shall not make haste;' Heb. xi. 35, 'Not accepting deliverance,' with the displeasure of God and hazard of conscience.

[3.] That we may not faint and grow weary of duties, even of life itself, as Jonah iv. 8. Faith keepeth us from fainting, Ps. xxvii. 13, Ps. xlii. 5.

3. In such times faith is manifested. The true and sensible discovery of faith is patience under manifold tribulations.

1.] Because then we have nothing to stick unto but the comforts and supports of faith. While we have anything to live upon on this side God, either for maintenance, or protection, or safety, God hath but the name; as those, Isa. iv. 11, 'We will eat our own bread, we will wear our own apparel, only call us by thy name.' Though the flesh liveth upon its own proper supply, yet we have so much religious manners as to give God the name. But now, when these are removed from us, then it is more plainly seen what we live upon, and how we live, either by faith or sense. Besides, in daily and light trials reason will minister some comfort; as philosophy knew little better than *non si male nunc, et olim sic erit*; that their present troubles will shortly cease, and they shall shortly partake of their delights here, and so force themselves into a kind of quietness in their troubles when they cannot help it, and hope shortly it will be better with them as to their worldly estate. Thus in daily and light trials a man of understanding may hold up the head; but when one deep calleth to another, then nature yieldeth. Many persecutions and tribulations spend all our probabilities; these troubles and dangers leave us wholly to faith: Rev. xiii. 10, 'Here is the faith and patience of the saints.' The fit time to exercise these graces; that is, in the trials of antichrist; they will have

work enough for faith and patience. Sense findeth nothing to live upon; reason, or confidence, or hope findeth nothing to live upon; only God's promises keep faith and patience alive.

[2.] Its proper genuine effect is then produced to the view of conscience, and of the world also. It sensibly appeareth what boldness and courage our belief of God's promises hath produced in us, by enduring the greatest extremities rather than forsake the way of the Lord. Certainly the strength of faith, as of all other graces, is most seen in the effects. Now there is a twofold effect of faith—to obey with cheerfulness, and to endure with patience. This is called the 'Work of faith,' 2 Thes. i. 11, the imperate acts. Now, when the work of faith is fulfilled with power, there is no longer a veil upon it; the sincerity of it is unquestionable. The latter we are upon, enduring with patience: 2 Cor. iv. 13, 'We having the same spirit of faith, believe, and therefore speak.' Boldly own the truths of the gospel, whatever troubles we endure for it. This showeth a mighty spirit of faith is come upon a man, when death worketh in him, ver. 12. In afflictions, by patience and constancy we confess Christ and his truth, and sensibly express faith in him. But you will say, Is this such a manifest token of our sincerity? Doth not the apostle say, 1 Cor. xiii. 3, 'Though I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing?' I answer—We must distinguish between judging of others and judging ourselves. Of others, by the bare outward acts or effects: Mat. vii. 20, 'By their fruits shall ye know them.' Of ourselves, by habits and effects together. If the ground or inward cause of our suffering be the love of Christ, the belief of the reward, the humble neglect of the flesh, contempt of the world, and all this verified in forsaking all for Christ, the case is evident and clear.

Use 1. Let us determine with ourselves that suffering with Christ is the way to reign with him. We would fain have continual prosperity, because it is easy and pleasing to the flesh, but the scripture showeth us another way. God's gold must be tried; they that would overcome must fight. If we like not of these terms, let the way of Christ alone; but if we desire his glory hereafter, let us be contented with this lot here.

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2. Deliberately sit down, and count what it may cost you to follow Christ and save your souls, Luke xiv. 28, that so your thoughts of it may fortify your resolutions, and you may not count it strange when it cometh, 1 Peter, iv. 12. Suffering doth not surprise christians indeed as a thing unlooked for, for they have been long preparing for it. Many read of suffering in the gospel, but see no probability of it, therefore dream of a smooth and easy way to heaven.

3. Consent to do so. In resolution forsake all, Luke xiv. 26; which resolution must still be renewed and strengthened; for if we be careless, faith will fail.

4. When it cometh, endure it with patience. It should be some pleasure and satisfaction to your souls to find yourselves in the common way to heaven, 1 Peter iv. 13. Nothing is too dear and hard for securing heaven.

SERMON II.

Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.—2 THES. i. 5.

THE apostle speaketh from the commendation to the consolation; wherein the apostle declareth the use and fruit of these sufferings—(1.) Generally; (2.) Particularly. A notable means of evidencing the general judgment and their own particular glory.

From the general use, ἔνδειγμα τῆς δικάιας κρίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ—

Doct. That the persecutions which the godly suffer from the wicked are a plain demonstration that God shall one day judge the world, and will give to every one according to his works.

I shall first state the point, and then show how it is a demonstration, &c.

1. It concerneth us to be fully persuaded of the truth of a future judgment, wherein punishments and rewards shall be dispensed, for two reasons—(1.) It establisheth our true and proper comfort, for then our wrongs shall be righted, Phil. i. 28, and our labour of love recompensed, Heb. vi. 10. (2.) Our duty is bound upon us by the strictest tie, for this is the great awe-band upon us, Eccles. xii. 14.

2. This judgment is a righteous judgment: Acts xvii. 31, 'He hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness.' Now he trieth the world in patience, conniveth at many faults; though none are punished now besides or beyond their deservings, yet all are not punished according to their deservings.

3. This judgment needeth to be evidenced to us, not only by the light of scripture, but reason. Though light of scripture be more strong and clear, yet the light of nature hath its use. Nature saith, It may be, Faith, It shall be; yet the former testimony must not be rejected.

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[1.] Because things seen by a double light work the more strongly upon us; as upon our love and obedience: 'How much more to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord?' Philem. 16. So upon our faith; when even nature teacheth us that it is reasonable to expect such a retribution, all vain cavils are refuted.

[2.] Because all have not received the light of scripture, at least not with such reverence and respect as they ought to do. To such the light of nature is a preparative inducement either to believe, or to believe more firmly.

[3.] Because in time of temptation (as the time of bitter and grievous persecution is) we need all the succour and relief which the nature of the thing will afford. Evil is present and pressing, and

our great hopes are to come. Then besides the grounds of faith we must study the helps of faith. The grounds of faith are the promises of the gospel; the helps of faith are such demonstrations and evidences as the light of nature will afford in the case. Reason is allowed to be a handmaid to faith.

[4.] Among other arguments to evidence a future day of recompense, the persecutions of the godly by the wicked are ἔνδειγμα, a plain document or demonstration that such a righteous judgment there will be. That is asserted in the text.

The argument may be conceived two ways—

(1.) If God so severely chastised the relics of sin in his children, how much sorer vengeance attendeth the wicked that live in all manner of profaneness? If *leviora delicta*, the lighter offences of his children be thus chastised, what severity may the wicked expect for their enormous crimes? The scripture is not a stranger to such an argument; as 1 Peter iv. 17, 'For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?' If God will manifest his just displeasure against them of his own family, for their correction and trial, surely the end of the wicked will be unspeakably terrible. If they sip at the cup of trembling, the wicked must expect to drink up the dregs thereof. Their trials are certain forerunners of a woful end, abiding the instruments thereof, when the Lord has done his work by them; for if those who are justified by Christ, and walk holily, get to heaven through so many fiery trials, those that cast off all religion and give up themselves to all wickedness, in the day of God's reckoning with them they cannot expect to be sheltered from his everlasting wrath, when their judge shall force them into his presence. The like arguing is in Luke xxiii. 31, 'If these things be done in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?' Green wood is unapt to burn, but dry sere wood will easily take fire. So Prov. xi. 31, 'Behold the righteous shall be recompensed upon earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner?' 'Recompensed,' that is, punished or chastised for their transgressions. The certainty of the punishment of the wicked is confirmed from the chastisements of the godly; for if God be so severe upon his children, what will become of enemies? So Jer. xxv. 29, 'If I bring evil on the city that is called by my name, should ye be utterly unpunished? ye shall riot be unpunished.' If God had begun so roughly with his own people, they must look as surely and sorely to suffer at last. Thus it will hold good.

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(2.) This argument may be formed thus: If good men suffer here, and the ungodly have the upper hand, and have liberty and power to vex them with all manner of grievances, it showeth that there is a righteous judgment to come, wherein the godly shall obtain the reward, and the ungodly cannot avoid punishment; for no righteous governor will suffer his disobedient subjects to persecute those that most care fully obey him, if he hath power to remedy it; and therefore, though he permit it for a time, yet he will call them to an account, and then amends and satisfaction shall be made them that have suffered wrong fully. So their enduring many persecutions and tribulations was an ἔνδείγμα, a perfect document and demonstration of a judgment to come. This I take to be the

argument here, for the apostle's intent is not to humble but comfort these Thessalonians; and our great consolation is taken from the day of judgment, when our final redemption draweth nigh and is accomplished. The former consideration tendeth more to humiliation and caution, and tendeth more to the establishment of the punishment of enemies, but this to the reward of friends, when God's faithful servants shall be restored to their due honour and glory.

Secondly, How it is a demonstration of a future judgment. That it may the more sink into your minds, I shall deduce it at large.

1. There is a God. This is the supreme primitive truth, which lieth at the bottom of all religion: Heb. xi. 6, 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is.' And it is evident to reason; for if there be not a first and fountain-being, how did we come to be? for nothing can make itself; or how did the world fall into this order wherein now we see it? Indeed we cannot open our eyes but some object or other is presented to our view, which loudly proclaimeth that there is an infinite eternal power which made us and all things else. It were to light a candle to the sun to prove this.

2. That this God is just; for all perfections are in the first being. To deny him to be just is to deny him to be God and the governor of the world. The perfection of his nature includeth his justice, for he is infinitely righteous, both in himself and all his dealings with the creatures: Jer. xii. 1, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord.' So doth the eminency of his office: Rom. iii. 5, 6, 'If God were unrighteous, how then shall he judge the world?' that is, he were then incapable of governing mankind.

3. That this holy just God is the governor of the world; for man being his creature, doth thereby become his subject, obliged to obey him. He is a rational free agent, placed among occasions of good and evil; and though he be bound to obey, yet might continue in his obedience or disobey God, as the woful event showed. God is called the judge of the earth, to whom reward or vengeance belongeth, Ps. xciv. 1, 2.

4. It is agreeable to the justice of his government that it should be well with them that do well, and ill with them that do evil; or that he should make a difference by rewards and punishments between the obedient and the wicked. Conscience and natural reason owneth this truth: Rom. i. 32, 'They know the judgment of God, that they that do such things are worthy of death.' It seemeth uncomely when it is otherwise: 'As snow in summer and rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool,' Prov. xxvi. 1. When the wicked are exalted, men look on it as an uncouth thing, as a blemish whenever it is done. Well, then, God is a rewarder of good, a punisher of evil.

5. This reward and punishment is not fully administered in this world, even in the judgment of them who have no great knowledge of the nature of sin, and the punishment which is competent thereto; yea, rather the best go to the wall, and are exercised with poverty, disgrace, scorn, and all manner of troubles, when the wicked live a life of pomp and ease, and often have their will upon

the godly, and oppress them at their pleasure. Hence come the complaints and expostulations of the saints, when they have stumbled at this stumbling-stone, Ps. lxxiii., Jer. xii., Hab. i. And indeed how shall we reconcile these things with the notions we have of God? Surely there is a God, and it is as sure that he takes notice of human affairs, and will judge accordingly. What is the reason then of this disproportion in his dealings between the good and the bad? No satisfactory account can be given, but that the wicked are reserved to future punishment, and the godly to future reward.

6. Since God's justice doth not make a sufficient difference here, there is another life where he will do it; for otherwise all these absurdities would follow—

[1.] God would seem indifferent to good and evil, yea, more partial to the evil; and would seem to approve and favour the rebellious more than the righteous; but this were a blasphemy, and a diminution of God's goodness and holiness, Ps. lxxiii. 1; so Ps. xi. 6, 7. Therefore there is a time to come when God will manifest his respects to the one above the other.

[2.] Man would seem to be left at liberty to break or keep God's laws at his pleasure, and no harm would come of it; yea, present good and profit. But this would destroy all obedience, and God is particularly engaged to punish such as would flatter themselves with these hopes, Deut, xxx. 19, 20, Zeph. i. 12.

[3.] Obedience would be man's loss and ruin, and so God would be the worst master: 1 Cor. xv. 19, 'If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.' The worst would be the most happy and the best the most miserable; for the children of God do not only forsake the grateful pleasures of the world, but hazard all their natural interests, and actually suffer the loss of all things by the cruelty of their persecutors. Now Christ would never proselyte us to a religion that should be our undoing, nor shall any of his people be posers by him. This is contrary to all natural light and sense of religion that is in men's hearts, that they that venture the most for Christ should be in the worst condition. Therefore there must be another life, when God will fulfil the good he hath promised, and execute the evil threatened.

[4.] That the most eminent virtue should lie under perpetual infamy; for the people of God do not only suffer hard things, but their names are cast forth as evil, and their way condemned as factious singularity; and though they be instruments of public good, yet they are traduced as the troublers of Israel, and so made sacrifices to public hatred. But this is a great absurdity, therefore things must be reviewed, and that which is good restored to its public honour: 1 Peter iv. 13, 14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye.' When his glory shall be revealed, so shall yours; which is a great satisfaction to the godly, who prize a good name above other earthly interests.

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[5.] The children of wisdom would seem sons of folly, in checking their lusts, venturing their interests, and renouncing all for their fidelity to Christ; as if they did foolishly for running into such

inconveniencies, when they might spare themselves and sleep in a whole skin. Now it is a great absurdity that God's wisest and most faithful servants should be accounted fools; that would quench and destroy all zeal for God. No; there will a time come when the wisdom of the world shall be seen to be the greatest folly, and that there are no such fools as those that employ their greatest abilities in attaining present pleasure, profit, and preferment, with the neglect of their precious souls, and those the wisest adventurers who have sold all to promote the honour of God and gain Christ, who look not upon things as they appear now to the sensual and deluded world, but as they will be found at the last day, when all things shall appear in their own colours.

[6.] That all the comfort of the saints in looking and longing for this day is but a fantastical impression or fanatical illusion, when yet these desires and affections are raised and quickened in them by God; not only as he doth warrant them by his word, but as wrought in them by his Spirit, Rom. viii. 23, and 2 Cor. v. 5. Now it is not for the honour of God that the hopes of the saints should be disappointed, and their great expectations frustrated. No; there will a time come when their affections shall be satisfied, their desires granted, and their hopes fulfilled to the utmost.

[7.] In the other life he doth it not till the general resurrection, or Christ's coming to judgment. There is a distinction between the good and evil at death, when the spirits of just men are made perfect, Heb. xii. 23, and the spirits of the wicked are sent to prison, 1 Peter iii. 19. But that is not sufficient, for two reasons—because that is private, and does not openly vindicate the justice of God; and that it is but upon a part, the soul only.

(1.) As it is private, and executed upon the wicked, man by man. Certainly it is more for the honour of God to bring his judgment to light, as the prophet saith, Zeph. iii. 5. Here the love of God towards the good and the justice of God towards the wicked is not manifest enough, not brought out into the clearest light. Not in death neither, for the honour of the just is not opened visibly, nor the glory of heaven exposed to view until the general judgment. But then this different respect is more conspicuous when the justice of God hath a public and solemn triumph, and his enemies are branded with shame, and the faith of his elect found to praise and honour, and the one publicly condemned, and the other justified by the judge upon the throne, Acts iii. 19.

(2.) As it is upon a part, the soul only. The bodies of the holy and the wicked both are now senseless, and moulder into dust in the grave; and till they be raised up and joined to their souls, they can neither partake of woe or weal, pleasure or pain. The soul, though it be a principal part, is but a part; the body essentially concurreth to the constitution of the man; and it is the body that is most gratified by sin, and the body that is most pained by obedience; and therefore the body, which is the soul's sister and co-heir, is to share with her in its eternal state, whatever it be. Therefore, that we may not be in part punished and in part rewarded, there is a time coming when God will deal with the whole man, and that in a solemn court and audience; which is a comfort to a christian when he is brought before the tribunals of men, and his body endures torture for Christ's sake.

Use 1. To show us how differently men will reason from the same principles; for the wicked draw another conclusion hence, *Cum rapiant mala fata bonos, ignoscite falso, sollicitor nullos esse putare Deos*; either that there is no God, or that he hath no respect to human affairs, and that all things are governed by chance. So elsewhere you may see what contrary and distinct conclusions the carnal and spiritual make from the same premises; as David from the immutable certainty of God's promises, Ps. cxix. 89-91. But the scoffers said, 2 Peter in. 4, 'Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' Because the frame of nature had kept one constant tenor and course, they plead for the eternity of the world and the falsehood of his promises; but David was hereby confirmed in the belief of God's constancy and faithfulness. So 1 Cor. vii. 29, with 1 Cor. xiii. 32; Jude 5, with Rom. vi. 2; 2 Sam. vii. 2, with Hag. v. 2; 1 Sam. iii. 18, with 2 Kings vi. 33. So Prov. xxvi. 9. All is as the heart is.

Use 2. To keep us from murmuring, or taking scandal at the sufferings that befall us for righteousness' sake. Not only the promises of God, but our very persecution is an argument of our final deliverance. There will be a review of these judgments; therefore let us comfort ourselves with these hopes. A christian must not look to present things, but future; not what is done now, but how things will appear in the last judgment. Now things may appear with all pomp and glory on the world's side, and terror to the saints; but this scene is soon with drawn, and present time is quickly past like a piece of fantastry; but then there is an inversion of things, shame is on the wicked, and honour put upon the saints, and the shame and glory are both eternal. Here we see the godly in their adversity and patience, but hereafter entering into their master's joy. Here the children of God are derided and vilified, but there they stand at Christ's right hand, and are approved and justified by him, and the wicked are rejected and turned into hell. This is a false and perverse judgment, but there it is a righteous judgment, as the wicked themselves shall be forced to confess, and shall wish when it is too late that they had chosen the faith, and holiness, and patience of the saints. Well, then, look not to the beginning but ending of all things. If you look to the beginning only, you are like to miscarry; but it would prevent your trouble if you did consider how these things will appear in the review.

Use 3. Of direction. When things promised in the other world seem too uncertain and far-off, and you are but coldly affected towards them, then consider what a change there will be, and the face of all things altered when Christ taketh the throne, and entereth into the judgment. The perverse carriage of things now is a confirmation to your faith, at least an help to your meditation. Improve the argument as it was set forth before. Few christians are so strong and firm in believing but they may find this a prop to their faith. Certainly all are so barren of thoughts, that they will find it an help to their meditations of the certainty of this judgment. Would God make laws with a sanction of penalty and reward, and never look after them more? Doth he delight in the prosperity of his servants or their afflictions? Would he raise hopes and desires which he never meant to satisfy? Would he give the wicked power to afflict and vex his people, and never call them to an account?

II. I come now to speak specially of the comfortable part of the judgment to the suffering Thessalonians, 'That ye may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.'

Doct. They shall be accounted worthy to enter into the kingdom of God who diligently and steadily pursue after it.

By way of explication—

First, What is meant by the kingdom of God? There is a twofold kingdom of God—the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of grace is the gospel estate now set afoot in the world. Now for this kingdom they might be said to suffer; that is, to promote it in the world, or because they had entered into it; but rather it is taken for the kingdom of glory, spoken of Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you,' &c. And they are said to suffer for it, that is, that they may enter into it.

Secondly, How counted worthy? There is a threefold worthiness—

1. *Dignitas equalitatis*, a condignity or worthiness of exact proportion: Luke x. 7, 'The labourer is worthy of his hire.' This exact worthiness is justice-proof, not only from the paction and covenant, but from the intrinsic worth of the action itself. There is *aequalitas rei et pacti*. What I bargain for is my due. But when there is besides the bargain a proportion between the labour and the hire, we claim and challenge it not only by virtue of the bargain, but as a reward due to the work for its own sake. Now there is such a distance between God and the creature, his reward and anything that we can do and suffer, that no creature can make God his debtor: Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' And when we have done all and suffered never so much, eternal life is a gift, and the mere fruit of his grace: Rev. ii. 10, 'I will give thee,' &c.

2. There is *dignitas convenientiae*, *aptitudinis aut decentiae*, a worthiness of decency or becomingness. This consists not in a perfect exact proportion, but some congruity or fitness. This is also twofold—a fitness in point of order and a fitness in point of preparation.

[1.] A fitness in point of order. So they are worthy who are conveniently qualified according to God's order: Rom. viii. 17, 'If sons, then heirs, joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we also may be glorified together. So 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12, 'If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he will deny us.' It is meet and convenient, or agreeable to Christ's wisdom and love, that he should own his faithful servants, and since they are willing to take his cross, that they should share with him in his crown; as David, when crowned at Hebron, made his followers captains of thousands, hundreds, and fifties. So also Rev. iii. 4, 'They that have not defiled their garments shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.' They observe God's order, who maketh fidelity to Christ, in doing and suffering his will, to be the way to their glory and blessedness.

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[2.] In point of preparation. We read, that as heaven is prepared for us, so we are prepared for heaven: Rom. ix. 23, ‘Vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory;’ and Col. i. 12, ‘He hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.’ It is the wisdom of God to put all things in their proper places, both in the order of nature and grace; as fishes in the sea, beasts on earth; so holy and heavenly creatures, whose hearts are weaned from the world, and whose hopes and desires are wholly carried to another and better world, and are willing to endure all things to obtain it, that they should be placed in heaven, for which he hath prepared them. And persecutions are one means which serve to fit and prepare the godly for heaven. As the hewing or squaring of stones fitted them to be set in the temple at Jerusalem, so are we squared, fitted, and made meet to be set in the heavenly temple. Things that suit are in the language of scripture called worthy: ‘Worthy of repentance,’ Mat. iii. 8, Acts xxvi. 20, Phil. i. 27, Eph. iv. 1, &c.

3. There is *dignitas dignationis*, the worthiness of acceptance, when God for Christ’s sake is pleased to count us worthy, and to take our carriage in good part though there be many failings. So Luke xxi. 36, ‘Watch ye, therefore, and pray, that ye may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of man.’ And so here, ‘counted worthy;’ that is, pronounced worthy by divine dignation to enjoy the kingdom of God. None deserve this, though some are admitted out of God’s benignity and faithful promises and gracious acceptance.

Thirdly, What is diligent and self-denying pursuit? I put in both terms, because we must not only do what is good, but suffer what is evil.

1. There must be diligence in doing good: Mat. vi. 33, ‘First seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof.’ This must be our top care, our first and chiefest business. It is not enough to seek after the kingdom of God, but we must seek after it in the first place; all must give way to this: Heb. iv. 11, ‘Let us labour to enter into that rest.’

2. There must be suffering evil: Heb. x. 36, ‘Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promise,’ Before the promise be fulfilled, not only our diligence but our patience must be exercised; for God will try what we can venture upon these hopes. So James i. 12, ‘Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him; 1 Peter v. 10, ‘After ye have suffered a while.’ The crown is promised to those that love him, but before it is bestowed there is trial and endurance necessary; so that besides obedience for subduing our lusts there must be patience to hazard our interests. In mortification we willingly part with our ill-being for Christ, but in self-denial with our well-being in the world.

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Reasons.

1. These things are required as conditions of entering into life: Mark x. 38, ‘If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.’ There is the law of

christianity fixed, and after such an express rule and constitution it is too late for us to interpose our vote, and hope to bring down the law of Christ to milder terms. No; the people of God must accept of this condition, and be prepared for it.

2. When this condition is yielded unto and fulfilled, then we have an evidence that God will count us worthy to enter into his kingdom: Phil. i. 28, 'In nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.' Mark, he saith it is not only a hopeful intimation, but an evident token; it clearly evidenceth your right to salvation. Crosses and sufferings in their visible appearance look like displeasure and wrath from God, but in their inward nature and destination of God they are a promising evidence that you are appointed unto glory: Mat. v. 10, 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' They may challenge it, be assured of it.

Use. Let us seriously consider of these things.

1. The felicity here offered; it is a kingdom, and the kingdom of God. What bustling is there in the world for a little greatness and advancement! Alas! all other crowns are but petty things in comparison of the crown of life, righteousness, and glory which God hath prepared for them that love him. This is enough to counterbalance all the ignominy, contempt, and disgraceful suffering which God's children meet with here in the world.

2. The certainty of conveyance. God will count them worthy of his kingdom: 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' He will not frustrate the desires and hopes of his suffering people. As the worldling goeth on by temporal glory to eternal shame, you are sure to go by temporal trouble to eternal glory.

3. You must submit to any terms: Phil. iii. 11, 'If by any means,' &c. The trial of our sincerity must not be looked for in our respect to the end only, but the means. There is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity, and to bring them to choose it for their treasure and happiness; but for the means of diligent obedience, patient suffering, there we stick most. We have a quick ear for offers of happiness, but we snuff at the troublesome conditions of duty and obedience and entire subjection to God. Balaam could say, Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous;' but he loved the wages of unrighteousness. When the wicked are said to despise eternal happiness, it is not simply as happiness or as eternal, but the means, the way thither, as the Israelites, Ps. cvi. 24, 25.

4. Sufferings are the most distasteful part of the means: 'For which ye also suffer.' All would reign with Christ, but not suffer with him; like Zebedee's children, sit on his right hand and his left, but not drink of his cup, nor be baptized with his baptism, Mat. xxii. 22, 23. God might have customers enough for the crown, but men like not the yoke and the cross that attend it.

SERMON III.

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you that are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.—2 THES. i. 6, 7.

HERE is an amplification of the former argument, wherein he doth more fully declare how their enduring tribulations was ἔνδειγμα, &c., a manifestation of God's righteous judgment.

In the words note—

1. The impulsive cause, God's justice, 'Seeing it is a righteous thing with God.'

2. The two effects, or the different retributions, 'To recompense,' &c.

3. The time when this is accomplished, 'When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven,' &c.

I begin with the first. This is mentioned that they may be certain of the effects. *Just* is taken in two senses—(1.) *Pro eo quod jure fieri potest*; (2.) *Pro eo quod jure fieri debet.* That which may be done without any injustice, that which ought to be done. The first, when a man doth exact his debts; the second, for a man to pay his debts. The first may be done or not done, required or omitted, without any blemish or charge of injustice; but the second must be done, or I am unjust if I do it not. The latter is intended here, for it is brought as a proof of the just judgment of God, in counting them worthy of his kingdom for which they suffered. God would do no injury, or were not unrighteous if he should trouble them that trouble you; that would make but a cold sense. No; his justice and equity requireth it; it cannot without some injustice be omitted to punish them, and give you a relaxation from all evil.

Doct. That in the retributions of the last day God showeth his justice.

1. I shall open the justice of God.

2. Apply it to the different recompenses.

I. For the justice of God, let me set it forth in these considerations—

1. Justice is an attribute that belongeth to God as a governor. It is twofold—general and particular.

[1.] His general justice importeth the perfection of the divine nature, and is the same with his holiness. As the perfection of the divine understanding includeth all intellectual virtues, so the

perfection of his will all moral virtues; and so God doth necessarily love righteousness and hate iniquity, and acteth becoming such a pure, holy, and infinite being. He can do nothing against the perfection of his nature; that is, cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. ii. 13, will not give his glory to another, Isa. xlii. 8, cannot be indifferent to good and evil: Ps. v. 4, 'Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with thee.' Hateth whatever is contrary to his holy nature: Zech. iii. 5, 'The just Lord is in the midst of thee; he will do no iniquity; every morning he bringeth his judgment to light.' Will not damn nor punish an innocent creature or a soul that loveth him, but still acteth with a condecency to his own being.

[2.] His particular justice, which respecteth not his nature, but his office, and belongeth to him as the governor and judge of the world. So he hath given a law to his creatures, and his governing justice consists in giving all their due according to his law: Deut. xxxii. 4, 'He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he.'

2. Of his government there are two acts or parts—legislation and execution. Accordingly you may conceive two branches of the justice of God—legislative, or judiciary and distributive.

[1.] His legislative justice determineth man's duty, and bindeth him to the performance thereof, and also defineth the rewards and punishments which shall be due upon man's obedience or disobedience. God made man a rational voluntary agent, capable of good and evil, with desires of the good and fears of the evil; therefore, that God as universal king might rule him according to his nature, he hath made for him a law that determineth good and evil, with promises to move him by desires and hopes, and threatenings to drive him by a necessary fear: Deut. xxx. 15, 'See I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil.' In the precept there is the rule of man's duty, in the sanction the rule of God's judgment or judiciary proceedings with him. And wherever this law is set up, there God is said to 'judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth,' Ps. lxvii. 4; that is, to set up holy and righteous decrees, fitted for the benefit of mankind.

[2.] His judiciary justice, called also distributive; that sort of justice whereby he rendereth unto men according to their works, whether good or evil, Rom. ii. 6, and that without respect of persons, 1 Peter i. 17, without regard to any external thing which hath no affinity with the cause that is to be judged, as profession or non profession.

This justice is twofold—remunerative and vindictive, rewarding and punishing.

(1.) Rewarding. It is just with God to reward our obedience, or to give men what his promise hath made due to them: Heb. vi. 10, 'God is not unrighteous, to forget your labour of love.' If they should never be rewarded or forgotten, God should be unrighteous or unfaithful, which to imagine is abominable: 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God, the righteous judge, will give me in that day.' It is from God's righteousness and promise, with

respect had to Christ's merit, and the qualification of the parties; as I shall more fully show by and by.

(2.) Vindictive, or punishing justice. God punisheth none but sinners, and only for sin, and that according to the measure of the sin: Rom. ii. 7-9, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the gentile.' Despisers of the grace of the gospel, John iii. 19; Heb. x. 29, 'Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy?' There is a special guilt in such a sin, which will be most tormenting and vexing to us. They have no cause to impute their damnation to anything but their own wilful neglect.

3. This distributive justice is exercised either more darkly or plainly.

[1.] More darkly. The world is not governed by chance, but administered by an all-wise and most just providence. Here in this world now there is a punishment of the wicked, and a reward of the righteous. For punishment God keepeth a petty sessions before the day of general assizes: wickedness is now punished: Rom. i. 18, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven,' &c. Now and then God doth so sensibly and visibly reward the righteous, that men are forced to acknowledge that godliness is matter of benefit in this world, abstracted from the rewards of another life: Ps. lviii. 11, 'Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth, verily there is a reward for the righteous.'

[2.] More plainly hereafter, when God will openly and beyond all doubt and question make good his word to his people, and declare his vengeance against the wicked. The great end of the day of judgment is the demonstration of God's remunerative and vindictive justice; therefore called 'the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' Rom. ii. 5. He will not only glorify his love and mercy in the salvation of the elect, but his justice also in rewarding the performers of the condition, and what his promise hath made their due. The business then is to remove the veil, Acts xvii. 31. The difference between the last time and now is this—

(1.) That the righteous and the wicked have but the beginnings of their reward and punishment. The wicked are not altogether without punishment, but they are but the beginnings of sorrow, if you respect God's external or internal government. As to his internal government, the carnal world mindeth it not much, but yet others may perceive it, as by troubles and gripes of conscience, Heb. ii. 15, or impenitence, or hardness of heart: Eph. iv. 19, 'Past feeling;' Ps. lxxxi. 12, conscience terrified or stupified. But the external government of God is exercised, so far as the world is not left without a sufficient witness of the justice of God, to give them warning what they may expect in the other world, and to keep up the belief of a providence; that is to say, that the governor of the world mindeth the affairs of the world, and so that he may be known to be a holy and just God: Ps. clxv. 17, 'He is holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works.' This is so far discovered in all the acts of God's providence, that the contrary is never discerned. Now we may say, Rev. xvi. 5,

‘Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.’ There is some foregoing punishment, which we may take notice of for the people of God in this life. His servants have much of his mercy, and the beginnings of their reward in the beginnings of their salvation, but the fulness is reserved for the world to come. As to his internal government, his people have much of his love, in peace of conscience, increase of grace, tastes of God’s acceptance, assistance of the Spirit, answers of prayer, and sweet foretastes of eternal life. As to his external government, men here may sometimes ‘discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not,’ Mal. iii. 17, 18, but at the general judgment this is fully manifested in eternal reward and punishment.

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(2.) The justice of God now appeareth more negatively than positively; that is to say, God doth nothing contrary to justice. As to his rewards of his servants, none can justly charge him for a neglect of them, they having deserved nothing which they enjoy, Gen. xxxii. 19, and having deserved much more than they suffer, Ezra ix. 13. All benefits are more, all corrections less than they deserve. And therefore it is not necessary that the justice of God should be always positively conspicuous; it is enough that it should be negatively conspicuous, that God do nothing contrary to his governing justice; as a man is always risible, yet he doth not always laugh; we cannot deny the faculty because of the cessation of the act. God is always just, but he doth not always exercise his remunerative justice. So for the effects of his vindictive justice; it is not always necessary they should be exercised in the day of his patience, in cutting off sinners presently as soon as they sin, and putting them into their final state; because men are now upon their trial, and the present government of the world is not that of sense, but of faith; therefore God waiteth to see if men will break off their sins, and make themselves capable of his mercy: 2 Peter iii. 9, ‘God is not slack concerning his promise.’ But hasty men would have all things done within time, without expectation of eternity. But God, that knoweth what long-suffering is necessary to the most obstinate creatures, doth not presently cast them off from all expectation of mercy. Christianity would have lost a Paul and many a useful instrument if the final judgment of God had gone according to our fancies and hasty censures. There is room still for repentance, God being always willing that the apostate state of mankind should have time, and day, and means to repent, and turn unto the Lord.

(3.) How God will exercise his fatherly justice upon his people, and his patience toward the wicked.

(1*st*.) His corrective justice toward his people, by many penal evils inflicted up them: 1 Sam. vii. 14, ‘If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and the stripes of the children of men.’ The faults of the godly procure to them sharp correction: 1 Cor. xi. 32, ‘We are judged when we are chastened of the Lord,’ &c. There is fatherly love, though also corrective justice, and the saints acknowledge it: Neh. ix. 33, ‘Thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done righteously, but we have done wickedly.’ So David: Ps. cxix. 137, ‘Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.’ Sharp corrections are but just; all is good to the godly.

(2*d*.) Patience towards the wicked: Rom. ix. 22, πολλῇ μακροθυμίᾳ, ‘endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath.’ They shall want no arguments to convince them of their folly and impenitency when they are in hell.

(4.) Now it is clouded, then conspicuous. There is a veil upon God’s proceedings, they are sometimes secret, always just: Ps. xcii. 2, ‘To show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.’

II. Let us apply it to the different recompenses here mentioned; and so—

1. To the punishment of the wicked: ‘To recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.’ There is no great difficulty to suit this part of the judgment to God’s righteousness; for sinners deserve the punishment which is inflicted upon them, who lived in ease and pomp, and neglected God’s laws, and oppressed his servants, that were more faithful than themselves.

There is a double reason of their punishment—

[1.] Their own disobedience to the laws of their creator, which is enough to involve them in eternal ruin: Rom. ii. 8, ‘But to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, tribulation and wrath.’ Men that dispute away their duty to God, and live in the world as if they had no superior but such as their interests engage them to own, and as if there were no God, no judgment, there can be nothing pleaded for them.

[2.] Their opposing them that would obey God, and so they make themselves an opposite party to God, and consent with the devil in his apostasy. There are two kingdoms in the world, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan; these are opposite. It is enough to our ruin to remain in the one and not accept of the other, when God cometh to reckon, Col. i. 18, Acts xxvi. 18. But it is a double condemnation if we be factors and agents for the one against the other. These carry on not only a defensive but offensive war against God; for these set themselves point-blank against the kingdom of God in the world, not only refusing it themselves, but seeking to discourage others: Mat. xxiii. 13, ‘Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of God against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer them that are entering to go in.’ They divert others to their power, not only by example, but persecution and opposition to them. And if they have come under some visible engagement to Christ, their crime is the greater. If they smite their fellow-servants, and eat and drink with the drunken, Mat. xxiv, 49, malign, envy, traduce, and injure them who are faithful to the law of Christ, and strengthen the hands of the wicked, no wonder they are punished. Surely that is just which right and equity requireth, either from the nature of the thing or the threatenings of God. It only admitteth this condition, if they repent as Paul did, who did it ignorantly.

2. If we refer it to the other effect, ‘To give you that are troubled rest.’

How is this just with God?

I answer—Things may be said to be righteous with God three ways—

(1.) In respect of strict justice, when what we do deserveth the reward by the intrinsic value, worth, and condignity of our obedience. So no obedience, whether of man or angel, though never so perfect, can bind God to reward it. There is this difference between sin and obedience, that the heinousness of sin is always aggravated and heightened by the proportion of its object, but the merit and value of obedience is still lessened. The sin or offence is aggravated, as to strike an officer is more than to strike a private man, a king more than an ordinary officer. Thence it cometh to pass that a sin committed against God doth deserve an infinite punishment, because the majesty of God is infinite; and so eternal death is the wages of sin. But on the other side, the value and merit of obedience is lessened. The greater God is, and the more glorious his being, the greater obligation lieth upon us to love and serve him; and the good which we do for his sake being wholly due to him, God is not bound by any right or justice from the merit of the action itself to reward it; for here the greatness of the object lesseneth the action, or respect thereby performed to it, Luke xvii. 10; for the creature oweth itself to God, who made it, and enabled it to do all that it can do; so that he is not bound to reward it out of his natural justice, but inclined to do it out of his own goodness, and bound to do it by his free promise and gracious covenant.

(2.) There is his justice of bounty and free beneficence. God is just by way of bounty when he rewards man capable of reward and accounted worthy, though not in respect of perfect righteousness in himself, yet because he is some way righteous. This capacity of the reward respects either the righteousness of Christ, and that satisfaction he hath paid for us, Rom. iii. 25, 26, or the difference between the person recompensed and others; that he loveth God, is willing to suffer for him, and worketh righteousness. General justice doth require that he should reward the righteous, and put a difference between the godly and the wicked. That governor that useth all alike is not just. Therefore it is said, Ps. xi. 7, that ‘the righteous God loveth righteousness.’ It is agreeable to justice in general, *ratione justitiae*, that wicked persecutors should not go unpunished, but that God should deal with them as they have done with others, and that they who have unjustly suffered in this world should be righted in another world, since they suffer out of love to God, and for his sake, and merely out of the hopes of that other and better world.

(3.) God is just in respect of his promise. The condition being performed, his justice obligeth him; he hath bound himself by his covenant, and his righteousness implieth his veracity and faithfulness, 1 John i. 9. Not as if our patience merited it, as the oppressors deserve and are worthy of punishment, but God’s promise assureth us of it; for though his promise be free, yet, if it be once made, justice doth require it, and God is not free, but bound to perform it.

Use 1. Terror to the wicked, especially those that are enemies of Christ’s kingdom in the world, and haters of those that are good, 2 Tim. iii. 3. God is just, and will at length call you to an account. Consider, he is just in his legislation; as he would not make unrighteous laws for the pleasure of men, so he is just in execution, he will not pass unrighteous judgment. Your carnal minds are

enemies to his laws, Rom. viii. 7, and your unbelieving hearts question his threatenings. But his laws are his laws, however you dislike them, and his threatenings are his threatenings, however you question the truth of them. His threatenings to be accomplished within time show always the merit of your actions, often the event; but his eternal threatenings will be made good. Hell is not a painted fire. As he will not repeal his established laws because you dislike them, so he will not revoke his threatenings for fear of hurting such wilful and impenitent sinners as you are. They that will not fear his judgments shall feel them. The wicked put it to trial whose word shall stand, God's or theirs: Jer. xliv. 28, 'They say, Peace, peace;' God saith, Woe, wrath, tribulation, anguish; and it shall be fulfilled or made good. But it is a sad thing to stand to that adventure; you may set a good face on it, but conscience owneth the justice, Rom. i. 32. Thence guilty fears arise, which are so natural to man, that we can neither deny nor put off. Nature is afraid of a just judge, and the consent of all people doth evidence it. Therefore we should think of it, and prepare ourselves to be judged by him.

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2. For the consolation of the faithful. God is righteous. You experiment his mercy here by the way, in pardoning your sins and sanctifying your afflictions, comforting you under them, and giving a gracious issue out of them; but then you shall find him just—(1.) In punishing your unreasonable enemies, 2 Peter ii. 9. (2.) Your reward is sure: Prov. xi. 18, 'To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.' Therefore we should the more resolutely forsake the pleasures of sin, and endure the afflictions of the gospel, and continue with patience in well-doing, that we may not lose what we have wrought. You have a pledge of this in the new nature given to you. As any are made partakers of a divine nature, they are more just and righteous, hate sin and sinners, love the godly. It is said of Lot, 2 Peter ii. 7, 8, that 'just Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; for that righteous man, dwelling among them, vexed his soul from day to day in seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds.' God, that created such a principle of grace in us, is much more righteous. Retributive justice is a ray of God's righteousness. God is said to be with him in the judgment, 2 Chron. xix. 6.

I come now more particularly to discuss the two effects.

First, To recompense tribulation to them that trouble you. Tribulation in the issue is the portion of the wicked: Rom. ii. 9, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.' But here the apostle would draw us to consider the harmony and agreeableness between the punishment and the offence. And thence we note—

That God usually retaliateth with men.

First, As here, 'It is just with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;' that the troublers should be troubled. You will say, How can this tribulation which is recompensed imply the ruin of the soul, when they afflicted only the bodies of the saints?

I answer—Two ways—

1. Because they can go no further: Luke xii. 4, ‘Fear not them that only can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.’ Implying they would do more if it were in their power, so great is their malice against the saints.

2. This trouble they occasion to the saints is their soul’s sin; not only the fruit of the violence of their hands, but of the enmity of their souls against the power of godliness, 1 John iii. 12. With their souls they sinned, and they are punished in their souls as well as their bodies. So that argueth this judgment of counter-passion, that as they do to others it shall be done unto themselves. God threateneth it in his word: Exod. xxii. 22, 24, ‘Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child.’ But what would come of it if they did? God threateneth that he ‘will kill you by the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children shall be fatherless.’ It should be returned and paid home in the same coin. So Rev. xvi. 5, 6, ‘Righteous art thou, O Lord, for they have shed the blood of the saints, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.’ There the angel of the waters applauds the suitableness of the judgment; they had made God’s saints a prey by their rigorous laws, and God would make them a prey to the destroyer. There is a proportionableness between the sin and the judgment; bloody men shall drink their fill of blood. Now this prophetical scheme and draught is a threatening. So James ii. 13, ‘He shall have judgment without mercy that showed no mercy.’ God will meet men in their own way of sinning, that his judgment may be the more conspicuous.

Secondly, God observeth this course in his providence: Judges i. 7, ‘Threescore and ten kings having their thumbs and great toes cut off gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me.’ Affliction, which is the most trusty counsellor to princes of all their retinue, for it knoweth not how to flatter, taught him to see his cruelty, and the justice of God in his punishment. The like justice God used to Pharaoh, who appointed the children of Israel to be drowned in the waters, and at length he and all his host were drowned in a branch of the Ked Sea. So God showed himself the patron of oppressed infants. Indeed, what more usual than that male factors are dealt with according to their own wicked ways? As God threateneth Edom, Obad. 5, ‘As thou hast dealt, so shall it be done to thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head.’ Ahab’s blood was lapped up by dogs in the place where they had shed the blood of Naboth. Jezebel was more guilty than he: Ahab permitted, Jezebel contrived. Ahab humbled himself, therefore Ahab was buried with honour, but Jezebel was entombed in the bellies of the dogs. Haman was executed on the gallows set up for Mordecai, Esther vii. 10. Henry the Third of France was killed in the chamber where the massacre was contrived, and Charles the Ninth died flowing in his blood in his bed. In the parable, *desideravit guttam, qui non dedit micam*—He wanted a drop who gave not a crumb. But is it so with good men also? Yes; Jacob, that got the blessing by a wile, and came to Isaac, the younger for the elder, after seven years’ hard service was put off with Leah, the blear-eyed elder sister, instead of Rachel, the beautiful younger sister. Asa, that put the prophet in the stocks,

was diseased in his feet. Joseph was not flexible to his brethren's requests, as they were inexorable to him in his extremity: Gen. xlii. 21, 22, 'We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.' This was many years after the fact committed; they knew not Joseph. David, Absalom, 2 Sam. xii. 10-12. Paul consented to the stoning of Stephen; yea, assisted at his execution, for they laid down their garments at Paul's feet; and therefore Paul was afterward stoned and left for dead, Acts xiv. 19, 20. Stephen prayed for him among the rest, 'Lay it not to their charge;' yet God gave him some remembrance of this sin. Barnabas was not stoned, who was assistant to Paul, but Paul was stoned; both had been alike offensive for preaching the gospel at Iconium. Paul was sensible of this crying sin, Acts xxii. 20. Well, then, if men will do to others what they should not, God will do to them what they would not. But here eternal vengeance is threatened.

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Use 1. Let us take heed how we oppress any, especially that our hearts boil not with rancour and malice against God's children. Injuriousness and cruelty to the faithful will not go unrevenged. It may be you think you do God good service, John xvi. 2. But that doth not excuse you from punishment, for God will not be served with furious and blind zeal. The rule is general, 'It is just with God to recompense tribulation,' &c.

2. Let not the godly be envious and repine at the temporal prosperity of wicked men. Their ruin is certain; God will remember them that show no mercy, but heavily lay on the yoke, Isa. xlvii. 6. God will put the cup of affliction into other hands, if you can but tarry his leisure, Isa. li. 22.

Secondly, 'And to you that are troubled rest with us.' There is his recompense to the faithful, and that which is appointed to them is rest; and not barely so, but 'rest with us.' Paul and the other apostles of the Lord were engaged in the same cause, and looked for a like issue. The apostles had a particular promise, Mat. xix. 28; but they were all fellow-soldiers in the same warfare, and as to the substance of it, expected the same crown.

Here note two things—

1. That the reward of the faithful is represented under the notion of rest. Here the word is ἄνεσις, which signifies a cessation or relaxation from all their troubles; but it implieth more than at first appeareth; not only a release from their troubles, but eternal glory and happiness in proportion to their troubles, 2 Cor. iv. 7. But a rest it is called—(1.) Sometimes in allusion to the rest of Canaan, where the people of God fixed their abode after their wearisome pilgrimage. So it is taken Heb. iv. 1, 'We having a promise of entering into his rest left us, let us fear lest any of us should seem to come short of it.' And so it noteth that heaven is the place of our eternal abode, after our pilgrimage in the world; there is our home and resting-place. (2.) Sometimes it is spoken of with allusion to the sabbatic rest: Heb. iv. 9, 'There remaineth therefore a rest for the children of God.' The word there is σαββάτισμος. It is a celebration of an eternal sabbath to God. Our abode there and business there is perpetual worship, and we go there not only to enjoy God, but to adore God. Heaven is a

temple, and christians are all priests, Rev. i. 6. We are not fully made kings till we reign with him, nor priests till we come to minister immediately before the throne. If the priesthood we have by Christ doth chiefly concern our ministration in the heavenly temple, the case is clear; here we are consecrated, fitted by justifying and sanctifying grace. (3.) It is called a rest in opposition to those tedious conflicts that we have about our spiritual estate and condition before God; but then all is at an end, when the pardon is pronounced by the judge's own mouth, Acts iii. 19. So it is ἀναψυξίς: then is everlasting joy and refreshing, no more conflicts and agonies of conscience; our doubts and fears are quite gone, and we are at rest in Christ. (4.) It is some times called rest in opposition to whatever was grievous and burden some in our duties: Rev. xiv. 13, 'They rest from their labours.' They cease not from duty, but from whatsoever was burdensome and trouble some in their duty, either through the weakness of their flesh, or their want of satisfaction in God. (1st.) The weakness of the flesh maketh duty wearisome to us. But there we are all spirit; even this body shall become a spiritual body, and it shall be no labour to us to serve God. (2d.) Want of satisfaction in God. *Adepto fine, cessat motus.* When the soul hath what it would have, it is at rest. Fulness of joy, satisfied with thy likeness. (5.) It is called rest in opposition to the calamities and troubles of the present life. So in the text, and Isa. lvii, 2, 'Rest in their beds.' Their souls at rest with God, and their bodies in their graves.

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Use. We say rest in God, but we forget our true resting-place. Arise! here is not your rest, Micah ii. 10; as right passengers with their staves in their hands, enter into heaven.

SERMON IV.

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you that are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.—2 THES. i. 6, 7.

DOCT. That the reward of the faithful is represented under the notion of a rest.

1. We shall inquire what a rest this is.

2. Why it is represented under this notion.

I. What is this rest?

1. It is a felicitating rest; not a bare cessation from troubles (as the word ἄνεσις would seem to import), or a freedom from evil, but the enjoyment of all good.

[1.] In this rest there is a freedom from all troublesome evils. In this estate there is neither sin nor misery. Sin grieveth the saints most, Rom. vii. 24. If any had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul much more; he was whipped, imprisoned, stoned; but lusts troubled him more than scourges, and his captivity to the law of sin was the worst bondage. To be sinning here whilst others are glorifying God is grievous to the saints. A beast will forsake the place where he findeth neither meat nor rest. The saints do live with manifold failings, but in heaven there is no sin, Eph. v. 27; no spot nor wrinkle upon the face of the glorified saints. Their faces were once as black as ours, but now they are fully cleansed, made fair as the sun, bright as the moon. Christ will present them as such to God, as rejoicing in the fruits of his purchase. Alas! what a trouble is it now to mortify one lust, or to prevent it from breaking out into some scandalous practice! We cannot do anything but sin will mingle with it, or enjoy anything but we grow proud and sensual. A worm may breed in manna, 2 Cor. xii. 7. But then we are most high and most humble and holy. What is it we struggled under and groaned under all our lives but sin? But now there is no sin, and no temptations to sin. In paradise there was a tempter, but not in heaven. Satan was long since cast out thence, and the saints come to fill up the vacant rooms of the apostate angels. The world is a place of snares, a valley of temptations, the devil's circuit wherein he walketh to and fro; but no serpent can creep into the upper paradise. Here we cry, 'Lord, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' There our cries are heard to the full; we are neither tempted, nor shall we displease God any more; sin is not only mortified but nullified.

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[2.] There is no more misery nor affliction. Whatever is painful and burdensome is a fruit of the fall, a brand and mark of our rebel lion against God; but there affliction is done away as well as sin. Both recompenses are without mixture. In hell there is an evil and only evil, without any temperament of good; and in heaven there is happiness and only happiness, without any allay of evil: 'God will wipe all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any pain,' Rev. xxii. 4. No more doubts of God's love, no sense of his displeasure. Here, when the wounds are healed the scars remain; we have many suspicious thoughts still; we need to be dieted; the honey of God's love would grow too luscious if we did not taste something of the vinegar and the gall; but there is full and uninterrupted joy. Here the candle of the Lord doth not always shine upon us alike brightly, but there our sun remaineth in an eternal high noon, without clouds or overcasting. If our souls be at ease, yet the body hath its afflictions. We make it too often the instrument of sin, therefore God justly maketh it the subject of diseases. But there are no gouts, and agues and fevers, nor stone, nor cholic, but the body for ever remaineth in an eternal spring of youth. And for violence from without and oppressions, there is no cry of destruction upon destruction, no tumult to discompose that blessed region wherein God will place his faithful ones; no company of the wicked to vex these righteous souls, much less have they any power to molest them, but they are bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness, as unruly men that trouble the faithful subjects are put into prison. Again, then we are freed from the inconveniencies of hunger, and nakedness, and want; for these are bodily necessities incident to the present state; but there wholly freed from

the necessities of nature, 1 Cor. vi. 12. There is no need of meat, drink, or apparel. The body now is a kind of prison to the soul, but then it is a temple.

[3.] An enjoyment of all good; for God is all in all, whom we know and love. We love what we see, and enjoy what we love. The blessedness of the soul is the heaven of heavens. It is called the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. It is not for their turn that know no other happiness but to eat, drink, and sleep, and wallow in brutish pleasures. It is an inheritance in light, that consists in the vision and fruition of God; and it is for saints, that are clarified from the dregs of sense, and know how to value and prize these things. To our felicity three things are necessary—(1.) A prepared faculty; (2.) A suitable object; (3.) The conjunction of both these. In the state of glory all these things concur; the faculty is more capacious, the object is more fully represented, and the fruition is more intimate than possibly it can be here. The faculty is more prepared, as we are purged from sin, and freed from the delusions of the flesh. The object is more manifested, for there we see God 'face to face,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The conjunction is more intimate; for here it is by faith, and that is an imperfect sight, there by vision; here by an imperfect love, there by perfect love. Now he that is joined to the Lord is made one spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. But oh, what a conjunction will it be when we shall be joined to the Lord by sight and perfect love! Vision shall succeed to faith, and possession to hope, and the soul adhereth to him without possibility of diversion. It is hard to speak of heaven till the great voice of his providence call upon us to come up and see what God hath provided for us. But, in short, vision maketh way for assimilation, and assimilation for full satisfaction. See 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall see him as he is, and be like him;' as iron by lying in the fire seemeth all fire. This for full satisfaction: 'I shall be satisfied with thy likeness,' Ps. xvii. 15. The soul is then at rest; it hath enough in God, in seeing God, and loving God, and being made like God.

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2. It is an holy and religious rest, a perpetual sabbatising, Heb. iv. 9, σαββάτισμος; a celebrating of an eternal sabbath to God. A sabbath is an holy rest, not a time of idleness, but to be religiously spent and employed; so this rest and sabbatism, which is promised to believers, is not passed over in ease and sloth, but in acts of worship and adoration. It is a rest from toil and labour, but not from work and service. On the sabbath-day the sacrifices were doubled, Num. xxviii. 1. In our everlasting sabbatism we serve God after a more perfect manner, especially delighting and rejoicing in God, and praising his name. The place agreeth with this notion as well as the time. Heaven is represented under the notion of a temple, as the state of glory by a sabbatism. There were three partitions in the temple—the outward court, the holy place, and the holy of holies; as there is an airy heaven, and the starry heaven, and the heaven of heavens, Acts iii. 21; and sometimes the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 2. This heaven of heavens is the seat of God and the blessed saints, often called the holiest, with respect to the type of the temple or sanctuary, Heb. ix. 24. The apostle tells you that the earthly or worldly sanctuary was a type of the true holy place, heaven itself, the throne and palace of God, where his people are admitted into a nearer attendance upon God. Well, then, if the state of glory be a sabbath and heaven a temple, we have but one thing to do more, that is, to find out a priest. So christians are; that is their quality and function; for it is said, Rev. i. 6, 'He hath made us kings

and priests unto God and his Father.' Now all the difficulty is whether this priesthood relateth to our spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, which we offer upon earth, or to our worship in heaven when we are admitted into the immediate presence of God, and praise him for evermore; whether it concerneth our ministration before the throne of grace, or before the throne of glory. I do not exclude the former; but because the latter is a truth commonly overlooked, I will prove that the priest hood which we have by Christ concerneth our ministration in the heavenly temple. I prove it—

[1.] From our conformity to Christ. If Christ were not consecrated to his everlasting priesthood till he died, the like is to be presumed of a christian. But so it is that this is clear of Christ: Heb. v. 9, τελειωθεὶς, 'Being made perfect through sufferings,' &c. At his death the rites of his consecration were over; therefore a christian, who runneth parallel with Christ in all his offices, is fully consecrated and fitted to officiate before God.

[2.] This suiteth with the other privilege; we are made kings as well as priests. Now our kingly office is imperfect till we come to heaven. A poor christian is but a king in a riddle; as he vanquisheth the devil, the world, and the flesh, in some weak manner, he hath a princely spirit. The kingdom of which we partake by Christ is mainly hereafter, Luke xii. 32; 2 Tim. ii. 12, 'If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.' So proportionably the other privilege of being made priests must be expounded also. We have our sacrifices now, but this office is not completed till we enter into the holiest, Heb. x. 19; not in spirit only, but in person.

[3.] If our consecration be not consummated till death, our office is not perfect till then. Our consecration to the spiritual priesthood consists in our justification and sanctification, both which are now imperfect: Heb. x. 22, we are bidden to 'draw nigh to God' (which is a priestly notion), 'having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed as with pure water.' Now we are not perfect as appertaining to the conscience, and can hardly get above our legal fears, nor are we fully cleansed and sanctified; but when our consecration is perfected, then are we fitted to serve God in his heavenly temple.

[4.] Nearness of access to God, and ministration before him, is the privilege of priests. Now we are kept at a distance; all that we can have in this life is to draw nigh to the throne of grace; but we are not admitted to God's immediate sight and presence. But when we minister before the throne of glory, then we have full communion with our God, and a clear vision of his blessed face; and then we are priests indeed when we come into the heavenly sanctuary.

Well, then, our service is not ended with our lives. As we still stand in the relation of creatures to God, so we must still glorify him and serve him: Rev. vii. 14, 15, 'And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white with the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; and they shall

hunger no more, and thirst no more,' &c. Then we shall not serve him by fits and starts, but constantly. We shall not be at a distance from God, nor God at a distance from us; but we shall still enjoy his company, lauding and praising his name. Here we are learners, there practisers. We shall then have a clearer sight of his excellencies, and a fuller sense of his benefits, and accordingly offer up to him the continual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

3. It is a rest for the whole person, soul and body both, but in their order. This I note, lest you should interpret this rest of their quiet abode in the grave, as it is sometimes understood; Isa. lvii. 2, 'They shall rest in their beds;' when the righteous are taken from the tumults of the world, and the evils that ensue after their death. Death is a sleep and quiet repose. But this is not meant of death, but of glory; the rest of the body in the grave is common to the wicked. Now, as their bodies are laid down to rest in the grave as in a bed, there to sleep quietly until the general resurrection, so their souls pass into a place of rest and bliss. The soul first entereth into rest. When men come first into the world, the body is first framed, and the soul cometh after; for this lower region is properly the place of bodies; therefore reason requireth that the body, which is a citizen of the world, should first be framed, that it may be a fit receptacle for the soul, which is a stranger, and cometh from the region of spirits, which. is above. But when we must remove into those heavenly habitations, then it is quite otherwise; for then the soul, as a native of that place, is presently admitted, but the body, as a stranger, is forced to reside in. the grave till the day of judgment, and then our bodies also are admitted into heaven; this is the law of all private persons. Indeed Christ, who is the head of the church, is not subject to it; his body as well as his human spirit was made a denizen of heaven as soon as ho ascended. He entered not there as a private citizen, but as king and lord of the heavenly Jerusalem, and therefore carried both body and soul along with him. But as to us, the soul goeth first there as to its proper seat, and after the final judgment both soul and body. Therefore the apostle saith, 'To give you that are troubled rest, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.' Then shall our reward be full. Bat that you may not think that this rest only implieth the sleep of death, and our quiet abode in the grave till we be awakened at the last day, I shall prove to you—(1.) That the souls of the faithful enter into a blissful estate as soon as they depart out of the body; (2.) What will be the condition of the body in the resurrection.

[1.] That souls as soon as they flit out of the body are at rest with the Lord. There are a sort of men so drowned in sense that they cannot believe things to come. Some question the immortality of the soul; others assert the sleep of it, because they imagine it to be so tied to the body as that it cannot exercise its functions and operations with out it; but that is a groundless error.

(1.) If death cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ, surely the soul, notwithstanding death, is capable of showing love to God, and enjoying the fruits of his love to us: Rom. viii. 38, 39, 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life, &c., shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Take it for our love to God, or God's love to us; it is our

happiness to love God, and be beloved of him. If death cannot vacate this or make it to cease, separate souls may love God, and enjoy the fruits of his love to them.

(2.) If the souls of the saints, as soon as they are loosed from the body, be with God and Christ, then they are in a state of bliss: Phil, i. 23, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better.' How could that be πολλῶ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον, by much far the better, if the soul were deprived of all sense and feeling, and did remain in a dead sleepy state? Is it not better for a gracious man to wake than to sleep? to be hard at work for God than to be idle and sit still? to use our powers and faculties than to lie in a senseless condition? What profit is it to be with the Lord and not enjoy his company? It is better to have our present love, knowledge, service, tastes, and experiences, than to lie in a stupid lethargy without all understanding and spiritual sense. It would be a loss to Paul if his body should lie rotting in the grave, and his soul without all fruition of God. What can be imagined to be that preponderating happiness which should sway his choice? Is it to be eased of present labours and sufferings? But God's people, who have resigned themselves to God, are wont to value their present service and enjoyment of God, though accompanied with great labours and afflictions. Surely Paul would never be in a strait if he were to be reduced upon his dissolution into a condition of stupid sleep, without any capacity of glorifying or enjoying God. God's people are wont to prefer the most afflicted condition with God's presence before the greatest contentments with his absence: 'If thou go not up with us, carry us not hence,' Better be with God in the wilderness than in Canaan without him. But so they are: 2 Cor. v. i. 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' Surely if the soul sleep till the resurrection, they should not say, When this house is dissolved; but, When this house is raised, and this tabernacle is restored. When the saints desire to part with the body, it is not for want of love to the body, but out of love to their souls; they would wish mortality were swallowed up of life, that the body might go along with the soul into glory. So i. ver. 8, 'We are willing to be absent from the body, that we may be present with the Lord;' implying that as soon as the one is effected and brought about, the other taketh place; otherwise more absent when out of the body.

(3.) If when they are with the Lord they are in a better state than now, surely then they are not only *in manu Dei*, in the hand of God; but admitted in *conspectum Dei*, into the presence of God. It were also absurd to long for a dissolution of that estate wherein we feel the love of God and Christ, sometimes with us, unspeakable and glorious, for an estate wherein there is no sight and sense of God and Christ, and celestial and heavenly things. But so it is that they account this more eligible, Phil. i. 23.

(4.) If the wicked and the righteous be in their final estate as soon as they die, surely then the rest of the saints beginneth presently upon their dissolution; for as the trouble of the wicked is, so

is the rest of the saints. But this we find in the scriptures, that the spirits of the disobedient are now in hell as in a prison, 1 Peter iii. 19. The souls of men and women do not vanish into nothing, are not extinguished in their bodies, nor are detained by the way in some third place; but as soon as they depart out of the body, go to the place and state of torment. On the other side, the spirits of just men are said to be made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. When they are clothed and divested of their bodies, they are perfected in heaven; which cannot be said if they did lie in a dull sleep, without any life, light, joy, or act of love to God.

(5.) What is said to one convert belongeth to all in the same circumstances, and to them in like cases: Luke xxiii. 45, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' By 'paradise' is meant heaven, as Paul calleth the third heaven paradise, 2 Cor. xii. 4, in allusion to Eden, or the garden out of which Adam was driven; not in regard of his body (for that was disposed of as men pleased), but his soul. But when the soul was in paradise, was it deprived of all sense, yea or no? Certainly no, for it was with Christ. And 'this day;' this comfort was not adjourned to commence some fifteen hundred or two thousand years afterward; as this is a great comfort to those that are hard at work for God; the time of your ease and refreshing is at hand; if suffering, it will be soon over, and then your joys begin; to the sick, it is but a little longer pain; to the dying, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye you will be with God.

(6.) If those already departed be living with God in heaven, those that follow after may upon the same terms expect it. Now it is so; the patriarchs are already with God, they all live to God: Luke xx. 37, 38, 'For God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' Then all the elect that are already departed are glorified: Col. i. 20, 'By the blood of his cross he hath reconciled all things to God, both in heaven and in earth.' He meaneth the universality of the elect, whether triumphant or militant. It cannot be meant of the angels; there was never a breach between God and them, and therefore they cannot be said to be reconciled to him. If things in heaven be reconciled, it is meant of the glorified saints.

Two reasons why our reward is represented under the notion of rest.

(1*st*.) Because it suiteth with the aim of the saints. It is the end of motion. None have it but those that seek after it. We are all travel ling into the other world. Some are posting to eternal torment; they choose a broad way and have much company, and go on pleasantly for the time, but this course endeth sadly; this is the path that leadeth down to the chambers of death. But others are going to life and rest; they enter into it by a strait gate, walk in a narrow way,—the strait gate of repentance, the narrow way of new obedience; but the end is blessed and glorious, Mat. vii. 13, 14. This life is a walk and a journey; we are now in motion and in passage. *Adepto fine, cessat motus.* When we come to the place we intend, there we take our rest. Every day a christian cometh nearer the shore: Rom. xiii. 11, 'Your salvation is nearer than it was when you first believed.' Only it standeth us upon to consider whether we go right. Every journey hath a period, and every motion its end and rest.

(2*d*.) This term suiteth best with the goodness of God, who delighteth to recompense his people for all their pain and weariness; he hath a care of his weary servants now. Many times the pangs of the new birth are sharp and tedious, therefore he giveth some the tongue of the learned, that they may refresh the weary soul, Isa. l. 4. And Christ saith, Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest/ It is our rest by the way; so at the end of the journey. A constant course of holiness puts upon many labours, and sorrows, and conflicts. (1.) Labours, The Lord taketh notice of them, Heb. vi. 10, 1 Cor. xv. 28; therefore the Lord telleth the laborious soul of a rest. (2.) Sorrows, through our manifold calamities and afflictions: John xvi. 20, 'The world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.' They shall have much comfort and refreshing for their sad hours. The world rejoiceth when Christ is removed, and gone out of the world; but the saints rejoice when Christ cometh; then is their complete rest. (3.) Conflicts with the devil, the 'world, and the flesh. Through many wrestlings we get to heaven, we make our way thither every step by conflict and contest. Now those that fight the good fight of faith, God will crown them, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

Use 1. To fortify our choice. It is left to us whether we will have our rest and ease here or hereafter. Both we cannot have, for rest is for the weary soul. We cannot reasonably hope to leap from Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom, if we have never laboured in duties public or secret, withheld not ourselves from any joy. Some have their good things here, Luke xvi. 25, Ps. xvii. 14, their whole portion in this world; others choose a life of labour, patience, and self-denial. To whom think you doth God promise rest? If we will not endure the pains and be at the cost, we shall not have the rest. The flesh is importunate to be pleased, but it is better to please God and save the soul.

Two questions we should often put to ourselves—

1. Is there a motion after something better than the world can afford us? A motion after God; you dare not rest on anything below God. The spiritual life is nothing else but a seeking after God: Ps. xxiv. 6, 'This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O God.' We seek on earth, we find in heaven. But are we seekers or wanderers?

2. Is this motion carried on with that industry, patience, and self-denial that such a matter of importance requireth?

[1.] Industry: Ps. lxiii. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee.' God is not to be sought carelessly and by the by; the greatest business of our lives must be for him: 'First seek the kingdom of God,' &c. Mat. vi. 33. The soul must press after him, and labour to enjoy him; this is our primary mark.

[2.] Patience under many disappointments and sorrows. The spouse that sought after her beloved was smitten and wounded by the watch men, Cant. v. 7. But your hearts are so set upon God and the life to come, that still you make it your chiefest care and business to seek him, and will not be

put out of your way: Ps. xliv. 17, ‘All this is come upon us, yet have we not departed from thee; our heart is not turned back.’

[3.] Self-denial of our own ease, pleasure, credit, honour in the world, still conflicting with your own lusts, that at length you may attain the blessed God: Phil. iii. 11, ‘If by any means,’ &c., Mat. xi. 12.

Use 2. To shame the people of God, that they are so delicate and tender of the flesh when such a rest is provided for them; that duties are so wearisome; that we begrudge a few sufferings; that we so much give way to coldness and lukewarmness, and that God is over looked and neglected in the general course and drift of our lives; that we are so loath to be at the trouble of contradicting our lusts, and do no more oppose the interest of the flesh. O christians! can we expect the rest if we will not labour and strive against sin, even to weariness?

Secondly, ‘Best with us;’ that is, with us apostles, and other holy ones of God.

Note 1. All christians have the same felicity for substance, though the degrees be different.

Common christians have their rest as well as the apostles. Those that have been together in the labour, in the duty, and the danger, shall be together in the rest and recompense. All the servants entered into the joy of the Lord, though some had an increase of ten talents, some five, Mat. xxv. 1. The grounds of essential happiness are the same to all.

1. The same redeemer and mediator, Exod. xxx. 15. If they had a better Christ, or another mediator to ransom their souls, they might expect another happiness; but all is brought about by the same redeemer, Jesus Christ, theirs and ours, 1 Cor. i. 2; by his mediation, sacrifice, and meritorious righteousness, Rom. iii. 22.

2. The same covenant, which is the common charter of the saints, Acts ii. 39. It is a covenant which offereth the same benefits and requireth the same duties. The same benefits, pardon, life. Pardon: Rom. iv. 23, 24, ‘Neither was it written for his sake alone, but for us also, if we believe.’ Eternal life is the common portion of all the; saints: 2 Tim. iv. 8, ‘Not for me only, but for all those,’ &c. It requireth the same duties, for all the saints have the same rule to walk by, Gal. vi. 16. The same gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth, Rom. i. 16. Well, then, if all have no other charter from God to show for pardon and life, and all are bound to the same duties, all shall have the same happiness.

Note 2. Though the essential happiness of the saints be the same, yet there are degrees in glory. (1.) From scripture. (2.) The nature of that glory and blessedness which we expect. *Sicut se habet simpliciter ad simpliciter, ita magis ad magis.* If I am to love a holy man as a holy man, I am to love those most who excel in holiness. So look what relation holiness hath to heaven, so more holiness hath more relation to heaven. (3.) From the remunerative justice of God.

Note 3. ‘Rest with us.’ It is a comfortable adjunct to our felicity in heaven that we shall have such company there. Surely the apostle mentions it for their comfort here. So elsewhere it is propounded: Mat. viii. 11, ‘Ye shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.’ These were mentioned because they were the prime believers, and chief in esteem among the Jews, before whom Christ then spake. So everywhere in scripture it is made a happiness to be of this society, Heb. xii. 22, 23; Eph. ii. 19, ‘Fellow-citizens with all the saints;’ Eph. iii. 15, ‘Of whom the whole family is named, whether in heaven or earth.’ If to be of this society now be a privilege, though severed in distinct habitations, then what a comfort is it to be admitted to a greater nearness of converse with the patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, and all the worthies of God. We love their company now; it is sweet to be in the assemblies of the saints on earth, to pray, hear, fast, and communicate together in the Lord’s supper; much more in heaven; the saints are more lovely, other manner of saints than ever we knew them before.

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Use. Well, then, let us love the saints of God now, for these are to be our everlasting companions: Ps. cxxxiii. 1, ‘It is comely and pleasant to live together in unity.’ We that look for one home, should we fall out by the way? All agree there; why should we not glorify God with one mind and mouth now? There are different degrees of light, which cause differences of opinion; but there are substantial and common truths enough, wherein we all agree, to bring us to a closer union. Certainly those beautefeus and coal-blowers should be hateful to all christians; the truest zeal and martyrdom will be enough in uniting christians.

SERMON V.

When the Lard Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.—2 THES. i. 7.

WE now come to the third thing, the time when our reward shall be fully accomplished, ‘When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.’

In the words observe—(1.) The person coming, ‘The Lord;’ (2.) His train and retinue, ‘With his mighty angels.’

From thence observe two points—

1. There is a time coming when Christ shall be fully revealed from heaven, and appear in all his glory.

2. That when Christ cometh he shall bring his mighty angels with him.

For the first point.

1. What is this revelation? The coming of Christ is sometimes set forth by the word ἀποκάλυψις, revelation; sometimes by the word ἐπιφάνεια, appearing. The former is in the text, and in 1 Peter i. 13, ‘Hope to the end for the grace which shall be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.’ So 1 Cor. i. 7, ‘Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ ἀποκάλυψιν, the revelation. Elsewhere the other word is used; as 2 Tim. iv. 8, Titus ii. 13, ‘Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.’ Both are to the same effect.

The former we are now upon. It is used for these reasons—

[1.] There are many who never had a sight of his glorious person, his bodily presence is withdrawn from us; for Christ departed into the heavens long before we were born, not to deny the world any necessary satisfaction, but upon wise reasons. It was expedient he should go from us: John xvi. 7, ‘It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you.’ And he is contained in the heaven of heavens, Acts iii. 21, ‘Until the time of the restitution of all things.’ There is a great distance between us and heaven, which though it doth not hinder his spiritual virtue and influence, yet it doth the enjoyment and sight of his bodily presence; we cannot see him nor hear him, though we feel his gracious operations in our souls: 1 Peter i. 8, ‘Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy,’ &c. But at the last day he shall be revealed, or visibly manifested to be the head of the church, and the judge and avenger of his people. We shall find that our faith was not misplaced, that he is what we believed him to be, and that he was worthy to be loved and obeyed.

[2.] When he was upon earth he lived in a state of obscurity, his godhead peeping out sometimes through the veil in a miracle or so, but mostly obscuring and hiding itself; for his kingdom was not of this world. And this way of coming was necessary to try his people: John i. 11, ‘He came unto his own, and his own received him not.’ The Jews will not believe that Christ was the true Messiah, because he came not in such a manner as to satisfy his own countrymen; but God’s thoughts are not as man’s thoughts. We walk here, ‘not by sight, but by faith,’ 2 Cor. v. 7. A dispensation of faith must neither be too bright nor too obscure.

[3.] Now his spiritual glory is seen but in a glass darkly, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. We apprehend him by faith, but see him not face to face; though he be revealed to the soul, yet not so revealed as he will be at his second coming. Vision or beholding of his glory is reserved for heaven: John xvii. 24, ‘Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.’

[4.] His kingdom is not always clear and visible in the world, though he ruleth in the midst of his enemies, Ps. cx. 2. His interest to all appearance is many times suppressed in the world, though at other times it breaketh out again, and is owned in the world: Luke xvii. 20, ‘The kingdom of God cometh not with observation,’ μετὰ παρατηρήσεως. It is not set up as other kingdoms are, with warlike preparation or visible pomp and glory.

[5.] His people and subjects are under a veil; their life is hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3; ‘The world knoweth us not, as it knew him not,’ 1 John iii. 2. It doth not now appear to the world, nor altogether to the saints themselves, what a blessed portion is made sure to them. The day of the manifestation of the sons of God is not yet come, Rom. viii. 19, either of the eldest and first-born, or of all the rest of the brethren; which is a comfort to us in our reproaches; if we be not revealed and manifested to be what we are, neither is the Son of God revealed to the full of his glory. In short, though Christ be revealed to us in the doctrine of the gospel, yet his excellency doth in part lie hid from his own children. We see him but darkly, and no wonder if the world see him not, and know him not. And for believers, their glory is hidden under the veil of afflictions, infirmities, and imperfections.

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2. That this time is coming is evident—

[1.] From the promise of his coming. This was the great promise ever kept afoot in the church. The scoffers took notice of it: 2 Peter iii. 4, ‘Where is the promise of his coming?’ There was an ancient promise long ago: Jude 14, 15, ‘Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all,’ &c. It hath been revived in all ages by the Lord’s messengers, Moses, David, Samuel, Joel, Zechariah, Malachi, and more clearly by Christ himself and his apostles everywhere: John xiv. 3, ‘I will come again; if it were not so, I would have told you.’ God, that hath been faithful in all things, will not fail us at last. He hath ever stood to his word, how unlikely so ever the things promised were. The believers of the old world were not deceived in the promise of his first coming in the flesh. Surely Christ would not deceive us with a vain hope, nor flatter us into a fools’ paradise; we may rest upon his infallible word for his second appearance.

[2.] From the types whereby Christ was prefigured. I shall instance in one, which the apostle explaineth from ver. 24 to the latter end; see it.

[3.] There are ordinances appointed in the church, to keep afoot the remembrance of this promise; the word preached, the Lord’s supper: 1 Cor. xi. 26, ‘As oft as ye eat of this bread and drink this cup, ye show forth the Lord’s death till he come.’ He hath left it as a monument of his faithfulness to revive our hopes and expectations. Would Christ institute a solemn ordinance for the remembrance of his appearing if he meant to come no more at us? The word declareth it: 2 Tim. iv. 1, ‘I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing,’ &c.

[4.] We have an inward pledge of it, the coming of the Holy Ghost into our hearts. At parting there is a taking and giving of tokens. Christ is not gone in anger, but about business, to set all things at rights for the great day of espousals. To prevent suspicion, he left the Spirit to stir up in us a certain and earnest expectation of that day: Rom. viii. 23, ‘We ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, even

the redemption of our body;' and Rev. xxii. 17, 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come.' The time is determined, the marriage-day fixed, though unknown to us; but the Spirit dwelling in us sets us a-looking and a-longing for it.

[5.] Our constant experience of his love and care over us. There are frequent messages of love which pass between us and Christ, which show that he doth not forget us, and is not strange to us now. There is a constant intercourse kept up between every believing soul and his Redeemer; though he be absent from us in the body, yet we hear from him, and he is present with us in the spirit. We hear from him in the word, in prayer, and in the sacraments; and will he not come again, who is so mindful of us at every turn? If he forgat us in his exaltation, as the butler forgat Joseph when he was at court, it were another matter. No; though our high priest be passed into the heavens, yet he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, Heb. iv. 15. He will not always leave us liable to sinning and suffering. He is our life now, and therefore shall appear, and we with him in glory, Col. iii. 4.

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[6.] Consider how much Christ's interest is concerned in it.

(1.) Partly that the glory of his person may be seen and fully discovered. His first coming was obscure, and without observation, for then he came in the form of a servant; but now he cometh as the lord and heir of all things, in power and great glory. Then he had for his forerunner John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Mat. iii.; but now he hath for his forerunner an archangel, by whose voice, as the trump of God, the dead shall rise out of their graves. Then he came with twelve disciples, a few poor fishermen, men of small condition in the world; now with legions of angels, σὺν μυριάσιν ἁγίαις, Jude 14. At the first coming, he acted the part of a minister of the circumcision, preaching the gospel to the people of Israel only; now he cometh as the judge of all the world. Then he invited men to repentance, and offered remission of sins to all those who would own him as their Redeemer; now he cuts off all hope of pardon for ever from them who refused or despised his grace. Then he offered himself as a mediator between God and man, to God as an high priest, to us as an apostle, Heb. iii. 1; but now he cometh as a judge and avenger. Then he veiled his divine nature under the infirmities of his flesh, and did but sparingly emit the rays of his majesty; now he shall appear in the glory of his Father. Then he wrought some miracles, which his enemies imputed to diabolical arts and magical impostures; now there will be no need of miracles to assert the divinity of his person, for all things are obvious and liable to sense. Heretofore he raised a few to life, now all the dead. Then he prepared himself to suffer death, now he shall tread death under his feet. Then he stood before the tribunals of men, that he might be condemned to the ignominious death of the cross; now he shall sit upon a glorious throne, all kings and potentates expecting their final doom and sentence from his mouth. Then he came not to judge, but to save; now to render to every one according to his works. Then he was scorned, buffeted, spit upon; now crowned with glory and honour. Then he came to bear the sins of many, now he appeareth without sin unto the salvation of those that look for him, Heb. ix. 28. Not bearing our burden, but bringing our discharge; not as a surety, but a paymaster; not as a sufferer, but as a conqueror, triumphing

over death, hell, and the devil. Finally, he cometh, no more to go from us, but to take us from all misery to himself, and that for ever.

(2.) That he may possess what he hath purchased. He bought us at a dear rate, even with the price of his blood, 1 Peter i. 18, 19. And would he be at all this cost and preparation for nothing? Surely he that came to suffer will come to triumph; and he that hath bought will possess. He loved his people unto death, and they loved him above their lives. For his people's sake he sanctified himself to his office; for their sakes he came at first, and for their sakes he will return: John xiv. 3, 'I go to prepare a place for you; and I will come again and receive you to myself.' When lie hath gotten them together into one body and great congregation, he will solemnly present them to God, as a prey snatched out of the teeth of lions: Heb. ii. 13, 'Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me.' And then will introduce them into those everlasting habitations, where they may be for ever with himself.

(3.) With respect to the wicked, it is a part of his office to triumph over them in their final overthrow. God bringeth them down now by pieces, but then altogether. He got himself a glorious name when he triumphed over Pharaoh and his host, but that was but one enemy, and that only in the sight of Israel. Now all his enemies are put under his feet, in the sight of all the world: Isa. xlv. 23, 'Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess;' Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 'We shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ; for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,' &c.; with Phil, ii. 10, 'At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,' &c. He will make all those that have set light by him to see all his glory. The carnal now slight the merit and value of his sacrifice: Heb. x. 29, 'Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing?' κοινὸν. They neglect his grace: John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.' Refuse his counsels and invitations, Prov. i. 23, and Mat. xxi. 15. Cast off his government, Luke xix. 14; but then they shall see him in all his royalty.

(4.) That he may require an account of things during his absence; what his servants have done with their talents, Mat. xxv.; what his church hath done with his ordinances, and how things have been carried in his house: 1 Tim. vi. 14, 'Keep this commandment without rebuke unto the appearing of Jesus Christ.' Whether his officers have been diligent: 2 Tim. iv. 1, 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom/ How they have dispensed the censures, whether they have eaten and drunk with the drunken, and beaten their fellow servants, Mat. xxiv. 49; that is, encouraged the wicked and strengthened their hands with the suppression of the godly, and discouraged the most serious. Finally, who have violated the light of nature, or disobeyed the gospel, ver. 8.

Use 1. Believe it. Nature cannot easily contradict this truth, and scripture doth plainly assert it. If it were a vain conceit and fancy, you might entertain it with scorn, but it is an evident truth, constantly delivered in the word of God. And the whole frame of religion would fall to the ground if this were not granted. God would lose the glorious demonstration of his goodness and justice, Christ the honour of all his sufferings, and christians all their comfort and hope raised in them by the Spirit of God, the wicked all that awe which doth in part suppress their licentiousness, and the whole government of the world be dissolved. It is a great, it is a sure, and now it is a near day. God and all his creatures would never be brought together if there were not such a time. The law of nature would be in vain, and the gospel would be false, if there were not such a time. Now, must man be unmanned, and the gospel, which is the wisest institution that ever the world was acquainted with, be condemned as a falsity, to justify your unbelief, and the cause and effect of it, your licentious living? Acts xvii. 31, 'God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness,' πίστιν παρασχὼν πᾶσιν. He made sufficient demonstration of the truth of this doctrine in Christ's resurrection: Zech. xiv. 3, 'The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.' Rouse up your faith, adhere steadfastly to this truth, as a thing certain; Christ shall come, attended with all his glorious saints and angels, and the believer shall find the fruit of his interests in him.

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2. Carry yourselves so that this day may be a comfort to you, and not a terror. It will be a terror to all guilty souls that have not entered into God's peace, 2 Peter iii. 14, a terror to all those that have not loved the Lord Jesus Christ above their own lives and interests in the world: 1 Cor. xvi. 22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.' A terror it will be to all that have opposed Christ's kingdom in the world, and discouraged serious godliness, and turned religion into a ceremony and dead form. A terror it will be to all those that love the present world, and the credit, pleasures, and profits thereof, and could not tarry till Christ came to distribute crowns, and pleasures, and honours at his right hand, but took up their happiness aforehand: Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.' A terror it will be to the scorners of godliness and the world to come, 2 Peter iii. 3, 4, but a comfort to the believers, that not only looked for, but loved this day, 2 Tim. iv. 8, thought it the greatest encouragement and happiness that could be offered to them to prepare for this day, 2 Peter iii. 11, that lived in a constant fidelity to Christ, and not only made conscience to do his will, but suffered all manner of inconveniences, 1 Peter iv. 13, rather than dispense with their duty to him: 'As ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, so, when his glory shall be revealed, ye shall be glad with an exceeding joy.' All that have been sober and mortified, loath to take up with a temporal happiness: 1 Peter i. 13, 'Gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;' 1 Thes. v. 8, 'Let us who are of the day be sober,' &c. We cannot keep up the lively expectations of better things unless we keep our hearts from vain delights.

3. Wait and hope earnestly for this time, because of the abundant grace and glory which shall be brought to us.

[1.] Grace: 1 Peter i. 13, ‘Be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.’ Then we shall have the fullest and largest manifestation of God’s love and favour to us. There is grace brought to us now by the revelation of Christ in the gospel, but hereafter more fully and perfectly. We see his grace in the pardon of sins, and that measure of sanctification which we now attain unto, that he is pleased to pass by our offences, and take us into his family, and give us to taste of his love, and to have a right to his heavenly kingdom, and employ us in his service; but it is another manner of grace then, when our pardon and approbation shall be ratified by our judge’s own mouth, Acts iii. 19, when he shall not only take us into his family, but into his presence and palace, John xii. 16, not only give us right, but possession; when we shall not only know Christ by faith, but by sight; when we shall see our nature united to the godhead, and not only have some remote service and ministration, but be everlastingly employed in loving, delighting in, and praising God, with all those heavenly creatures who are our eternal companions in this work. This is grace seen in all its graciousness; surely then our only cry will be, Grace, grace.

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[2.] Glory. What a glory is it that we must immediately possess in body and soul! It is said, ‘We look for glory, honour, and immortality,’ Rom. ii. 4; 2 Cor. iv, 17, ‘Our bodies raised glorious bodies;’ Phil. iii. 21, ‘Our souls.’ Then is the glory begun perfected: 2 Cor. iii. 18, ‘We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.’ The weakness ceaseth; we then shall know God perfectly, and love him perfectly; we shall not be disquieted any more with jarrings and divisions; no more resemble the devil, but wholly be transformed into the image of God; bodies glorious, souls glorious, place glorious, company glorious, work glorious, pleasing a glorious God.

Second point. That when Christ cometh, he shall bring his mighty angels with him.

This is often asserted in scripture: Mat. xxvi. 27, ‘The Son of man hall come in the glory of his Father with his angels;’ Mat. xxv. 31, ‘When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.’

There are two truths contained in this one proposition—(1.) That his angels are mighty angels, or angels of might; (2.) That he shall bring them along with him.

1. That they are mighty angels. They are said to excel in strength, Ps. ciii. 20. One angel in one night slaughtered many thousands of the Assyrians in Senacherib’s camp. This is offered to our thoughts to show that the most potent creatures are infinitely inferior to our Redeemer, which is comfortable to the godly, and maketh his vengeance terrible to the wicked; this strength they have from God their creator, who giveth strength to all his creatures as it pleaseth him.

2. Why he bringeth them with him.

[1.] To show his glory and majesty, that they are at his beck and command. The most excellent of all creatures are his ministers and subjects, and all the heavenly hosts at his command: 1 Peter iii. 22, 'He is sat down at the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to him.' And it is said, Eph. i. 22, 'That God hath set him far above all principalities and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.' And the apostle, when he would set forth the majesty of our Redeemer, telleth us that he was made far more excellent than the angels, whose ministers they are, and whom they are commanded to worship, Heb. i. 4, 6, 7, and who employeth his authority for the defence and comfort of the meanest of his people, ver. 14. They are subject not only to God, but to Christ as our mediator. Look, as it is the glory of earthly kings to command mighty and powerful subjects: 'Are not my princes altogether kings?' Isa. x. 8, that so many princes owned him as their sovereign, and served under him as their commander; and when God speaketh of the Assyrian, he calleth him a king of princes, Neh. viii. 10, namely, as he had many kings subject and tributary to him; so this is the majesty of our Redeemer, that he hath those powerful creatures, the mighty angels, in his train and retinue.

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[2.] Because he hath a ministry and service for them.

(1.) To gather the elect: Mat. xxiv. 31, 'He shall send his angels to gather together the elect from the four winds;' that is, from all parts and quarters of the world. There is no envy in holy and blessed creatures, we find the angels kindly affectioned to the salvation of lost man. When their Lord was incarnate, and so, in respect of his human nature, made a little lower than themselves, they disdain him not, but praised God at the birth of Christ: Luke ii. 13, 14, 'A multitude of the heavenly host praised God, saying, Glory to God in the highest,' &c. They attend upon the dispensation of the gospel, and are present in our assemblies: 1 Cor. xi. 10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels;' 1 Tim. v. 21, 'I charge thee before God, and the elect angels, that thou neglect not these things.' They are conscious to administrations in the church. When any sinner is recovered out of the apostasy, we read of joy in heaven, Luke xv. 7, 10. The people of God are now their charge, and hereafter their companions; and therefore they are contented to be employed by Christ about them. Now for their defence: Heb. i. 14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' Ps. xxxiv. 7, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him/ Hereafter they convey the souls of the departing righteous unto Christ: Luke xvi. 22, 'The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' To their rest in heaven. So at the last day they shall accompany them in their joyful retinue to their old beloved habitations. By their ministry he will gather the bodies of his redeemed ones from all parts of the world, after they have been resolved into dust, and that dust mingled with other dust, that every saint may have his own body again.

(2.) To execute his sentence on the wicked: Mat. xiii. 41, 42, 'The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity,

and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' So ver. 49. 'The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from the just/ It is their work, and they are employed about it, to consummate Christ's kingdom against God's enemies and the enemies of his children.

[3.] To show they are a part of that army which is commanded by the captain of our salvation, the blessed Son of God. Now they are a part of the army which is employed for the destruction of the kingdom of sin and Satan: Ps. lxviii. 17, 'The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even many thousands of angels; the Lord is among them in his holy place.' The psalmist speaketh of Christ as mediator and king of the church. No kingdom hath such defence, and such potent and numerous armies to fight their battles, as the church hath. The angels join with the saints in overturning the kingdom of sin, Satan and antichrist. They join with us; their influence doth not always visibly appear; and therefore when the whole army are drawn forth in their glory, they come as a principal part. In the head of this army there will Christ appear at the end of the world. When he hath won the field, he will come in triumph to confound his conquered enemies, and to be glorified in his redeemed ones. And therefore his holy angels, who are concerned in the conflict, are not left out in the triumph.

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Use. To quicken us to get our minds more deeply possessed with the majesty of our Redeemer. The scripture often representeth this argument to our thoughts, that he is head of all principalities and powers. Surely the representing Christ in his glory is a point of great concernment, or else the word of God would not so often insist upon it.

1. That we may admire the Mediator, and may not have mean thoughts of his being and office; but represent him to ourselves as a dreadful lord and king, who holdeth the most powerful creatures in subjection to himself. And shall poor worms make bold with his laws, when the angels are so ready to attend him at his beck and command, and that in the meanest services and ministries? If christians did know and considered how much of true religion consists in admiring the person of their Redeemer, they would more busy their minds in this work. Your obedience to the gospel in general dependeth upon it, that we may not slight his doctrine and benefits, Heb. ii. 1-3. After he had showed that Christ had obtained a more excellent name than the angels, he presently inferreth, 'If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?' So Heb. xii. 25, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth,' when he gave the law by the ministry of angels.

2. To quicken us to thankfulness. That we may bless God for the honour done to our nature in the person of Christ; for it is God incarnate that is made head of angels, and principalities, and powers. God in our nature, whom all the angels of God are called upon to adore and worship. This was the great counterwork to Satan's designs, for the devil's design was partly to dishonour God

by a false representation of his nature, as if he were envious of man's happiness: Gen. iii. 5, 'God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods;' to depress the nature of man, which in innocency stood so near to God. Now that this human nature should be so elevated and advanced, and be set far above the angelical nature in the person of Christ, admitted to dwell with God in a personal union; oh, let us admire the wisdom and goodness of God.

3. To strengthen our trust, and fortify us against all fears and discouragements in our service. Though the powers and authorities on earth and their messengers and hosts be employed against the saints, yet the captain of our salvation is in heaven, and all the mighty angels are subject to him and at his disposal. By this means the prophet Elisha confirmed himself and his servant when the king of Syria sent chariots and horses and a great host to attack the prophet in Dothan: 2 Kings vi. 14, 15, 'And his servant saw it early in the morning, and said, Alas, master! what shall we do?' The prophet answered, ver. 16, 'They that are with us are more than they that be with them.' And then he prayed, ver. 17, 'Lord, open his eyes that he may see;' and the Lord opened his eyes, and 'behold the mountain was full of chariots and horses round about Elisha.' The Syrian king looketh to his outward force, but considereth not the power of God. God can make preparation for his people's defence when all the powers of the world are against them. Those fiery horses and chariots were no other but the angels of God; here is force against force, chariots and horses against chariots and horses; thus doth the prophet seek to put fear out of the heart of his servant. He desireth God would but let him see the out ward force and strength in which the heavenly hosts did appear, there by to confirm his mind; thus did the three children strengthen themselves: Dan. iii. 17, 18, 'Our God is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods,' &c.; ver 28, 'And God sent his angel for their deliverance;' ver. 25, 'The fourth was like the Son of God.' So Stephen, Acts vii. 55, 56, saw Jesus at the right hand of God in the midst of his angels. Nothing doth lessen created glory, and fortify us against the terribleness of the creature so much as this meditation.

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4. To draw our hearts after Christ, and towards him; for the angels of God that worship him do know what he is: 'I will worship thee among the gods,' Ps. xcvii. 7; and Heb. i. 6, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' It is argument enough that the angels are witnesses, and take part with the saints: Ps. cxxxviii. 1, 'Before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.'

5. To make us more reverent in our approaches to him. For he sits in the assembly of the gods; the holy angels are round about him, and observe undecencies: 1 Cor. xi. 10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels;' and Eccles. v. 6, 'Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, nor say before the angel, it was an error.' The angels in heaven observe our behaviour in God's worship: Luke xii. 8, 'Him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God.' They speak well of us in heaven.

6. To quicken us to do what we can to promote the kingdom of God, even the increase of light, life, and love; for therein standeth the kingdom of God. In knowledge, as the devils are rulers of the darkness of this world, so the kingdom of God is begun in light; in life, not in formality and hypocrisy.

SERMON VI.

In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.—2 THES. i. 8.

THE apostle had spoken of the different retributions, conjunctly and together; now he cometh to speak of them severally and apart.

He beginneth with the wicked; and speaketh, first, of their judgment, in the text; secondly, their punishment: ver. 9, 'Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.'

In his coming to judge them, there is—

1. The manner. The terribleness of his coming to them, ἐν πυρὶ φλόγος, 'in a flame of fire.' His coming to the righteous is described by light, to the wicked by fire. To them he cometh shining as the sun, to these as lightning or burning fire.

2. The end, to take vengeance on them, or doom them to destruction.

3. They are described by a double character, 'Those that know not God, and that obey not the gospel,' &c.

Which may be understood copulatively or disjunctively.

[1.] Copulatively, of the same men diversely described, that they neither know God, nor obey Christ; for those are the two great points that are discussed in the judgment, God and Christ. And look, as it is life eternal, John xvii. 3, to know God and Jesus Christ, &c., that God is to be known, loved, obeyed, worshipped and enjoyed, and the Lord Jesus as our redeemer and saviour to bring us home to God, and to procure for us the gifts of pardon and life, which life is to be begun here, and perfected in heaven; this is the sum of what is necessary to life eternal; so on the contrary, not to know God nor to obey the gospel is the way to eternal death and destruction.

[2.] Distributively and disjunctively, of two sorts of persons of heathens or pseudo-christians.

(1.) The heathen are fitly described to be those that know not God; as 1 Thes. iv. 5, ‘Not in the lust of concupiscence, as the Gentiles which know not God.’ By the light of nature an infinite eternal power was discovered to them, but they knew him not so as to worship him and serve him: Rom. i. 20, 21, ‘But became foolish in their imaginations.’ So they shall be condemned by the light of nature, which they approved not. Though there be no saving knowledge of God out of Christ, yet they had so much knowledge as left them without excuse.

[2.] The false christians are fitly described in the other expression: ‘That obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ For they that have heard of the gospel shall be judged by the gospel, according to the dispensation they have lived under. Now the true christians are always described by their obedience; they do so believe the gospel as to live accordingly: Heb. v. 9, ‘He became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him;’ and Acts v. 32, ‘And so is the Holy Ghost, which he hath given to them that obey him.’ But the wicked and carnal are described by their disobedience: 1 Peter ii. 7, 8, ‘Unto you that obey, he is precious; but to the disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed.’ And again, ‘They stumbled at the word, being disobedient, whereunto they were also appointed.’ Some will not be persuaded to believe and obey the gospel; those are included in the last expression.

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Doct. That Christ will in a terrible manner come to render vengeance on all those who regarded not to know God and obey the gospel.

1. I shall speak of the terrible manner of his coming.

2. I shall speak of the twofold rule of proceeding in the judgment, upon the light of nature and the gospel, and who shall be judged by the one, and who by the other.

3. Examine the force of these expressions, ‘know not God,’ and ‘obey not the gospel.’

I. For the terrible manner of his coming, implied in the words ‘in flaming fire.’ A terrible day it will be certainly to those who do not expect it and prepare for it. This fire serveth—

1. To set forth the majesty of the judge. When the Lord Jesus appeared to Moses, he appeared to him in a burning fire: Acts vii. 30, ‘The angel of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire in a bush.’ So when he gave the law, he gave it out of the midst of the fire: Deut. v. 22, 23, ‘And the mountain round about him did burn with fire.’ Then the people cried out, ‘This great fire will consume us; we shall die if we hear the voice of God any more.’ So when Christ is now revealed, he shall be encompassed about with a flaming fire: Ps. 1. 3, ‘Our God shall come, a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.’ As fearful and terrible as he showed himself in giving the law, so terrible shall he be in the execution of it, judging the impenitent; so that this flame of fire becometh the glory of his divine presence.

2. This flame of fire is mentioned as the instrument of punishment on the wicked, who are said to be cast into a furnace of fire, Mat. xiii. 42, and Mat. xxv. 41, ‘Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;’ setting forth thereby the extremity of their pain and torment.

3. By this flame of fire is all the world burnt up. God having provided a more glorious mansion for his people to dwell in, will by a general conflagration destroy, or at least purge the world from the dross it hath contracted: 2 Peter iii. 10, ‘The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.’ A dreadful sight it will be for men to see the dissolution of the whole frame of nature, and the delight of their souls burnt up before their eyes; the Lord thereby testifying his displeasure against wicked men’s placing their happiness in these things, and not in himself.

Therefore since the coming of Christ shall be with such majesty and terror, we should prepare ourselves accordingly; for that is the use the apostle makes of it: 2 Peter iii. 11, ‘Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?’ Surely we should live much to the glory of Christ in the world, and get more holiness of heart and life, that this day may not be terrible to us, but comfortable.

II. The persons brought into the judgment, and the distinct rule of proceeding, the light of nature and the gospel; for Christ will render vengeance to them that know not God, and obey not the gospel.

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1. Some had no other discovery of God but what they could make out from the course of nature and some instincts of conscience, as mere pagans; these shall not be judged for not believing in Christ, but for not knowing God. The apostle telleth us, ‘As many as have sinned without the law, shall perish without the law; as many as sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law,’ Rom. ii. 12. The gentile world is judged by one rule, and the Jewish by another, so the christian by another. Those to whose notice no fame of Christ and the law of Moses could possibly arrive, they shall perish without the law, be condemned to perdition in the judgment; for in that context he speaketh of the righteous judgment of God. But by what rule? The light of nature written in their hearts, ver. 14, 15. Nature in some measure told them what was well or ill done, pleasing or displeasing to God. The law of nature taught them their duty, and the course of God’s providence, that God was placable, and so invited them to repentance, Rom. ii. 4. Therefore among the gentiles—(1.) All atheists that denied God’s being or bounty, his essence or providence, as if he cared not for human affairs, they are obnoxious to the judgment. (2.) All idolaters who corrupted the worship of God, prefer their own idols before the true and living God. (3.) All wicked men among the heathen, who, when they knew God, glorified him not as God, Rom. i. 21, but gave up themselves to abominable impurities, as well as idolatries against the light of nature, are obnoxious to Christ’s vengeance; they knew not God, his nature and being. (4.) All those that despise God, resist his authority: Exod. v. 2, ‘Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?’

But you will say, What is this to us?

I answer—Our doom is indeed to be debated according to another rule, which is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But yet that which is perfect doth not destroy that which is imperfect, but imply it rather, as the reasonable soul doth the sensitive and vegetative. And that which we are to learn from hence is—

(1.) That the ignorance of God doth excuse no man from judgment; for the cause of the condemnation of the wicked is that they know not God; and therefore it is a more bloody sin than we usually think it: Isa. xxvii. 4, 'It is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favour.' Whether foreign nations or God's own people, he will severely punish them for their ignorance in necessary things.

(2.) That it is not enough to know God, unless we know him as we ought to know him; as the heathen knew God, but glorified him not as God, did not worship him, and serve him, and trust in him. So christians: Titus i. 16, 'Professing to know God, in their deeds they deny him.' They live as if they knew not God; what could they do more or worse if there were no God?

(3.) That the more means there is to know God the greater is the crime if they do not his will; for sin is more aggravated by the clearness of the revelation made to us: Luke xii. 47, 'He that knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.' According to the degree of knowledge or means of knowledge, so is both our sin and punishment greater; for here God considers not *de facto*, what knowledge we have but *de jure*, what knowledge we might have or should have. So that though the first character doth more directly concern the heathens, yet we christians are concerned in it also.

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2. Some having a discovery of Christ, and salvation by him, are judged by the gospel.

To evidence this to you, I shall show—(1.) Who may be said not to obey the gospel; (2.) Who shall be judged by the tenor of the gospel dispensation.

[1.] All such may be said not to obey the gospel—

(1.) Who obstinately refuse to entertain the doctrine of Christ, and salvation by him, but oppose it rather. So it is taken, 1 Peter iv. 17, 'If judgment begin at the house of God, what shall be the end of them who obey not the gospel of Christ?' will not come under the faith and profession, but are enemies and persecutors of it.

(2.) Such as acknowledge and profess the belief of the doctrine of Christ, but are remiss and careless in christian practice, do not heartily give up themselves to Christ's obedience, but live in their sensual lusts: Eph. ii. 2, 'Walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience;' Eph. iii. 6, 'Children of disobedience.'

(3.) Such as apostatise and revolt from it after they have known the way of righteousness, fall off from the christian profession and practice, and depart from the living God: Heb. x. 39, 'We are not of them who draw back.' All these may be said not to obey the gospel.

[2.] Who shall be judged by the tenor of the gospel dispensation?

(1.) Certainly those who have lived in the clear sunshine of the gospel, and have heard of Christ, and the grace of God dispensed by him: Mark xvi. 16, 'Go, preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.' There is the rule of God's process; they are condemned upon a double account—because of their sins against God, and their refusal of the remedy: John iii. 18, 19, 'He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already,' &c. In their natural estate they are under the wrath of God, and after they have heard of the offers of pardon and life, will not embrace the offered remedy, and give up themselves to the obedience of Christ, or suffer themselves to be drawn off from worldly vanities or fleshly lusts, that they may live unto God. If the end of all wicked men, even of those that have not so much as heard the gospel, shall be everlasting destruction, because they made not use of that natural knowledge they had of God, and those impressions of their duty which were left upon their hearts, Ps. ix. 17. If all that forget God shall be turned into hell, surely the danger will be greater of those who have the gospel clearly preached to them, and will not give obedience thereunto; for to their other sins they add impenitency and unbelief, and so are liable to the vengeance of the gospel, as well as the curse of the law.

(2.) Those to whom the object of faith was but more obscurely propounded; who are of several sorts.

(1*st*.) Those that lived before the flood and after the flood; as Abel, Enoch, and Noah, are mentioned in the chronicle and history of faith, as well as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And believers of a later stamp and edition, Heb. xi. And among unbelievers are reckoned all those who, through their obstinate incredulity, rejected the divine revelation made to them; as the world of the ungodly in Noah's time, who were disobedient when the Spirit of the Lord in him preached righteousness to them, or to God opening the way to life and salvation; as it is said, 1 Peter iii. 19, 20, 'By his Spirit Christ preached to the spirits now in prison, who were sometime disobedient in the days of Noah, when the long-suffering of God waited for them.' Now these, though they had but an obscure presignification of the seed of the woman, who should break the serpent's head, or that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, shall be condemned for not improving the gospel delivered to them, in such notions as God saw fit to convey it to them, not for want of explicit knowledge in all mysteries.

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(2*d*.) Some lived under the legal administration of the covenant of grace. To whom two things were propounded, the duties of the law and some strictures and obscure rudiments, or the first beginnings of the gospel. Now they shall be judged according to the administration they were under;

for the apostle telleth us, Rom. ii. 12, ‘As many as have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law;’ for the violating of the law of Moses, or neglecting the first dawnings of grace, which God offered to their view, search, and contemplation. Indeed the law was more manifest; but the gospel was not so obscure but they might have understood God’s willingness to be propitiated and reconciled; and therefore God will call them to account about not keeping his law, or not flying by faith and repentance to the mercy of God, which by divers ways and types of the Messiah was then revealed to them. The holy psalmist did so: Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, ‘If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;’ Ps. cxliii. 2, ‘Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.’ And the neglect of grace in others is inexcusable; and therefore they are condemned for not keeping the law, and for their unbelief and impenitency, which, though it be not so grievous a sin as theirs who lived under a clearer revelation, yet it sufficiently vindicateth the righteous judgment which is exercised upon them.

(3*d*.) Some lived in Christ’s time, when John the Baptist invited them to a gospel covenant, and our Lord himself set afoot the great salvation, and offered grace to believing penitents, confirming the dignity of his person and office by divers miracles, and that he had sufficient power to repeal the law of Moses, and erect the gospel kingdom foretold by the prophets. It was more dangerous then not to believe in the Son of God; for Christ telleth the Jews to slight him, appearing in so clear a light of miracles, was damnable: John viii. 24, ‘If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.’ But yet because the Spirit was not yet poured out, and Christ’s person was veiled under much obscurity and abasure, their condition was not altogether so bad as it was afterward when the gospel kingdom was now solemnly published, and the Spirit did abundantly convince the world that it was a sin not to believe in Christ, John xvi. 9, and Christ was so plainly proved by his resurrection to be the Son of God, and the great prophet and Messiah, and judge of the world. Therefore God gave them the morning market of the gospel: Acts iii. 26, ‘Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquity;’ and did not cut off their estate till they rejected the gospel, as well as crucified the Lord of glory: 1 Thes. ii. 15, 16, ‘Therefore wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.’ It was a great sin before, a damnable sin not to receive them; but God considered their prejudices, and the judgment will be more or less grievous upon them according to the advantages and opportunities they had of knowing Christ to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

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(4*th*.) Since the pouring out of the Spirit, and the setting up of the gospel kingdom in the world, some know Christ by clear doctrine, others by hearsay and obscure fame. Take, for instance, the Turks and modern Jews. The Turks acknowledge one merciful and true God; they deny not Christ to be a great prophet, but they deny him to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world and Redeemer of man kind, and wickedly prefer their false prophet Mahomet before him, and his fond superstition before the law of Christ. Now according as Christ is more or less perspicuously revealed to them, they shall have a more tolerable or heavy judgment, for the clearer is the revelation of the truth,

the more culpable is the rejection or contempt of it; for there is no man that heareth of Christ suffering for sinners, and rising again from the dead, and ascending into heaven, but is bound more diligently to inquire into it, and to receive and embrace this truth so suitable to our desires and necessities. The Jews inherit the obstinacy of their ancestors, confess there was such a person as Jesus the son of Mary, who gave out himself in the country of Judea to be the Messiah, and gathered disciples, who from him are called christians; but they call him an impostor, question the miracles done by him as done by the power of the devil. Surely these shall be judged by the gospel, which is so proudly and obstinately contemned by them after so many disappointments, and so long an expectation of another Messiah.

(5*th*.) Among christians, the gospel is not alike clearly made known. To some Christ is more plainly and purely preached, without any mixture of errors that have any considerable influence upon the main of religion. Others are in that communion in which those doctrines are yet taught, which are indeed absolutely and indispensably necessary to salvation, but many things are added which are very pernicious and dangerous in their own nature; so that if a man could possibly be saved in that religion, he is saved as by fire, 1 Cor. iii. 13, and in a strange way of escape. As if one had poison mingled with his meat, it may be the vigour of his youth and the goodness of his digestion might work it out, but yet the man runneth a great hazard. As for instance, the papists acknowledge Christ for the Redeemer and Mediator between God and man, his two natures and satisfaction, but they intermingle doctrines that sorely weaken these foundations, and other practices that dishonour the nature of God, and the merit and intercession of our Saviour. Now the doom of the corrupters of the christian religion will be exceeding great, because they have poisoned the waters of the sanctuary, and mangled Christ's ordinances, and perverted his truths to serve their avarice, ambition, and other human passions and interests. The apostle said, 2 Thes. ii. 10-12, 'Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, God shall send them strong delusions to believe a lie,' &c. However God may deal with the vulgar, who err in the simplicity of their hearts, we know not; but the condition of their leaders into this apostasy from the purity and simplicity of the gospel is exceeding dangerous.

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III. To examine the force of these expressions, 'Know not God,' and 'Believe not the gospel.'

1. 'Know not God.' There is a twofold knowledge of God—speculative and practical.

[1.] The speculative knowledge. The bare sight of the truth, or some empty and cold opinions about God and religion; such may the heathen have, who, when they knew God, glorified him not as God, Rom i. 21. Such may the Jew have: Rom. ii. 19, 20, 'And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that walk in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law,' μόρξωσιν τῆς γνώσεως ἐν τῷ νόμῳ. Such may the formal christian have: 2 Tim. iii. 5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.' A map or model of gospel truth. There are different degrees of this

speculative knowledge. Memorative, such as children have, who are taught to speak of divine mysteries by rote, as of God, Christ, heaven, hell, sin, righteousness; their memories are planted with notions about such things, but they are not affected with them; they do not understand the meaning, nor believe the certainty of those things wherein they are instructed. Another degree above this is an opinionative knowledge; when they do not only charge their memories with these notions, but have a kind of conscience and judgment about these things, and so bustle and contend about that way of religion in which they have been educated; yet wisdom entereth not upon the heart, Prov. ii. 10. This maketh men disputers, but not serious practisers of godliness: 'They receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved,' 2 Thes. ii. 10. There is beyond these a higher degree of speculative knowledge, when men have some kind of touch upon their hearts, but it is too slender and insufficient to stand out against temptations when they rise up in any considerable strength, or to master and subdue their lusts; they may escape the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ, 2 Peter ii. 20. Surely it is hard to conceive how so grand a truth as the nature of God or salvation by Christ should be understood or considered without some impression or touch upon the heart. It doth affect men in part, and produce some partial reformation, but sin prevaileth against it.

[2.] Practical and saving. We must know God so as to trust in him, Ps. ix. 10, know God so as to love him, 1 Cor. viii. 3, know God so as to obey him: 1 John ii. 4, 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, the truth is not in him.' So Jer. xxii. 16, 'He judgeth the cause of the poor and needy; was not this to know me, saith the Lord?' Our practices must speak out our knowledge, and what principles are rooted in our hearts; our actions give the world a better knowledge of our thoughts and opinions than our words can. Well, then, all that know not God, so as to fear him for his majesty and power, to love him for his goodness, to trust in him for his wisdom, to imitate him for his holiness, to obey him for his authority, so as to seek to enjoy him and delight in him, they are obnoxious to Christ's judgment. Certainly that man hath no religion that hath no God, and he hath no God that preferreth his base lusts before obedience to his precepts.

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2. 'That obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is not enough to profess the gospel, but we must obey the gospel if we would be exempted from the terror of the judgment.

Now what is it to obey the gospel? To yield up ourselves to do the will of Christ revealed in the gospel. This obedience is necessary if we consider the gospel, or faith, or Christ.

[1.] The gospel, which is the sum of things to be believed and done. It hath its commands as well as the law, it is not all made up of promises. The three great commands of the gospel are repentance, and faith, and new obedience.

(1.) Repentance; that we should bewail our former failings, and be ready and willing to return to God. Now when men harden themselves in their sins, and reject all admonitions to the contrary, they do not obey the gospel: Isa. i. 19, 20, 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of

the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword.' Unbelief of divine promises and threatenings, and obstinate impenitency go together. Wilful disobedience to this great command of the gospel is the damning sin. Some are so obstinate in evil, that they cannot be persuaded by any means to relinquish it. When they will not be persuaded to accept of God's offers of mercy and grace in Christ, but love darkness more than light, John iii. 19, they are left to his vengeance.

(2.) Faith in Christ. Not to mind this is against God's peremptory command: 1 John iii. 23, 'This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' It is not a slighting of grace only, but a high point of rebellion and disobedience to God. And so disobedience to this command maketh way for our disobedience to other commands: 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Heb. ii. 3.

(3.) New obedience. The whole moral law is adopted into the new covenant; for Christ redeemed us to God, and the kingdom of the Mediator is subordinate to the kingdom of the Father: Titus ii. 12, 'We should live soberly, righteously, and godly.' To neglect our duty is to disobey the gospel; though we own it in profession, we contradict it by practice; though we are not ashamed of the gospel, yet the gospel is ashamed of us, if we go on in our sinful ways.

[2.] Faith implieth obedience; for it is a hearty consent to take the blessedness offered for our happiness, the duty required for our work, and so hath an influence on our whole obedience: Rom. x. 16, 'But they have not all obeyed the gospel; for Isaiah saith, Who hath believed our report?' Rom. i. 5, 'We have received apostleship for the obedience of faith among all nations;' Rom. xvi. 26, 'The mysteries of the gospel are made manifest for the obedience of faith;' that is, that we may subject ourselves to God: Acts vi. 7, 'Many of the priests were obedient unto the faith.' Not only believed, but performed the duties which faith calleth for.

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[3.] Christ; his example, his authority.

(1.) His example. He came from heaven to teach us how to obey God, most willingly, readily, and at the dearest rates: Heb. v. 8, 9, 'Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him;' as the ἀποσφράγισμα, the best impression can be left upon us. He submitted to his Father's will in the hardest duties: Phil. ii. 8, 'Obedient to the death of the cross.' He took upon him the yoke of obedience, and that even to a shameful, painful, accursed death. What impression should this stamp and seal leave upon us?

(2.) His authority and sovereignty. He is the Saviour of the body, and the head of the church. We receive him not only as a priest, but as our Lord and king: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a Saviour.' Therefore we must not only look to be feasted with privileges, but mind our duty and obedience to him.

Use 1. Well, then, if you would have the comfort and not the terror of this day, you must obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; that is the trial which christians must undergo. If you cry, Lord, Lord, and be workers of iniquity, he will not know you and own you. If you profess a religion which you abhor, all your worship is a lie, and all the confidence you build upon it is but a vain deceit: Rom. vi. 16, 'Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?' Alas! many christians live as if they were baptized in the devil's name, and sworn to be his bondmen; they give up themselves to worldly and fleshly lusts, as if their baptism were a protestation against Christ, and all respect to his laws. But let it not be so with you, beloved christians; your glory and safety will be obedience to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray consider—

1. Whom you are to obey; Jesus Christ, the Lord and sovereign of all. Here in his flesh they said, Mat. viii. 27, 'What manner of man is this, that even the winds and seas obey him?' And will not you obey him? It is Christ whom you call your Saviour, and shall he not be your Lord? He made a plaster of his blood to cure your souls, and endured the curse, that by his obedience many might be made righteous, Rom. v. 19. Christ first obeyed himself, and hath set us so perfect a copy, whose life was religion exemplified, a visible commentary on God's law. He kept his Father's commandments, and abode in his love, John xv. 10, who did ever please God, therefore God was always with him.

2. Wherein you are to obey him. In a thankful acceptance of his benefits, which is faith; and a hearty return to your obedience and happiness, which is repentance; and all this verified in a godly, sober, righteous life, which is ordinarily called new obedience.

3. He is your judge. At the last day he will come and see what you have done with his precepts; he will not be so terrible, but as comfortable to the godly. *Euge, bone serve*—'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

Use 2. What have we then to do but—

1. To study to know the Lord, that we may choose him for our portion, and love him, and be loved by him, serve him, and be happy with him, please him, and enjoy him: 'Let us follow on to know the Lord/ Hosea vi. 3. Here is the root and beginning of all godliness; if God were better known in his power, wisdom, and goodness, it would draw our hearts more to him, and produce more confidence, obedience, and love. The Lord is for the most part an unknown and a mistaken God in the world; the more you apply yourself to this, the more you will find. We know God for the most part as a man born blind does fire; he feels there is something that warmeth him, but knows not how to conceive of it. To press you to this, consider—

[1.] It is your glory and excellency: Jer. ix. 23, 24, 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him

that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me.' To conceive aright of God, his nature, attributes, and works, is the perfection of man; to know things of so high a nature, the infinite and eternal God; to behold his wisdom, goodness, and power; to be led to him by all the creatures, and every act of his providence; to read his blessed name in every leaf of his sacred word. The dimmest knowledge of God is better than the clearest knowledge of all the secrets of nature.

[2.] This will be our happiness: John xvii. 3, 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' It is begun by saving knowledge, and is completed by the vision of God; it is the same God we know and love here and there, and with a knowledge and love of the same nature, but as to degrees it is more perfect; here we know him and see him as in a glass darkly, hereafter as in his glory, face to face.

[3.] What a shame it is not to know God, who hath so manifested himself to us in his works and word, and is so ready to manifest himself by his Spirit.

(1.) In his works within us or without us; for the apostle telleth us, Acts xvii. 27, 28, 'He is not far from every one of us, for in him we live, move, and have our being;' whose creatures we are, from whom we have all that we have; and shall we not often think of the God that made us? Look upon this body or this soul, whose image and superscription doth it bear? The work will show the workman. God is before thee, behind thee, round about thee, yea, within thee; and shalt thou not take some time to season thy heart with the thoughts of God? Everything that passeth before thine eyes proclaimeth an invisible God, an eternal power that made thee and all things else, Ps. xix. 1, 2. Shall the heavens above, and the earth beneath thee say, Remember God; nay, every creature and pile of grass thou treadest upon, Remember God; and shall we be so stupid that God shall not be in all our thoughts?

(2.) In his word and covenant. There God has provided and promised such plenty of knowledge, that he hath told us, Heb. viii. 11, 'They shall not teach every man his brother, and every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest.' This grace shall be diffused among all sorts of people: Isa. xi. 9, 'The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' As plentiful as water in the sea; and will you only be strangers in Israel, lose the benefit of the dispensation you are under?

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(3.) How willing God is to manifest himself to us by his Spirit: 'In thy light we shall see light;' and God hath promised, Jer. xxiv. 7, 'I will give them an heart to know me that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole hearts.' You must take your lot and portion. God will not fail the waiting soul.

SERMON VII.

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.—2 THES. i. 9.

IN the former verse the judgment is spoken of; here the punishment of the wicked. Which is set forth—

1. Generally, they shall be punished with everlasting destruction.

2. Particularly. Two branches of it are mentioned—(1.) The *poena damni*, 'From the presence of the Lord.' (2.) The *poena sensus*, 'From the glory of his power.' Some make them to be the two principal causes of their punishment, the face of the Lord, and his glorious power; the wrathful countenance of Christ shall bring this punishment upon them, and his power shall execute it; or the sentence shall come out of Christ's mouth, and be put in execution by his power; as David, Ps. xvii. 2, 'Let thy sentence come forth from thy presence;' when he desired God to appear in the trial of his innocency. So the wicked shall then be condemned by Christ himself, who shall then appear in glory and sovereign power. But I rather stick to the former exposition, as noting the parts of their punishment.

[1.] 'From the presence of the Lord.' I interpret it, as Beza doth, they shall be cast out from the presence of Christ, *expulsi a facie Domini*; as also, Mat. xxv. 41, 'Depart, ye cursed.'

[2.] And 'from the glory of his power.' That noteth the punishment of pain, expressed by fire, which signifieth the wrath of God. The wicked shall be punished by the immediate power of God.

Doct. That the punishment of the wicked at the last day shall be exceeding terrible and dreadful.

I will amplify it by going over the words of the text.

First, It is generally described; they 'shall be punished with ever lasting destruction.' Where we have—(1.) The estate: (2.) The duration of it.

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1. The estate itself. It is called 'destruction,' ἔλεθρον τίσουσιν. So 1 Thes. v. 3, 'Sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child.' In Mat. vii. 13, the broad way leadeth to destruction; and Rom. ix. 22, 'The vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.' In both places, ἀπώλειαν; and so Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose end is destruction.' In all these places, by 'destruction' is meant eternal dam nation, called sometimes perdition or destruction, 1 Tim. vi. 9; some times corruption, Gal. vi. 8; meaning thereby, not an abolition of their being, but their well-being. Annihilation would be a favour to the wicked; then they wish they never had a being, or might presently cease to be. No; the substance neither of their souls or bodies is not annihilated, but shall

be upheld to all eternity by the mighty power of God; but it is a destruction and loss of all their felicity and happiness.

[1.] Of all their carnal happiness, their glory, pleasure, and gain, wherein they placed their whole contentment and satisfaction, that shall cease, and the world, which is the fuel of it, shall be burnt up before their eyes.

[2.] Their loss of the true happiness, which lieth in the favour of God, and all the joys and blessedness which are bestowed upon the godly; this they are deprived of. They have a being, but a being under punishment, under torment. God doth not take away the being of a sinner, but he taketh away the comfort of his being, his well-being; he doth totally bereave him of all comfort, and body and soul is cast into hell-fire, Luke xii. 5, where they languish and pine away under the wrath of a highly provoked and then irreconcilable God.

2. It is eternal destruction, not fully accomplished in a moment, but continueth for ever. What is here called ‘everlasting destruction,’ is elsewhere called ‘everlasting fire,’ Mat. xxv. 41, and ‘everlasting punishment,’ ver. 46. The loss is everlasting; the wicked are everlastingly deprived of the favour of God, and of the light of his countenance. When Absalom was not admitted to see his father’s face, ‘Kill me,’ saith he, ‘rather than let it be always thus,’ 2 Sam. xiv. 32. But the wicked are never more suffered to come into the presence of God, who is the fountain of all peace and joy; therefore how miserable will their condition be! Besides, the pain will be eternal as well as the loss. Their misery is represented in scripture by everything that is terrible; sometimes by death, which is so much feared, and it is everlasting death, for they never return to life and happiness again; sometimes by fire, and it is everlasting fire; the fire never goeth out, and the flame never ceaseth; sometimes by chains and prisons, and it is everlasting chains of darkness; and sometimes by weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and this wailing is for evermore. There is no time when this fire shall go out, or these chains be loosed, or these wailings cease, or heaven or hell have any period.

But here foolish reason will interpose, and ask how it can stand with the justice of God for a momentary action to cast men into ever lasting torment? I answer—

1. God will govern the world by his own reason, and not by our fancies. He hath made a holy law, and that law hath a sanction; it is established by penalties and rewards. Now if God will make good his threatenings, and bring upon the creature the misery which he hath foretold, wherein lieth the injustice? What part of the punishment would you have to be relaxed, the loss or the pain? The loss is double—of God’s favour and our natural comforts. Would you have God to admit those to the sight and fruition of himself who never cared for him? or return to their natural comforts, that they may again run riot with them, and use them as an occasion to the flesh, and to beguile and quiet their consciences with these enjoyments, or feeding their carnal mind with these pleasures while they want better things? or to lessen the pain when the sin and impenitent obstinacy doth still continue? Should the pain cease? If there were no pain, yet the loss would be a torment.

2. It is meet for the government of the world that the penalties should be thus stated, to give us the more powerful argument against fleshly lusts, which, being pleasing and suitable to corrupt nature, need to be checked by a terrible commination. Man is a very slave to sensual pleasure, which being born and bred with him, and riveted in his nature, is not easily renounced. Therefore God hath told us that the pleasing of the flesh will cost us dear: 'If ye live after the flesh ye shall die,' &c., Rom. viii. 13. The sinner's paradise is guarded with a flaming sword, and our delight is balanced with our fear, that by setting eternal pains against momentary pleasures, we may the better escape the temptation, Heb. xi. 25. Shall we for a momentary pleasure run the hazard of eternal sorrow? The pleasures are but for a season, the torments are everlasting; the fearful end of this flesh pleasing course may deter us from it. It is agreeable to the wisdom of our lawgiver that things to come should have some advantage above things present; that the joy and pain of the other world, which is a matter of faith, should be considerably greater than the pleasures and pains of this world, which is a matter of sense; else things at hand will certainly more prevail with us than things to come, if they be not considerably greater. Therefore here the pain is short, so is the pleasure, but there both are eternal.

3. No law observeth this, that the *mora poenae*, the continuance of the punishment, should be no longer than the *mora culpae*, or the time of acting the offence. For a fact clone in a day or in an hour men suffer loss, shame, exile, imprisonment all their lives. Public right and order is not so easily repaired by the punishment as it is perverted by the offence; and therefore when in all human procedure the punishment doth continue longer ordinarily than the time wherein the crime is committed, it is unreasonable to tax God's justice upon this account.

4. There are many reasons which justify this appointment; as—

[1.] From the majesty of God, against whom the sin is committed, which is depreciated and contemned by the creature's offence. What base things are preferred before God, and the felicity we might have in the enjoyment of him! At how vile a price is his favour sold, and how is his authority despised! Now those that break the laws of the eternal God are justly punished with eternal punishment.

[2.] From the nature of sin, which is a preferment of a short sensitive good before that which is spiritual and eternal. If men refuse an everlasting kingdom offered to them for a little carnal satisfaction, Heb. xii. 16, eternal life and eternal death is cast upon their choice; if they be eternally miserable, they have but their own choice.

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[3.] From the will of the sinner. He would continue his sins ever lastingly if he could. They are never weary of sinning, nor ever would have been if they had lived eternally upon earth; they desire always to enjoy the pleasures of this life, and are rather left by their sins than leave them; in hell they never heartily repent. If God should take them out of that estate, they would, like metal taken out of the furnace, harden again; and as their impenitency is endless, so is their punishment.

[4.] There is no change of state in the other world. Now we are upon our trial, and God alloweth a remedy whereby we may pass from death to life; then the door is shut and past opening, Luke xiii. 25; the gulf is fixed, Luke xvi. 26, and every man is *in termino*, in his everlasting estate of misery or happiness.

Well, then, since they break the laws of the eternal God, and the very nature of the sin is a despising eternal blessedness for some temporal pleasure and profit, and this they would do everlastingly if they could subsist here so long, and during all the time of God's patience, and their trial, they would never pass from death to life, or change masters and covenants, they are justly punished with everlasting destruction.

Secondly, This particular is amplified by the parts of it, *poena damni* and *poena sensus*, the punishment of loss, and the punishment of sense.

1. The loss, intimated in that clause, 'From the presence of the Lord.' They shall be banished out of his sight, and presence, and company for evermore: 'Depart, ye cursed.' Concerning this part of the punishment observe—

[1.] That herein all are equal. There are degrees in the pain, for some have περισσότερον κρῖμα, a heavier and more intolerable judgment; some have few, some have many stripes; but all are equally excluded from the fruition of God and Christ, all are under the sentence of 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity,' Mat. vii. 23.

[2.] What is the saints' blessedness is the wicked's torment; they are punished from the presence of the Lord, and thence our refreshings come: Acts iii. 19, 'That your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' That which is our happiness is their misery.

[3.] How fitly this is inflicted on them. Forsaking God and departing from God is now their sin, and then their misery; they cast God out of their thoughts: Rom. i. 28, οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν, 'They liked not to retain God in their knowledge.' They would raze out of their minds everything that doth put them in remembrance of God; the very thoughts of him are a burden to them. They rejected God, and now God rejecteth them; they bid him to depart, Job xxi. 14, so now Christ will bid them depart. They cannot endure his presence, and then he will not endure theirs. The impressions of God upon their hearts are a trouble and vexation to them, therefore is their presence loathsome to Christ. So that this is plainly a loss of their own procuring; they first excommunicated God, as not enduring his presence and company, and they are paid home by a just recompense, excommunicated from the glorious church of the blessed.

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[4.] This is the hell of hell, the greatest part of the punishment.

(1.) It is a great punishment in itself. To be expelled from the presence of the Lord is to be deprived of an infinite good; they lose the favourable presence of God, the sight of Christ, the company of the blessed, and their abode in those happy mansions which are in Christ's Father's house. Hell is a deep dungeon, where the sunshine of God's presence never cometh: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy.' This they are deprived of. How grievous was Paul's departure to the disciples! When he told them, 'Ye shall see my face no more;' they wept: Acts xix. 38, 'Sorrowing most of all for the words he spake, that they should see his face no more.' Surely when Christ shall tell the wicked so, what a torment will it be to their minds! Better lose all things than lose the presence of God: Exod. xxxiii. 15, 'If thy presence go not up with us, carry us not hence.' They would live in the wilderness with God rather than enter into Canaan without him; they shall see what God's presence is by Christ's appearance in the brightness of his glory, a sight that will stick in their minds to all eternity; and when they see with what grace and honour he receiveth his servants, and themselves shut out, Luke xiii. 38, it shall make them more apprehensive of their loss; as Dives was the more affected when he saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 27. Others of the same nature and interests do enjoy what they have forfeited.

(2.) They shall have a full sense of the greatness of the loss. A wicked man now careth not for the light of God's countenance; he is blinded by the delusions of the flesh, and looking altogether to visible things, he hath no sound belief of the things which are invisible; but now he comes to understand the reality of what he hath lost, and what was mere matter of faith before becometh an object of sense. Punishment openeth their eyes, which sin hath shut. Besides they have no natural comforts to divert their minds, no plays, or sports and pleasures, no pleasant meats, nor drink, nor company, which now draw off the heart from better things, and solace them in the want of them; but now there is nothing of this left. Supposing a rational creature to exist, and hath nothing to divert his mind, his understanding, reflecting upon his loss, would be torment enough to him. In short, sensible experience teacheth them how to value their loss, and they have nothing to bridle the affections, nor carnal mirth to allay the bitterness of their condition. And once more, all their hope, false peace and confidence is gone, they hope now to fare as well as the best, but then their hope leaveth them ashamed; they see it is quite otherwise.

(3.) The loss is irreparable. They are banished out of God's sight for evermore. Despair is one ingredient in the sorrow of the damned; all hopes are cut off of being any more admitted into God's favourable presence. There are many ups and downs in a christian's experience, God hideth his face that he may afterward show it the more gloriously; but this curse is never reversed against the wicked. It was the church's prayer, Ps. lxxxi. 19, 'Return again, and cause the light of thy countenance to shine upon us, and we shall be saved.' The saints find sun shine after clouds, but to these the mist of darkness is reserved for ever, 2 Peter ii. 17. Hell is a region upon which the sun

shall never shine; the wall of partition between God and them shall never be broken down; his fiery indignation they may look for, but not his comfortable and gracious presence; that is reserved for the saints.

2. We now come to the *poena sensus*, the punishment of sense, intimated in that clause, 'And from the glory of his power.' This clause further showeth the grievousness of their punishment. The face of the Lamb sitting upon his throne is terrible to the wicked, therefore they shall call upon the mountains to cover them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb, Rev. vi. 15, 16. But if they cannot abide his presence pronouncing the sentence of banishment upon them, how heavy will his hand be when he cometh to execute that sentence!

That this may sink into your minds, I will prove two things—(1.) That God doth immediately punish the sinner with his own hands; (2.) That if Christ interpose his own hand, this maketh their case more terrible and dreadful.

[1.] That Christ or God will take the punishment into his own hands. He is the principal author of those pains which the wicked endure. That God hath an immediate hand in the punishing of obstinate and impenitent sinners is evident by these reasons—

(1.) The quarrel with sinners is God's own: Lev. xxvi. 25, 'I will avenge against them the quarrel of my covenant.' So Hosea xii. 2, 'The Lord hath a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways.' It is his laws that are broken, his grace despised, the blood of his Son slighted, his Holy Spirit vexed and grieved, and his glory trampled under foot; and therefore no wonder if he take the punishment into his own hands, and inflict it upon them by his own immediate power.

(2.) Vengeance is God's royal prerogative: Heb. x. 30, 31, 'Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord.' And thence he concludeth that 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' Because vengeance is his, therefore the sinner falleth into his hands; he hath reserved this work unto himself.

(3.) Terrors of conscience, that now light upon any, good or bad, they are the arrows of the Almighty: Job vi. 4, 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.' This was his great trouble, that it was the Almighty God with whom he had to do; the sense of God's wrath was like an envenomed dart flung into his soul. Now if the troubles occasioned by sin now cause men to know and dread his almighty power, much more when sin is fully recompensed into the bosoms of wicked men. An arrow shot by a strong hand maketh a deep and piercing wound, what will one of God's empoisoned darts do?

(4.) After this life, God is all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28, both in mercy and wrath. All cometh immediately from God, without the intervention of means.

He is all in all in a way of mercy. Here he supplieth the necessities of the bodily life by the creatures, and sometimes at the second and third hand; and therefore we know little of God in comparison by that kind of dispensation: 'I will hear the heavens, and the heavens shall hear the earth.' He supplies our soul necessities by ordinances. Now though the fountain be full and flowing, yet if the pipe be narrow, the water can pass only as the pipe can transmit it: the pipe is narrow here, and the vessel is not very capacious. So in a way of wrath; now it is executed by creatures, and God showeth how much strength he can put into a creature to execute his displeasure; but a creature is not a vessel capacious enough to convey all his wrath to us, as a bucket cannot contain an ocean. A giant striking with a straw, the straw cannot convey the strength of his blow, for it is a light thing though in the hands of a mighty man; so no creature is able to bring all God's wrath to another, no vessel is able to hold all God's displeasure; but then we shall fall immediately into his hands.

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(5.) The pains and torments of the wicked angels come immediately from God. He holdeth them in chains of darkness, 2 Peter ii. 4. These chains of darkness are God's irresistible power and terrible justice, overtaking, tormenting, and restraining them. It will be worse with them at the last day, their torments will be increased, and that from the hand of Christ himself. They seem to acknowledge so much when they say, Mat. viii. 29, 'Art thou come to torment us before the time?' They know there is a time coming when they shall be tormented more than they are yet, and tormented by Christ. Now this showeth whence wicked men also shall be punished; for they are cast forth with the devil and his angels, to endure the same torments they do, from the same hand, the glorious power of Christ.

(6.) The agonies of Christ, whence came they but from the wrath of God? The devil might stir up outward trouble against him by his instruments, but whence came his agonies in the garden, where there was no enemy to molest him? yet his soul was heavy unto death, and he did sweat drops of blood. The scripture telleth you, Isa. liii. 10, 'It pleased the Father to bruise him, to put him to grief.' Now this giveth light to the case in hand, for he carried our sorrows and bore our griefs, Isa. liii. 4, that is, the curse due to our sin. And what was done to the green tree, to such an innocent person as Christ was, showeth what will be done to the dry, what will be the portion of the impenitent, God will bruise them and break them by the power of his own wrath.

[2.] Now that it is φοβερὸν, a very dreadful thing to be punished by the glory of his power, will easily appear if we consider—

(1.) The party punished, the impenitent and obstinate sinner in his whole man, both in body and soul. Both are fellows in the sin, and both partake in the punishment: Mat. x. 28, 'Fear him that can cast both body and soul into hell.' The body is not only the instrument but the occasion of many sins; we obey many brutish motions to please and gratify the body, therefore the body hath its share in these pains. Christ telleth us the whole body of the wicked is cast into hell fire, Mat.

viii. 29. Then for the soul too, woe, wrath, tribulation, and anguish is the portion of every soul that doeth evil, Rom. ii. 9, 10. And this arising not only from the reflections of our conscience, but the power of God; the soul is scorched by the wrath of God; and by remembering what is past, feeling what is present, and expecting what is future, their anguish and horror is increased.

(2.) The party punishing, God or Christ, by his own immediate power. Now God's power is invincible and infinite, far beyond our conceiving: 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger?' Ps. xc. 11. As the glory of the Lord is great and infinite, so the effect must be. As that Midian king said to Gideon, when he was afraid to be hacked and mangled by his young son, 'Fall thou upon me thyself, for as the man is so is his strength,' Judges viii. 21. So as the agent is, so must the act be. Man's anger is like himself, weak and finite; so God's anger is like himself, infinite and powerful: Nahum i. 6, 'Who can stand before his indignation, and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.'

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(3.) The end of his punishing, which is to manifest the glory of his own strength in the just confusion of wicked men. Sometimes God showeth his power, but now he will show the glory of his power; as it is in the text, 'Punished from the glory of his power.' So Rom. ix. 22, 'What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known?' The world shall see what he is able to do in punishing sinners, what he can inflict and make the creature bear, τὴν δόξαν τῆς ἰσχύος ἀυτοῦ. He will now stir up all his wrath, Ps. lxxviii. 39. Now when God shall fall upon a sinner with all his might, how woful will his condition be!

(4.) The pledges of this punishment. I shall name some.

(1*st*.) When God's anger is but kindled a little, when a spark of his wrath falls upon the conscience of his own children, their souls are troubled so that they choose strangling rather than life. In his fatherly corrective discipline, how are poor creatures at their wit's end! This is but a drop of that horrible tempest which shall be the portion of their cup.

(2*d*.) The Lord Christ's soul was troubled. Though he were the Son of God, perfect in faith and patience, wanted no courage or fortitude, yet when he felt the wrath of God, his soul was heavy unto death; he was afraid, he was amazed, the human nature of Christ was never so much put to it as then. What then will the power of God 's wrath accomplish in the wicked?

(3*d*.) The outward instances of God's wrath on particular men, when they fall into any painful disease, stone, colic, strangury, acute fevers, these come more immediately from God. You cannot think of two or three days' pain in this kind without horror, and how will you dwell with devouring burnings? That which God puts into a judgment maketh it the more terrible; a small thing deeply afflicts when it is set a-work by God.

(4*th*.) Public judgments. When God lets loose an enraged enemy upon a people, what burning of houses, ravishing of virgins, killing of infants, spoiling of all our precious things, exquisite

tortures which cursed miscreants will find out to vex them who are fallen into their power. Head of the sacking of Jerusalem in Josephus, of Constantinople in Nicholas Comates, or the predictions of Moses, Deut. xxviii. 66, 67, rather a chronicle or history than a calendar or prognostication, &c.

I shall now come to vindicate the point, and show that this discourse is useful—

1. To those that are carnal.

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[1.] To rouse them out of their security. If men did believe and consider the torments of hell and the dreadfulness of God's wrath, they would not sin as they do. Sermons of hell may keep many out of hell, and a due consideration of wrath to come may rouse men up to flee from it. We do not urge the terror of the Lord, as desiring you may experiment it, but shun it. The wrath of God is no vain scarecrow; surely men could not be so careless as usually they are, if they did heartily believe it, seriously consider of it, or closely apply it.

(1.) Many believe it not. Secure sinners think to-morrow shall be as yesterday, and the next day as the former, that when they die there is an end of them; and so have a mind to go to hell, to prove whether God be a liar, yea or no; they will not believe it till they feel it There are no atheists in hell, though there be some in the visible church. If one came from the dead, they will believe, Luke xvi. 30. Men would have other assurance of things to come than God meaneth to give them; when they will not hearken to faith and reason, God leaveth them to sense and experience. Or—

(2.) Do not seriously consider of these things, put far away the evil day, Amos vi. 3. As to the day itself, they can neither put it on nor off, but put off the thought of it, being besotted by the pleasures of carnal sense. As Saul cured the evil spirit by music, so do they by the delights of the flesh banish and exclude all thoughts of eternity, and charm and lull conscience asleep. Now it is good to bring these men to consider the end of things.

(3.) Do not closely apply these things. They do not examine whither they are going, whether their way tendeth to heaven or to hell. Most will seem to grant the truth and terribleness of hell torments, but what have they done to get out of this condition? Do they fly from wrath to come? An humble and hearty subjection to Christ will procure your escape from these torments, therefore deal with yourselves: 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Heb. ii. 3. Escape what? Mat. xxiii. 33, 'How can ye escape the damnation of hell?' If you would not fall into the hands of a living God, cast yourselves into the arms of a dying Saviour: Ps. ii. 12, 'If his wrath be kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.' Therefore let us apply this truth. Do we enter into God's peace, or continue in the high way to hell? Are not we sensual, senseless, secure? If we abuse mercies, slight offers of grace, defeat the healing methods of God, refuse the motions and discipline of his Spirit, what will become of us? Those that reject his mercy will not be able to reject his justice, or withstand the power of his wrath. You have to do with God now in the word of his power, Heb. iv. 13. He worketh by it immediately; but if you neglect this, you will

have to do with him immediately again in the way of his judgment; and then his wrath hath a full power over the wicked, because the motions of his word and Spirit had no power over them.

[2.] To check their boldness in sinning against light and conscience. It is a standing it out against God and Christ; now can your hearts endure, or your hands be made strong against his fierce wrath? So 1 Cor. x. 22, 'Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?' If you dare not to meet God at the last day, never dare to break a commandment. Many times obstinate sinners will say, You threaten us with wrath, we will bear it as well as we can. Bear! what will you bear? The wrath of the eternal and ever-living God? Thou that canst not endure for a day or two to be scorched in feverish flames, the pains of the stone or gout, the pain of a broken arm or leg, the scalding of a little gunpowder casually blown up, how wilt thou endure the wrath of God himself, when he shall fall upon thee with all his might? Thou that art so daunted at the sight of any great carnage by war or pestilence, or a sudden surprise of enemies, that roarest at the toothache, that canst not endure to try the burning of thy finger in a candle, that canst not hear of Lawrence's being roasted on a grid iron without horror, thou canst seriously hear this doctrine without trembling; surely all this bravery and hardness of heart is the fruit of unbelief and seared impenitency.

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[3.] To cause them to shake off all delays in the business of salvation, to flee from the wrath to come, Mat. iii. 7, to flee for refuge to the hope set before them, Heb. vi. 18. No motion will serve here but flight; we cannot get soon enough out of this condition; while a great way off, meet thy enemy and make thy peace with him, Luke xiv. 32. You know not how soon God may take the advantage, and cut us off from all possibility of grace; if Christ be an adversary, agree with him quickly. He is pleased to compare his coming to that of a thief; by way of surprise he may steal upon you unawares. How many thousands are there in the other world, who did as little think of that doleful estate whilst they were pleasing the flesh, as you now do? Therefore we should give ourselves no rest till our peace be made with Cod.

2. To the godly it is of use many ways.

[1.] You may bless God for your deliverance by Christ. It is said,

1 Thes. i. 13, 'Jesus hath delivered us from wrath to come.' And again, Rom. v. 9, 'Being justified by his blood, we are saved from wrath by him.' The more we consider the misery of the wicked, the more we may know what we have escaped, and what we have to bless God for. We were all once involved in this condemnation; and if we be as brands plucked out of the burning, Zach. iii. 2, it is wholly to be ascribed to the Lord's grace. It is one part of the christian's heaven to think of hell; the miseries of this life commend heaven to us, much more the torments of the world to come. The Israelites, when they looked back and saw the Egyptians drowned in the waters, it heightened the deliverance, and made them more thankful for their own escape.

[2.] To quicken us to a greater love and likeness to Christ. Fear serveth well to guard our love, and then the torment and slavishness of it is lessened: 1 John iv. 17, ‘Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.’ Where love is sincere, there is a study to imitate Christ; and the more we imitate him, the more boldness. Boldness is opposite to shame, 1 John ii. 21; to fear, 1 John iv. 18, ‘There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear.’ The cause of shame is nakedness and folly. Nakedness: 2 Cor. v. 3, ‘If so be that, being clothed, we shall not be found naked.’ If destitute of all grace, we are naked. Folly, if we have made a perverse choice: Luke xii. 20, ‘Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.’ Fear mainly respects the wrath of God and eternal punishment; we need not fear it, if we love him and be like him, for surely Christ will own his own image.

[3.] To try the strength of our faith. They that cannot endure such discourses discover much of the secret guilt and security of their own hearts, they cannot endure to hear the worst. It was a bad man that said, ‘He prophesieth nothing but evil to me.’ I cannot abide this preaching of hell and damnation. Presumption is a coward and a runaway, but faith encountereth its enemy in the open field: Ps. xxiii. 4, ‘Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.’ It supposeth the worst; but a presumer’s conscience is not soundly established, they cannot endure to hear of evil.

[4.] To counterbalance the fear of man, which causeth apostasy; as here it is produced for the consolation of the faithful, and to abate the present terror of adversaries. What are the terrors of man to the terrors of Christ in the judgment? Luke xii. 4, 5, ‘Be not afraid of man, but of him that can destroy both body and soul;’ Heb. iii. 12, ‘The living God,’ mortal man. Men may handle you cruelly, but they cannot reach the soul; their anger is mortal, and we are mortal: ‘Not accepting deliverance, that they might have a better resurrection/ Heb. xi. 35. Better endure this than expose ourselves to the wrath of God.

[5.] To warn their friends and relations, brothers, sisters, children, &c. Tell them what a dreadful thing the punishment of the wicked is; as Dives in the parable: Luke xvi., ‘Send to my father’s house, for I have five brethren.’ Shall we be less charitable than a man in hell is represented to be? If we have a friend or child falling into sin, let us warn them of the danger thereof.

SERMON VIII.

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe (*because our testimony among you was believed*) *in that day*.—2 THES. i. 10.

THE apostle now proceedeth to the other part of the righteous judgment of Christ, which concerneth the saints, for whose sake Christ principally and chiefly cometh. His coming is not so terrible to the adversaries as it shall be glorious and comfortable to the saints. In the same day in which he shall punish his adversaries, he will reward the faithful, 'When he shall come to be glorified in his saints,' &c.

The comfortable effect of Christ's coming is—(1.) Asserted; (2.) Applied to the Thessalonians.

If we consider it as asserted, there we have—

1. The state itself.

2. The measure and degree of it, that Christ shall be glorified and admired upon that account.

3. The author, Christ.

4. The subjects participant—(1.) Saints; (2.) Believers; a double character.

5. The time, 'In that day.'

Doct. That there is an estate of admirable glory reserved to be bestowed by Christ on the saints at the day of judgment.

This point will be discussed by going over the circumstances of the text.

First, The state itself is a state of glory. There is a twofold glory put upon the saints—(1.) Relative and adherent; (2.) Intrinsic and inherent.

1. The relative glory of the saints standeth in three things—

[1.] In the free and full forgiveness of all our sins, and our absolution pronounced by the judge on the throne, Acts iii. 19. As pardon is of three sorts—(1.) Constitutive, by God's new covenant: Acts x. 43 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whoso ever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.' (2.) Declarative and sentential, when God as a judge doth determine our right. This is done here in part, when God doth speak peace to our souls, either in his word or by his Spirit: Isa. lvii. 19, 'I create the fruit of the lips, Peace, peace,' But more fully at the last day, and solemnly, when the judge *pro tribunali*, sitting upon the throne, shall pronounce and declare us pardoned and absolved, and accepted unto life before all the world. (3.) Executively, when he doth not inflict the deserved penalty, but give us glory and happiness; this is in part done here, as God taketh off the penalties and fruits of sin in his internal government, giving us the Holy Spirit; for this he giveth as the God of peace, as pacified to us in Christ, Heb. xiii. 20, 21, by his external government taking off the punishment which lieth upon us for sin, therefore acquitted and pardoned. But more fully at the last day, when we are endued with glorious qualities both in soul and body, and all the fruits of sin, even those that lie upon the body, cease. Then is the sentence of

absolution solemnly pronounced, then is the full execution, as we are perfectly freed from all misery, and brought into the possession of all happiness.

[2.] A participation of judicial power. The saints are not only judged, but judges: 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3, 'Do not ye know that the saints shall judge the world?' And again, 'Know ye not that we shall judge angels?' *Per modum suffragii*, as assessors on the bench with Christ. Though some of the wicked long ago had their punishment, and all the evil spirits were cast out of God's presence; but then they shall have their solemn doom, the saints consenting in the judgment, and visibly associated with Christ in the judgment: Luke xxii. 30, 'Ye shall sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' And therefore it is said, Ps. xlix. 14, 'The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;' that is, in the morning of the resurrection, when we awake out of the sleep of death; and they have dominion as they are appointed to assist Christ in judicature; they shall have power over them who slighted, reviled, persecuted them. Here some of the saints judge the world by doctrine, all by conversation: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by which he condemned the world.' There by vote and suffrage, the more to convince wicked and ungodly men.

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[3.] Christ's public owning them before God and his angels, by head and poll, man by man: Luke xii. 8, 'Him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God,' that is, own them in the judgment. This is one for whom I died, who hath been faithful to me, and glorified me upon earth; this presentation of the elect to God was a thing much upon the heart of Christ: Col. i. 22, 'To present you holy and unblamable,' &c.; Jude 24, 'To him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory;' and Eph. v. 27, 'That he might present it to himself a glorious church.' There is a threefold presentation spoken of in scripture. One made by believers themselves: Rom. i. 12, 'I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present yourselves a living sacrifice;' Rom. vi. 13, 'Yield yourselves unto God.' παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ Θεῷ. When we solemnly give up ourselves to God's use and service. The second by Christ's messengers: 2 Cor. xi. 3, 'That I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.' When we can set such before the Lord, as the fruit of our labours, and pledges of our faithfulness in his work; Lord, these and these have I gained to thee, or at least built them up in the knowledge of Christ. The last is by Christ himself, as an account of his charge: Heb. ii. 13, 'Behold I and the children which thou hast given me.' That he hath justified, sanctified, and now brought them home to God. When all the elect are gathered into one company and society, he will thus present them to God, and go before them as the great shepherd of the sheep, to lead them into their everlasting fold, rejoicing in his own success, and settle them in their eternal and glorious estate. This is done privately at the time of death, but publicly and solemnly at the day of his coming, when he shall give up the kingdom to his Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24, *tanquam pr edam hostibus ereptam*, as a prey snatched from the enemy, as having made good his undertaking; which is a great engagement on believers to holiness, that Christ may own us, and present us to God with honour.

2. The glory inherent and internal: Rom. viii. 18, ‘The glory which shall be revealed in us.’ Now it is revealed to us, our ear hath heard a little thereof, but then it shall be revealed in us, fully accomplished in our persons; as here there is a revealing of Christ to us, which implieth the offer, and a revealing of Christ in us, which implieth the participation: Gal. i. 16, ‘It pleased God to reveal his Son in me.’

But let us see a little how this glory is revealed in us. (1.) In our bodies; (2.) In our souls.

[1.] In our bodies. There is a great deal of glory put upon the bodies of the saints; and this is of principal regard in that day, because our souls are made perfect before, and the apostle speaketh of what is visible and conspicuous. There is no place for our earthly and corruptible bodies in the heavenly city: ‘For flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,’ 1 Cor. xv. 51; that is, corruptible and earthly, as now it is, it cannot enter into heaven; therefore Christ’s great work is to change the body, we shall have glorious bodies like unto his glorious body.

(1.) It shall be immortal and incorruptible: 1 Cor. xv. 42, ‘It is gown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.’ Christ will endue them with immortality and impassibility, that they shall never decay nor be liable to sickness, weakness, or any defects, but have all the perfections which a body is capable of.

(2.) For clarity and brightness, it shall be like Christ’s glorious body. Therefore it is said, 1 Cor. xv. 43, ‘It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.’ Christ’s body shineth with light and brightness, a glimpse whereof was given in Christ’s transfiguration: Mat. xvii. 2, ‘His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was bright as the light.’ When he appeared to Paul from heaven, his body was wonderfully glorious; he could not endure the light which shined to him, Acts ix. So when the saints shall appear with him in glory, the righteous shall shine as the sun in the firmament, Mat. xiii. 43.

(3.) It shall be a spiritual body: 1 Cor. xv. 44, ‘It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.’ But how is it a spiritual body? The least in it is, that it shall be subject to the spirit; as the soul while it is subject to the. flesh is called carnal, so the body when it is subject to the spirit is termed spiritual: John iii. 6, ‘That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’ Then the new birth produceth its consummate effect, it is all spirit, without any mixture of the rebelling flesh. Certainly as regeneration is called the first resurrection, it helpeth ns to conceive of this estate; but there is more in it; the body is spiritual not only because it is *ad nutum spiritus*, at the command of the spirit, but *ad modum spiritus*, after the manner of the spirit; it standeth in no need of natural supports. There is no food nor repast, no marrying nor giving in marriage, Mat. xxii. 30, but they are as the angels of God in heaven; they live not as husbands and wives, but as the pure and spiritual angels; we shall not stand in need of meat and drink and sleep, as now we do. Now what a blessed thing is it to have either privilege, to have bodies wholly subject to the spirit, and bodies not liable to present necessities; once more, not clogged with a mass of flesh, but possibly may ascend or descend, pass

from place to place in a moment! As the angels move up and down in the twinkling of an eye, or as the helm turneth the ship, so is the body turned instantly at every motion of the soul.

[2.] The soul is fully satisfied, and filled up with God. We have a more complete knowledge of him, and exact conformity to him: 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall see him as he is, and be like him.' But this is riot of this place, and was spoken of in another verse.

Secondly, The measure of that glory which he shall impart. It shall be so great, that it is said—(1.) 'Christ shall be glorified in his saints;' (2.) 'Admired in them that believe.' Both expressions show the greatness of this glory.

For the first, 'He shall come to be glorified in the saints.' The apostle doth not say that the saints shall be glorified, which yet is said in other scriptures, Rom. viii. 17; that were less though it be much; but he saith Christ shall be glorified in that day. Again, he doth not say Christ shall be glorified in himself, which is also said elsewhere; as 1 Peter iv. 13, 'That when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy.' But Christ is glorified in the saints, in the glory which he communicates to his people; he is glorified in the glory which resulteth to him from their glory. And this expression showeth both—(1.) The certainty of this effect of his coming; for it is more than if he had said they shall be glorified. Surely Christ will not be wanting to his own glory, and therefore he cannot be wanting to the salvation of his people; he will not forget those things which make for his own honour, and the honour of his Father. If his glory be concerned in our glorification, we may be the more confident of it. (2.) The greatness is seen also in this expression; for how is Christ glorified in the saints? Christ may be glorified two ways—(1.) Passively and objectively; (2.) Actively, as he is lauded and praised in the saints; or in other terms, he is glorified in them and by them. The first is most proper here; for it is said, 'He shall come to be glorified in his saints.'

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[1.] Objectively. God is glorified by impression. So all his creatures glorify him; that is, offer matter to set forth his glory: Ps. cxlv. 10, 'All thy works praise thee, all thy saints bless thee.' In this lower world, man is the mouth of the creation, they ascribe and give God the glory of his excellencies; but all creatures yield the matter of God's praise, they are the harp well stringed and tuned, though man maketh the music; and above all, new creatures: Eph. i. 12, 'That we should be to the praise of his glory;' not speak, but be. There is more of God seen in the new creature than there is in anything on this side heaven. The very work of the new creation sets forth his goodness, wisdom, and power, to all attentive beholders; though the believer should be silent, the work would speak for itself; but especially now, when his work is perfect and brought to an issue, and Christ hath put to his last hand, and done all to and for believers which he means to do.

[2.] Actively, by expression or ascription of praise. So it is said, Ps. 1. 23, 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me;' that is, it is an eminent means of glorifying God when we take notice of his excellencies, have a due apprehension of them, and delight ourselves in the commemoration of his

benefits. Believers are now bound to it, for therefore they were called out of darkness into his marvellous light, that they might show forth his praises, 1 Peter ii. 9, τὰς ἀρετᾶς, objectively and actively. His goodness, power, and wisdom in their conversion; much more then Christ's great power in raising them from the dead, Eph. i. 19. His wisdom in conducting and guiding his people to this happiness, notwithstanding their own weakness, and the opposition of their adversaries, and the cross events by the way: Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;' 'Then shall I know as also I am known,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. His goodness in pardoning all their sins, and giving them the glorious effect of his promises, and in rewarding his people, otherwise unworthy of so great a reward: 1 Peter i. 13, 'Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ,' Then is grace seen in all its graciousness.

Second expression, that 'Christ will be admired in those that believe.' We admire at those things which exceed knowledge and expectation, at great things never seen before, nor could the heart of man conceive they should ever be brought to pass. Now that glory shall exceed all our hope and expectation.

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But who are the parties that shall wonder?

They are either—(1.) The good angels; or, (2.) The wicked; (3.) The saints themselves. The good angels shall praise God for this wonderful discovery of his grace. The wicked shall stand wondering at this great change, the saints themselves shall be ravished at the sense and thought of it.

1. The good angels. Though they are but the spectators, not the parties interested, yet they are marvellously affected with the excellency of this grace and salvation which is brought to sinners by Jesus Christ: 1 Peter i. 12, 'Which things the angels desire to pry into.' They wonder at these things now, and know more of the manifold wisdom of God in his dispensations to the church than otherwise they could have known, Eph. iii. 10. They see more of God in this than in any of his other works. In the state of the church upon earth, God discovers much of his wisdom, power, and goodness to the angels, much more in the final glorious estate of the saints; therefore Christ speaketh of confessing and owning his people before the angels, for they look after these things: Rev. iii. 5, 'I will confess his name before my Father and his angels.' Now when Christ employeth their ministry in gathering his saints together, they shall stand wondering at the glory which he putteth upon them, they shall stand wondering what he means to do with creatures that are but newly crept out of dust and rottenness.

2. The wicked are amazed and astonished when they see those so much loved and advanced by Christ, whose lives they counted madness and folly. They shall be spectators of the blessedness of the godly, as the godly shall be of their destruction and punishment; they shall see them whom they accounted the off-scouring of all things, shining as the stars in the firmament. The church

complaineth, Lam. iii. 45, ‘Thou hast made us as the off-scouring and refuse in the midst of the people.’ You will say, They were a sinful nation that had revolted from God; but you shall see Christ’s choicest servants fared alike: 2 Cor. iv. 13, ‘We are counted as the scurf and off-scouring of all things,’ as the sweepings of the city. Now God’s people, that are so odious in this world, are highly esteemed there; Christ receiveth them as the dearly beloved of his soul, and that in the sight of the wicked; for the sentence of absolution goeth before the judgment of condemnation, the sentence beginneth with the godly, but the execution with the wicked: Mat. xxv. 41, ‘Then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.’

3. The saints themselves are filled with wonder, they finding their expectation so much exceeded; for admiration is the overplus of expectation. The saints know most of God and his grace, yet they shall then admire him, for prophecy is but in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. There is no tongue now to speak of these things, nor ear to hear them; even in what is revealed, the saints find many astonishing instances of God’s love; all is wonderful in the Redeemer’s grace: 1 Peter ii. 9, ‘That we should show forth the praise of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.’ Whether we consider the woful condition we were in before, the rich grace that hath recovered us, the blessed privileges we are called unto, it is all matter of wonder, and passeth the power of created understandings to apprehend, or our tongues to express. They wonder at their own happiness now, but then they shall admire Christ more than ever they have done; our wonder now is but slender to our wonder then.

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Thirdly, The author, Christ. How he is concerned in this; for it is not said, the saints shall be glorified, but he shall be glorified and admired. Our glory, as it cometh from Christ, redoundeth to him: ‘For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, amen,’ Rom. xi. 36.

1. He is the procurer of this glorious estate for us by his death and sufferings. It is not, that I remember, expressly said that Christ hath purchased glory for us, but it is in effect said, for he purchased us unto glory; therefore the church is called the purchased possession; Eph. i. 14, ‘Until the redemption of the purchased possession;’ that is, until the church come to its final deliverance. So that we have the full effect of his death at the day of judgment, at which time those who are purchased by the blood of Christ, and are his possession and peculiar people, shall obtain full deliverance from sin and misery. He hath bought us with a price, and purchased us to this end, that he might possess us. And we have our full redemption, when our bodies are raised up and glorified, Rom. viii. 13. What though the death of Christ had a nearer end, our reconciliation with God, and the expiation of our sins, yet this glorified estate is also thence inferred: Rom. v. 10, ‘For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.’ No wise agent would lay so broad a foundation unless he intended an answerable superstructure. Would the Son of God die for a sinful world, if he did not mean to make them everlastingly happy? Besides it is said, he gave himself for us, to cleanse us, yea, and

to present us to himself, &c., Eph. v. 27. That is the second end of Christ's giving himself for his church, that he might present it to himself a glorious church. He gave himself, not only to sanctify his people, but to glorify them. Heaven is not merited by our holiness, but purchased by Christ; it is the fruit of the blood and love of the Son of God.

2. He has promised it in his gracious covenant: 1 John ii. 25, 'This is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life.' Other things are promised, but this is the chief promise; he hath promised to justify his people, that he may take away that which hindereth their access to God, to sanctify his people, that he may fit them for communion with God, and begin the life which is perfected in heaven, and to glorify them as the consummation of all. Other promises are but steps to this, other promises are now accomplished within time, this is the promise most doubted of, and less liable to sense; therefore now Christ will be glorified and admired in his faithfulness to his people. The promise longest delayed will come; we must shoot the gulf of death; stay till the end of all things, till we have the full of it.

3. He dispenseth it, and communicateth his glory to the saints. He is our husband, we are his spouse. *Uxor fulget radiis mariti*; as the husband riseth in honour, so doth the wife. He is the head, we are the members; when the head is crowned, all the members are clothed with honour and garments of state. There must be a proportion; his mystical body shareth with him in his glory; he is the captain, we are his soldiers: Heb. ii. 10, 'The captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings, to bring many sons unto glory.' When David was crowned at Hebron, he made his followers captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, and captains of fifties. Servants: John xii. 26, 'My servants shall be where I am.' He will put marks of honour and favour upon all his servants; they often meet with disgrace here; here they suffered, sighed with him, now they shall be glorified with him.

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4. He is the pattern and sampler of it. In all things Christ must πρωτεῦειν, he must have the pre-eminence, Rom. viii. 29. We have all our blessings at second-hand. First Christ is manifested to the world, and then the saints: Col. iii. 4, 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.' His glorious body is the pattern to which ours is likened: Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,' and to a conformity to him in all things: 1 John iii. 2, 'When he shall appear, we shall be like him.' Now in all these respects Christ is concerned in our glory; we have it from him, by him, and according to his pattern.

Fourthly, The subjects, 'In his saints,' and 'in all that believe.' Where mark—

1. The connection between these two characters, saints and believers; and it implieth that those that by the belief of the gospel do separate themselves from the world, and consecrate themselves to God, or that do believe so as to become saints, shall be thus glorified. The true faith is of a sanctifying nature: Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith;' and Acts xxvi. 18, 'Sanctified by

the faith which is in Christ Jesus.' In the gospel there is represented to us a holy God, whom we should imitate: 1 Peter i. 15, 'As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy.' A holy Saviour, whose main work and blessing is to turn us from sin, Acts iii. 26, and Mat. i. 21. A Holy Spirit, who sanctifieth us unto God, that we may become a peculiar people to him, 1 Cor. vi. 11, Titus ii. 14, Eph. i. 13; a holy rule to walk by, Phil. ii. 14, 15; a holy hope to aim at, 1 John iii. 3; and a blessedness to be possessed by the holy, Heb. xii. 14, and Mat. v. 8. Now if there be a sound belief of these things, it will not be a naked belief, but operate unto holiness. Certainly all true believers will be saints, and live holily.

2. This glory and blessedness is limited to saints and believers, as their peculiar and proper portion. For believers, John iii. 15, 'That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' For saints, many places, Col. iii. 12. Heaven is the inheritance of those only who are saints: Acts xx. 32, 'I commend you to God, who is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all those which are sanctified;' Acts xxvi. 18, 'That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified.' It concerneth us to see that we be believers and saints. The apostle showeth this was the reason of applying this consolation to them; namely, as they had believed, and improved the gospel unto obedience.

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Who are sound believers, I shall show hereafter, now only what it is to be saints. Holiness is sometimes in scripture relatively considered, sometimes positively. Relatively, that thing or person is holy which is separated and set apart from a common to a holy use. Positively, it implieth the renovation of our natures. As holiness is considered with respect to our relation to God, there are four things in it—

[1.] An inclination towards God; for grace puts a new bias upon the soul, by which it bendeth and tendeth towards God, whereas before it bended and tended towards carnal vanities; therefore it is expressed by conversion, or a turning from the creature to God, Isa. xxvi. 18, 19.

[2.] From this tendency ariseth a dedication of ourselves, and all that we have, to the Lord's use and service: 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'But first gave their own selves to the Lord;' Rom. vi. 13, 'Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead;' Rom. xii. 1, 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.' They are ashamed God hath been so long kept out of his right.

[3.] From this dedication there results a relation to God. So that from that time forth they are not their own, but the Lord's: Ezek. xvi. 8, 'I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine;' Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 'None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.' In the text, 'glorified in his saints,' because of his right in them; and they devote themselves to him.

[4.] An actual using ourselves for God; for we are vessels set apart for the master's use, 2 Tim. ii. 21; and accordingly we must live, not to ourselves, but unto God. If we love God, and have any sense of his kindness to us in Christ, we will do so, and shall need no other bond to bind this upon us but our own love: 2 Cor. v. 15, 'That we who live should not live to ourselves, but to him that died for us/ 'Besides, a sincere christian maketh conscience of his dedication: 1 Cor. vi. 15, 'Your bodies are the members of Christ; shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid.' Many give up themselves to God, but in the use of themselves there appeareth no such matter. Besides, from the relation and interest God hath in us: 'Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.' So 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, 'Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are his.' We must make conscience of alienating what is God's. Lastly, it is bound upon us by the certainty of the future account, Luke xix. 23; therefore we should keep a constant and faithful reckoning how we lay out ourselves for God.

2. Positively. Holiness is the renewing of our hearts by the Spirit, or an inward principle of sanctification wrought m us. Other things, when dedicated to God, are changed only in their use, but man is changed in his nature; there is a difference between him and others, as he is set apart for God and dedicated to an holy use: Ps. iv. 3, 'The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' But there is a difference between them and themselves, as they are cleansed, purified, and renewed by the Holy Ghost: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' A man must be holy before his actions can be holy; they are the saints in whom Christ will be glorified.

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3. Though it be limited to saints (all of that number are comprised), yet there is a great deal of difference between the saints of God. Some are more eminent in grace, others weak and dark; and there is a difference between them at the last day; some are raised, others that are alive are changed; but they all agree in this, that Christ will be glorified in all; there is not one single believer in whom Christ will not be admired; even in the glory that he puts upon the meanest and weakest, it shall be enough to raise the wonder of angels; whether it be a prophet's reward, or a righteous man's reward, or an ordinary disciple's reward, whether bond or free, all is one, Christ will crown his grace in him; for the apostle saith, 'He shall be admired in all that believe.'

Fifthly, The season, 'In that day.' For this public honour and glory we must tarry till the time fixed; we shall have most of his favour when Christ and we meet; and it is not fit the adopted children should have their glory till the Son of God by nature be publicly manifested to the world. His personal honour lieth hid, and is much under a veil; all things come to their perfection by degrees; there is no congruity between the present state and this blessedness—(1.) The place is not fit; (2.) The persons are not fit; (3.) The time is not fit.

1. The place is not fit for a perpetual state of blessedness, because it is full of changes. Here time and chance happeneth unto all things, and there is a continual vicissitude of summer and

winter, night and day, calm and tempest. The world to come is either all evil or all good, here is neither all evil nor all good; this is a fit place for our exercise and trial, not for our enjoyment. Here is the patience of the saints, but hereafter is the reward of the saints; it is a fit place wherein to get a right and interest, but not to get possession; it is God's foot stool, but not his throne, Isa. lxvi. 1. He will not immediately show himself to us till we come before the throne of his glory. He filleth the upper part of the world with his glorious presence, the lower with his powerful presence. This is a place where he will show his bounty to all his creatures, a common inn and receptacle for sons and bastards, a place given to the children of men, Ps. cxv. 16; but the heaven of heavens is reserved for himself and his people.

2. The persons are not fit. Our souls are not yet purified enough to see God: Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;' 1 John iii. 3, 'Every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself as he is pure.' Till sin be wholly done away, which will not be till death, we are not meet for his presence. When Christ will present us to God, he will present us faultless, Jude 25. Our bodies also are not fit till we have passed the gulf of death, and all of Adam be left buried in the grave. Old bottles cannot bear this new wine. A natural creature is not capable of the glorious presence of God, and cannot endure the splendour of it: Mat. xvii. 16, 'They fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.' Upon any manifestation of God the saints hid themselves, as Elijah wrapt his face in a mantle. Moses trembled exceedingly when God gave the law.

3. The time is not fit. We must be some time upon our trial before we enter upon our final estate. God governeth now not in a way of sense, but faith; we are justified by faith, live by faith, walk by faith, not by sight. Now the state of faith requireth that God's manner of dispensation should neither be too sensible and clear, nor too obscure and dark. It is fit Christ should be admired now in the graces, but then only in the glory of his people: 1 Peter iv. 4, 'Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' Room must be left for trial: James i 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' Room for faith and patience: Heb. vi. 12, 'That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.'

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SERMON IX.

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, &c.—2 THES. i. 10.

USE 1. To wean us from the vain glory of the world. Surely if there be such great glory provided for us, we should patiently suffer present ignominy and contempt. God's people here are usually a despised people, partly because they make such conscience of obeying an unseen God, and seem

altogether to depend upon an unseen happiness, which, because it is future, and lieth in another world, we must shoot the gulf of death before we attain it. Now this seemeth folly to the carnal and sensual world: 1 Cor. ii. 14, ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;’ and 1 Peter iv. 4, ‘They think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot.’ Partly because many times they are chastened and afflicted. Now an afflicted people are usually a despised people: Ps. cxxiii. 4, ‘Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.’ They that are proud, and live a life of pomp and ease, and have all things flowing in upon them according to their own will, contemn and slight others, and take no notice of their burdens, unless it be to increase them; they pour vinegar on the wounds which they should heal: Job xii. 5, ‘He that is ready to slip with his foot is as a lamp despised in the thoughts of him that is at ease.’ While we are burning lamps, shining in riches, and greatness, and power, and friendships, and interests in the world, we shall have enough to look after us; but when a snuff is ready to go out, every one holds their nose at it. So it is with those that fall under the displeasure of the times. Partly because of the many reproaches whereby they are misrepresented to the world: Luke vi. 22, ‘Their name is cast forth as evil.’ Elijah was thought the troubler of Israel, and Christ an impostor, and Stephen a blasphemer. Now though this be grievous (for nature hath a very tender sense and feeling of contempt), yet this should not discourage us in the ways of God, because it is a privilege to be worthy of the world’s hatred. *Gratias ago Deo meo, quod dignus sum quem mundus oderit*—Jerome. I thank God that I am worthy of the world’s hatred. If they slight you that slight God and Christ and their own salvation, why should you be troubled? Besides, our self-love is too great, when we are so tender of suffering a little disgrace and contempt for Christ’s sake, who suffered so many and great indignities for us: Isa. liii. 3, ‘He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;’ Heb. xii. 2, ‘Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.’ No; resolve to be yet more vile, 2 Sam. vi. 22, and base in your own eyes, and the eyes of the world. And again, till we are contented with the glory that cometh from God only, we are unfit for christianity: John v. 44, ‘How can ye believe, that seek honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?’ John xii. 42, 43, ‘Many believed on him, but because of the pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.’ It is not enough to deny pleasures and riches, but we must be dead to honour, credit, and reputation, which is the hardest point of self-denial. But the great reason is that of the text, the honour Christ will put upon us at the last day is so great, that all other things should be lessened in our opinion and estimation of them: ἐλάχιστον, 1 Cor. iv. 3, ‘With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you,’ or of man’s judgment, ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας. Man’s day should be as nothing to us when we consider Christ’s day. Well, then, since there is such a glorious estate reserved for us, let us not seek the vain glory of this world; we need not look asquint, or seek out for another paymaster than Christ. They are approved whom the Lord commendeth, 2 Cor. x. 18. The more despised in the world for righteousness’ sake, the more

honourable with God. If they could hinder your esteem with him, it were another matter. No; they will ever be of great account in heaven that keep their garments unspotted from the world. Let us but wait the time, and they that are contemptible in the world shall be glorified even to admiration.

Use 2. To encourage us to seek after this glorious estate, by continuance in well-doing with all diligence and patience. The heirs of promise are described, Rom. ii. 7, to be them 'who by patient continuance in well-doing do seek for honour, glory, and immortality;' where mark—(1.) The end; (2.) The way; (3.) The manner of pursuit.

1. The end or aim is 'glory, honour, and immortality.' In all business and affairs the end must be first thought of. Now the persons who are here described propound to themselves the noblest and highest end which the heart of man can pitch upon, even glory, honour, and immortality. Among men the ambitious who aspire to crowns and kingdoms, or aim at perpetual fame by their virtues and rare exploits, are judged persons of greater gallantry than covetous muckworms or brutish epicures; yet their highest thoughts and designs are very base and low in comparison of sincere christians, who look for glory, honour, and immortality at the last day, and whom nothing less will content and satisfy than the enjoyment of God in his heavenly kingdom, and all that happiness which he hath promised to his faithful servants. The threshold would not content them, but the throne; their end is far more noble than the designs of all the rest of the world. Others are unworthy of an immortal soul, but these carry themselves as possessed with a divine spirit. All the business and bustle of others is to have their wills and pleasures for a while, as if they had neither hopes nor fears of any greater thing hereafter; but their business is to get true glory and excellency. The apostle calleth it, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'A far more exceeding weight of glory.' By which they vanquish all the temptations of disgrace and scorn which they meet with here in the world. The difference between the godly and the wicked is not that the one seek honour and glory, and the other not. No; they both seek honour and glory, but the one seek it in the present world, and the other in the world to come; the one seek it in vain things, the other in solid and substantial blessedness; the one seek it in corruptible things, outward pomp, and a fair show in the flesh, and renown in the world; if our fame survive us, what good will it do us when we are dead? Alas! it is but a poor shadow of that eternal glory and honour which Christ will put upon the saints. The glory of the other world is immortal and never withering, the glory and honour of this world is uncertain; their Hosanna is soon turned into a *Crucifige*, Crucify him: 2 Sam. xix. 43, with 2 Sam. xx., 'We have ten parts in the king, and more right in David than ye;' but in the next verse, 'We have no part in David, nor inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel.' They who but now claimed ten parts in David presently disclaimed and disowned all interest in him, as having no part in him at all; so suddenly are men's affections and esteem of us altered. But the saints look higher; they seek glory, honour, and immortality, or a glory which will abide with them, and they with it, to all eternity. Their design is, that 'Their faith may be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Christ,' 1 Peter i. 7. Then the saints shall be much commended and gloriously rewarded, which doth abundantly recompense and make up all the shame and disgrace of their trials.

2. The way they take or means they use to attain it, ‘By continuance in well-doing.’ A good design without a good way will come to no effect; therefore, next to the fixing of a right end, we must choose a right way; and if we desire glory, honour, and immortality, we must follow the course that leadeth to it. The apostle saith it is by well doing and continuance therein.

[1.] For well-doing; that must be stated. The world is filled with ill notions; every man applaudeth himself in his course, be it never so vain. The covetous, the ambitious, the dissolute, when they think they thrive in their several ways, they think they are well: Ps. xlix. 18, ‘Though whilst he lived he blessed his soul, and men will praise thee when thou doest well for thyself.’ A man’s own self-deceiving heart measureth good and evil by his present affections and condition in the world. The brutish worldling applaudeth himself in his way when it succeedeth, he doth well because he thriveth in the world. The glutton thinketh he doeth well when he maketh much of and pampereth his flesh, and hath wherewithal to do it; the ambitious applaudeth himself in his fortune, that he gets the honour that he sought after; the prodigal when he spendeth, thinketh he doeth well; and the covetous when he spareth, thinketh he doeth well. Thus men set up their own fancies as their rule. No; that is well-doing when we discharge our duties to God, and that really turneth to our eternal good. We do well when we walk according to the rule, which is the will of God, revealed by the light of nature and scripture; then only we do well when we act agreeably to those obligations which lie upon us by virtue of the law of God, or the rule which he hath given us in his word. Some duties concern our entrance into the christian state, others our progress in it.

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(1.) For our entrance into the christian estate, or recovery out of the apostasy of mankind, faith and repentance: Acts xx. 21, ‘Testifying to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.’ When we are willing to return to God, as our lord and happiness, by the Mediator Christ Jesus, by his renewing renovating grace, condemning our former ways, and humbly imploring the grace of our Redeemer, and waiting for it in all the instituted means. These are the remedial duties which concern our relief and deliverance from that sin and misery wherein all mankind are involved, and this is our beginning to do well.

(2.) Our progress in the new state. Those duties are set down, Titus ii. 12, ‘Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.’ There are but three beings in a moral consideration—God, our neighbour, ourselves. The three adverbs are suited to them. (1.) Soberly, that implieth self-government, or the right ordering of our passions and appetites; for sobriety is a holy moderation in the use of all worldly things. (2.) Righteously, that implieth a carrying ourselves to all men with mercy, and all good fidelity in our relations as parents, children, husbands, wives, rulers, subjects. (3.) Godly, that implieth a holy subjection to God’s commanding and disposing will, and also an entire dependence upon him, and constant communion with him. Well, then, to do well is to humble ourselves for our sinful and miserable estate by nature, to implore God’s grace in Christ, and resolvedly to betake ourselves to a holy course, bridling our passions and affections, and taking more care for the soul than the body,

that is sobriety. As to men, we must not only mind the negative, to prevent wrong, *Alteri ne feceris quod tibi fieri non vis*, not to do to others what we would not have them do to us; but the positive, as set down, Mat. vii. 12, 'What ye would men should do unto you, do even the same unto them,' that ye may do good to the uttermost of your power. As to God, that we love our Creator, and live to him, not breaking his laws for all the world. Therefore all those that prefer the body before the soul do not subordinate all things they affect to eternal happiness; that gratify the flesh to the wrong of the soul, they do not do good; all that are self-lovers and self-pleasers to such a degree that others are wronged, yea, so far as they are not helpful to others to the uttermost of their power, do riot do good; all that live in the neglect of God do not carry themselves with that reverence, delight, and trust which is due to so wise, good, and powerful a being as God is; they are not well-doers.

[2.] Continuance in well-doing. We must continue this care of pleasing God in all the duties he hath required of us to the end: Luke i. 75, 'In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.' In a journey it is not sufficient to go a mile or two, but we must hold on our course to the journey's end; so we must never give over well-doing while we are in the world. Some are good for a pang or fit; but, 'Oh, that they had a heart to fear me, and keep my commandments always!' Deut. v. 20. The law bindeth continually, and grace planted in the heart should influence all our actions. God's eye is always upon us, and we are every hour and moment anew obliged to him for his benefits; therefore our duty should last till we attain our end, lest we lose our crown, and the benefit of all we have done already. There are always the same reasons for going on that there were for beginning at first; the same bond of duty lieth upon you, the same hopes are laid before you, the same helps and encouragements, and there can be no temptation great enough to recompense this loss of glory, and honour, and immortality.

3. The manner of pursuit, with diligence and patience.

[1.] Diligence, 'They seek it,' which implieth not only a hearty desire, but an earnest endeavour: 'First seek the kingdom of God,' Mat. vi. 33, that is, with such an affection as is not controlled by other affections; this must be their chief business, all must give way to this. Many desire this glory, but they are soon put out of the humour, and take up with the pleasures, honours, vain delights, and profits of the world. Surely if we heartily desire it, something must be done in order thereunto, and done with all our might: John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which endureth to everlasting life;' Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling;' Phil. iii. 14, 'Press towards the mark.' You will never come to the enjoyment of this happiness with idleness and cold wishes; we must desire it so as to labour after it in the first place. Many do something, but it is little or nothing to the purpose; the strength of their endeavours runs in another channel. It may be they pray for it, but do not live, accordingly.

[2.] With patience, enduring all the hardships and difficulties that we meet with by the way. The good ground is described to be the good and honest heart, 'That bringeth forth fruit with patience,' Luke viii. 15. The other grounds brought forth fruit, but they did not bring forth fruit

with patience; the stony ground was impatient of afflictions, the thorny ground impatient of the delay of the reward. They that have a deep sense of the other world can tarry God's leisure: Heb. vi. 12, 'Be ye followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.' Many troubles and dangers will attend a holy course, loss of estate, slanders of the wicked, hazards of life; but all these things we must endure, and submit to our trial, else our faith will never be found to praise and honour.

Secondly, It is applied to the Thessalonians, 'Because our testimony among you was believed.' As if he had said, Among which number I assuredly place you; that which is said of all believers belongeth to you; for you are of that number, for you have believed our testimony.

Doct. That those that truly and sincerely believe the apostle's testimony concerning God's good-will to sinners in Christ, are sure to have the honour and glory which he will bestow upon his servants at the last day.

To explain this point to you.

1. I suppose, and take for granted, that general promises may and ought to be applied to particular persons, rightly qualified, for other wise the promises were in vain; they must be applied to some or none; if not to these, to none. I distinguish between an inviting offer and an assuring promise. The inviting offer is universal to all, and puts in no exception against any to exclude them from the grace offered, if they will fulfil the condition; and they must not exclude themselves; as John iii. 16, 'Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' If you will repent and believe, the benefit may be yours as well as others'. Now this must be applied and taken as sent to us: Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is this word of salvation sent.' You must take it home to yourselves, for God promiseth and offereth you pardon and life if you will believe in Christ; this is to excite you, not to assure you. But then there is an assuring promise, which doth put all those that are qualified into the number of those that have obtained pardon and life by Christ, and give them confidence of their good estate, as all those places which do describe the heirs of salvation; as John i. 12, 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name;' John v. 24, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life;' and the like. Those promises suppose a qualification and performance of duty by the person to whom the promise is made; before we can be certain of our own interest and future enjoyment, we must not only perform the duty and have the qualification, but must certainly know that we have done that which the promise requireth, and are duly qualified. If it be so, then we not only apply the promise by way of excitement, but by way of assurance, and conclude with the apostle, 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' Of this sort is the present application to the Thessalonians. The apostle supposeth the sincerity of their faith: if Christ will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe, he will be glorified in you, admired in you, because our testimony among you was believed.

2. That the great test of christians is believing; for the promises run everywhere in this strain: Mark xvi. 16, ‘He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;’ and John iii. 36, ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.’ Why? Because the gospel, which is God’s powerful means to recover us out of the apostasy, is firstly and mainly received by faith. Before we can give up ourselves to the Son of God, and submit to his healing methods, we must believe him; and there all things are so supernatural, both as to the person of the Redeemer, and his offices and benefits, that we cannot own him in that quality, nor receive his doctrine, nor obey his laws, nor depend with any assurance on his promises, without faith. Therefore when a lost sinner, that lieth under the wrath of God due to him for his former sins, would enter his plea and claim, and put in for a share in everlasting happiness and salvation, he must undergo this trial, whether he do believe in Christ, yea or no; for this is his entrance into christianity, and to believe is to become a christian.

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3. It is not enough to consider whether we believe in any sort, but whether we do truly and sincerely believe; for many profess Christ that do not believe in him. Christ hath disciples in name and disciples in deed: John viii. 31, ‘If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.’ Again, there are some to whom the gospel cometh in word only, and not in power, 1 Thes. i. 5. They have a literal knowledge and apprehension of things, but it worketh no change in them, they are not renewed and changed.

Quest. How shall we distinguish the one from the other?

Ans. When the truths believed have an effectual power upon us, to change our hearts and reform our lives. So the apostle: 1 Thes. ii. 13, ‘When ye received the word, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe.’ Look, as we judge of men’s knowledge of God by their carriage towards him: Titus i. 16, ‘Many profess to know God, but in their works they deny him.’ The Lord refuteth the claim of those that said, ‘My God, we know thee;’ Hosea viii. 2, ‘Ye have not followed the thing that good is.’ We profess God knoweth the heart, yet we never take care to purge it from corrupt lusts; we profess God hath a particular providence and care for his people, yet we shift for ourselves; we profess God is true, yet we believe him no further than we see him; so our believing in Christ may be judged of. It is not the speculative assent which cloth denominate us believers, but answerable walking. Many will honour Christ with their lips, give him all the titles which belong to the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, but they disregard his office and saving grace; they own the truth of eternal salvation by Christ, but they neglect this great salvation, Heb. ii. 3, never look after any interest in the happiness of the other world, nor make any serious preparation for the life to come, but wholly spend their time in pampering the flesh, or worldly cares and ambitious projects. These are not sincere believers.

4. The matter which we are to believe is the apostle’s testimony concerning God’s good-will to sinners in Christ. Here I will prove two things—

[1.] That christianity, or the doctrine of salvation by Christ, is a testimony. A testimony is a sort of proof necessary in matters that cannot otherwise be decided and found out by rational deduction or discourse; as in two cases—in things that depend upon the arbitrary will of another, and in matters of fact. In both respects is the gospel brought to us as a testimony. In the first respect by Christ, who came out of the bosom of God, and knew his secrets; as it is a report of matter of fact by eye and ear-witnesses, by the apostles.

(1.) A testimony is necessary in matters that depend upon the arbitrary will of another. If I be concerned to know how he standeth affected towards me, I must know it by his testimony. So God's good will of saving sinners by Christ is not a thing that can be found out by the light of nature, therefore it is made known to us by testimony. None can know God's mind but God himself, and he to whom he will reveal it. So our Lord telleth us, Mat. xi. 27, 'No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.' To save sinners, or restore the lapsed world by a redeemer, is not *proprietas divinae naturae*, a necessary act of the divine nature, but *opus liberi consilii*, an act of his mere grace, love, and compassion: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,' &c. This wonderful work proceeded from the free motion of God's will, and therefore was impossible to be found out by discourse of natural reason; for how could any man divine what God purposed in his heart before he wrought it, unless he himself revealed it to him? That *Deus placabilis*, God was appeasable, man might find out by the continuance of the course of nature, and the blessings of providence, notwithstanding our sin, and the need of an expiation and a propitiatory sacrifice; but for the way of appeasing God, how a man shall be pardoned and reconciled to God, and obtain eternal life, of this nature knew nothing. The angels, who are the highest sort of reasonable creatures, wonder at it when it is revealed, Eph. iii. 10, 1 Peter i. 12. Therefore they could never find it out before it was revealed. Upon the whole, the knowledge of the gospel merely dependeth on the testimony of God brought to us by Christ, who was sent to reveal his Father's will.

(2.) A testimony is necessary in matters of fact. Matters of law are argued and debated by reason, but matters of fact are only proved by credible witnesses; and in this respect the gospel to us is a testimony that Christ came into the world, taught the way of salvation in that manner wherein it is now set down in the scriptures, wrought miracles, died for our sins at Jerusalem, rose again to confirm all, and cause faith in the world that he was the true Messiah; these things were to be once done in one place of the world, but yet the knowledge of them concerned all the rest of the world. All the world could not see Christ in the flesh, nor hear his gracious speeches, nor be present where he wrought miracles, died, rose again, ascended into heaven; and it was not necessary that he should always live here, and act over his sufferings in every age and every place; yea, the contrary was necessary, that he should but die once and rise again, and go to heaven; and those that live in other ages and places have only a valuable testimony of it.

[2.] That this testimony is given to the world by Christ and his apostles, as the messengers of God.

(1.) For Christ's testimony; I will not speak of that now; he was the chief revealed by these mysteries, Amen, the faithful witness, Rev. iii. 14. And John iii. 33, 'He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.'

(2.) The testimony of the apostles falleth under our cognizance. These were chiefly intrusted by Christ to reveal these things to the world, and had this office put upon them to be chosen witnesses of the death and resurrection of Christ: Acts i. 8, 'Ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem and Judea, and the uttermost parts of the earth;' Acts ii. 32, 'This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we are witnesses;' Acts x. 39-41, 'And we are witnesses of all things he did,' &c.; and other places. This witness is very valuable to produce a saving belief of christianity; for they had the testimony of sense, and were certain of those things they reported: 2 Peter i. 16, 17, 'We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty,' &c. They were men of great holiness and integrity, free from all suspicion of imposture and deceit: 1 Cor. xv. 15, 'Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we testified that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up again, if the dead rise not.' They that were acquainted with them could not so much as suppose that such persons would teach an untruth; they were authorised by miracles: Heb. ii. 3, 4, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him: God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost?' Now their testimony they gave by word and writing. (1.) By word, when they were alive, and went up and down preaching the gospel: Acts iv. 33, 'With great power gave the apostles witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ;' that is, doing things beyond the power and reach of nature. (2.) By writing, 1 John i. 12. Christ prayeth for all that shall believe through their word, John xvii. 20, meaning all believers in all ages.

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Use 1. Information.

1. Of the nature of faith. It is the believing of a testimony. We cannot properly be said to believe a thing but by report and testimony. I may know a thing by sense and reason, but I cannot properly be said to believe it, but as I hear it affirmed, and as it is brought to me by some witness. We see those things which we perceive by the eye or sense of seeing; we know those things which we receive by a sure demonstration; but we believe those things which are brought to us by credible testimony. For instance, if any ask you, Do you believe the sun shineth at noon-day? you will answer, I do not believe it, but see it. If any one ask you, Do you believe that twice two make four, or twice three make six? you will say, I do not believe it, but know it; for certain reason teacheth me that each whole consists of two halves or moieties. But if he ask you, Do you certainly believe the sun is bigger than the earth? then you will answer, I do believe it, be cause you have good authority and testimony for it. Your eyes do not discover it, for then you would see it; neither doth

any man, who is no scholar, know any certain demonstration of it; but philosophers and astronomers, who are competent judges in the case, do with one consent affirm it. [See Sermon on Acts v. 32.]

2. The ground of faith. It is Christ's and his apostles' testimony, or their word; and though we hear them not in person speaking to us, yet the evangelical doctrine which they delivered should find belief and entertainment with us. We have their word in writing, delivered down to us by a succession of believers unto this very day. Christianity hath held up its head against all encounters of time; the persecutions of adverse powers have not suppressed, nor the disputes of enemies silenced the profession of it. This testimony of Christ and his apostles hath been transmitted to us, partly by faithful men employed in the ministry of the gospel: 2 Tim. ii. 2, 'The things thou hast heard of me, commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' Partly by the ordinances of the church: Mat. xxviii. 19, 20, 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;' 1 Cor. xi. 26, 'As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.' Partly by the profession of christians, Isa. xliii. 10; ye are witnesses, trustees. Partly by the sufferings of many: Rev. xii. 21, 'They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death/ Partly by family instruction: Exod. x. 2, 'That thou mayest tell it in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought,' &c.; Exod. xii. 26, 27, 'It shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover,' &c. These being credible means, give us as good grounds of faith, as if we lived in the apostles' time; and we may expect God's blessing upon the means blessed by the Holy Ghost heretofore.

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Use 2. To exhort you sincerely to believe this testimony, that you may make out your title to eternal life. It is now a testimony to us: Mat. xxiv. 14, 'This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.' If we receive it not, hereafter it will be a testimony against us: Mark xiii. 9, 'They shall deliver you up to the councils, and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten; and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.' You are told of the punishment of the wicked and of the reward of the sanctified. Now you must assent to these things with your minds, that you may embrace the happiness offered with your affections, and practise the duties required with all diligence and seriousness. Dead opinions will never be taken for true faith; such dead opinions as are begotten in us by education, and the tradition of the country where we live, and possibly by some common illumination of the spirit, but have no life and seriousness in them: James ii. 14, 'What will it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith? can faith save him?' men may stand to it with great instance that they do believe, but it is but a dead opinion, therefore not saving.

Two sorts will never be allowed for true believers—(1.) The care less; (2.) The unsanctified.

1. The careless. They do not contradict the testimony of Christ, rather than positively believe it; talk by rote after others, but never seriously consider either the truth or weight and importance of the things which are to be believed: Mat. xiii. 19, 'When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart,' οὐ συνιεῖ, do not consider the necessity, end, and use of this doctrine. Faith is God's work: Acts xvi. 14, 'Lydia, who worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things spoken of Paul.' If you would be counted believers, you must rouse up yourselves: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' &c.

2. The unsanctified. Both the characters in the text. The contrary practice is a denying of the faith, 1 Tim. v. 8, that cannot endure this strict life, love a sinful, sensual life, coldness in duty. The strength of your faith must appear by the fervour of your duties and seriousness of your endeavours, 2 Thes. i. 11, 12. If there be cold prayers and carnal conferences, slightness in religion, it shows you do not believe the gospel. You may know a believer by his affection, diligence, self-denial, and his faith and fear; as Noah: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark,' &c.

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SERMON X.

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.—2 THES. i. 11.

THE apostle had given thanks for them, ver. 3; now he prayeth for them. He gave thanks for the work begun and carried on hitherto; he prayeth now that God would perfect the work of salvation begun in them of his mere mercy. Love and power began this work, and love and power still carry it on. In his thanksgiving he saith, 'We thank God always for you, brethren;' and in his prayer, 'We pray always for you.' That is said to be done always which is often done, upon all meet occasions. If you have any success, we always give thanks for you; if any fear or danger of receding from the faith, we always pray for you. The apostle durst not trust the event or force of his own ministry, nor the experiment of their sincerity, but ascribeth all to God, commendeth all to God; the beginning, progress, and end of our salvation cometh from him alone. They had begun well, therefore he blesseth God; that they might end well, he prayeth to God, 'Wherefore also we pray always for you,' fec.

The matter of his prayer is delivered in three expressions, 'That our God,' &c. All which intimate—(1.) A double cause; (2.) A double effect.

1. The double cause—(1.) God's free goodness; (2.) Infinite power. God's goodness appointed this happiness for us; his power bringeth us to the enjoyment of it.

2. The double effect—(1.) Perseverance in their duty; (2.) Attainment of everlasting happiness. All the expressions concern both end and means.

Now, that I may give you the full meaning of the text, I shall first lay down a general observation; secondly, open the three expressions, which contain the matter of the apostle's prayer.

For the general observation, take it thus—

Doct. That the whole business of our salvation floweth from the plea sure of God's goodness, and is effectually accomplished by his divine power.

First, I must prove to you that it floweth from the pleasure of his goodness. The apostle's word in the text is ἐυδοκία ἀγαθωσύνης. Ἐυδοκία signifieth his most free will; ἀγαθωσύνη, his benignity. In the whole course of our salvation, the pleasure of his goodness is to be observed. The coming of Christ: Luke ii. 14, 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men.' The covenant of grace: Col. i. 19, 20, 'It pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell: and (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.' The ministry: 1 Cor. i. 21, 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' The grace to embrace the covenant offered: Mat. xi. 26, 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' It is God's good pleasure to reveal it to some and not to others. The grace to keep the covenant; so in the text, and Phil. ii. 13, 'He worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' So that God's will is the rise and root of all. So for the blessings of the covenant, they all come from his good pleasure. The blessing by the way: Deut. xxxiii. 16, 'For the good will of him that dwelt in the bush, let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, because of his gracious favour.' So for the blessing of the end of the journey, for eternal life: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;' ἐυδόκησε, out of his own accord, and the inclinations of his singular mercy. Our Father's pleasure doth not only concern our final happiness, but all the ways and means which conduce thereunto, to give it in such a way as best pleaseth him.

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To make this more evident to you, take these considerations—

1. That God hath absolute power and sovereign right to dispose as he will of all his creatures, not only as to their temporal but eternal concernments: Mat. xx. 15, 'I may do with mine own as it pleaseth me.' As the master over his goods, as the potter over his clay. Nothing before it had a being had a right to dispose of itself; neither did God make it what it was by necessity of nature, nor by the command, counsel, or will of any superior, nor the direction of any coadjutor; neither is there any to whom he should render any account of his work; but merely produced all things by the act of his own will, as an absolute agent and sovereign lord of all his actions: Rev. iv. 11, 'Thou

hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' None can call him to an account, and say, 'What makest thou?' and why doest thou thus? Isa. xlv. 9. Why dost thou dispose of me in this or that manner? If the question be, Why God made me a man, and not a beast, not a plant, &c.?

2. The sovereign will is the supreme cause why he did pass by some and elect others: Rom. ix. 18, 'Therefore he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy.' God is not bound to render any reason beyond his bare will: 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,' ver. 16. God is to be considered as the governor of the world, or as a free lord. God will not show mercy so as to cross his government, nor so bind himself to his government as shall cross his liberty as an absolute lord and free agent. Compare 1 Cor. ix. 24, 'So run that ye may obtain.' It is not in him that runneth, yet, 'So run.' The first place belongeth to God's dispensation of grace as a free lord, the second as a righteous governor. God is arbitrary in his gifts, but not in his judgments; his judgments are dispensed according to law and rule, but his gifts of grace according to his own pleasure. So God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; it is his prerogative to convert whom he will; that is not an act of right and wrong, but of favour and grace; therefore the cause that moved God to elect any, or one more than another, is his absolute sovereign pleasure, or favour and good-will towards those whom he did elect.

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3. This absolute dominion and sovereign will is sweetly tempered with his goodness, or rich favour and gracious condescension toward his elect ones. His will to them was good pleasure, or the pleasure of his goodness. God hath a gracious good-will towards his people. The propension or self-inclination that is in God to do good to his people is called his benignity or goodness; but as it is free, it is called the pleasure of his goodness; as it is to persons in misery, it is called his pity and mercy. We are to consider it here as free and independent in regard of the creature. What could he foresee in us to move and incline him but what was the fruit of his own grace? The first grace is the mere fruit of his mercy and pity to us, giving us a new heart, whereby we repent and turn to him. More expressly to the case is James i. 18, 'Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures;' Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.' In all the subsequent grace, though we are qualified according to the rules of his government, yet we merit nothing there; the continuance of what is received is a part of the pleasure of his goodness; for as he begat us of his own good-will, so by the same good-will he continueth us in the state of grace to which he hath called us: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy;' Phil. i. 6, 'He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' They that walk most accurately stand in need of mercy; all our comforts and supplies are the fruit of undeserved grace. For our final consummation, the same pleasure of his goodness which laid the first stone in the building doth also finish the work: Jude 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' We take glory out of the hands of mercy, and it is mercy that puts the crown upon our heads. It is mercy that pardoneth our failings, accepteth our persons, rewardeth our faithfulness,

pitieth our miseries, relieveth our wants; it is mercy that maketh us worthy of the glory of the blessed. In short, it is mercy doth all for us. The whole progress of this work from first to last is all from God; not from any worth of ours, nor by any power of ours, but merely from the pleasure of his goodness.

Secondly, As it is from the pleasure of his goodness, so it is accomplished by his almighty power. The scriptures speak of the power of God, which is necessary—(1.) To bring us into a state of grace; (2.) To settle and maintain us in a state of grace.

1. To bring us into a state of grace. Nothing but the almighty power of God can overcome man's obstinacy, and change our hearts, and subdue us to God. Man is so corrupt that he cannot change himself, for there is no sound part left in us to mend the rest: Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' Therefore Christ died to purchase the Spirit, to renew and sanctify us; and his work must not be lessened and disparaged as if it were needless, or not so great as some would have it to be. The scripture always heighteneth it, and we must not lessen it. It is called a new creation: 2 Cor. v. 17, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;' Eph. ii. 10, 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works.' So Eph. iv. 24, 'That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' Now creation is a work of omnipotency, and proper to God. There is a twofold creation which we read of: in the beginning God made something out of nothing, and some things *ex inhabili materia*, out of foregoing matter, but such as was wholly unfit and indisposed for those things which were made of it; as when God made Adam out of the dust of the ground, and Eve out of the rib of man. Now take the notion either in the former or in the latter sense, and you will see that God only can create. If in the former sense, something and nothing have an infinite distance between them; and he only that calleth things that are not as though they were can raise the one out of the other. To this sanctification is compared: 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts,' &c. ὁ εἰπων. It alludeth to that, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' Or if you will take the latter notion, creation out of unfit matter, he maketh those that are wholly indisposed to good, averse from it, perverse resisters of what would bring them to it, to be lovers and followers of holiness and godliness: 2 Peter i. 3, 'By the divine power all things are given us which are necessary to life and godliness.' God challengeth this work as his own, as belonging to his infinite power. By life is meant not life natural, nor life eternal, but life spiritual; and by holiness, the fruits of it, or holy conversation. All is accomplished by the exercise of his controlling omnipotent power; so that this work must not be looked upon as a low, natural, and common thing, nor the benefit of the new creation be lessened and disparaged, lest we lessen our obligation to God.

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2. To keep us and maintain us in a state of grace. Here consider—(1.) The necessity of the power of God; (2.) The sufficiency of it to keep us.

[1.] The necessity of God's power: 1 Peter i. 5, 'Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.' None but this almighty guardian can keep us and preserve us by the way, that we may come safe to our journey's end. This will appear to you—

(1.) Partly because habitual grace, which we have received, is a creature, and therefore in itself mutable; for all creatures depend in being and working on him that made them: Acts xvii. 28, 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being.' Now as God assisteth all creatures in their operations, so doth he also the new creature: Heb. xiii. 21, 'The Lord make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight.' Not only is conversion wrought in us by God, but when we are converted, grace is no less necessary to finish than to begin. Our new estate dependeth absolutely upon his influence from first to last; he worketh all our works for us and in us, not only giveth us habitual grace, which constituteth our spiritual being, but actual grace, which quickeneth us in our operations. By this dependence on him God doth engage us to a constant communion with him. If we did keep the stock ourselves, God and we would soon grow strange; as the prodigal, when he had his portion in his own hands, goeth away from his father. The throne of grace would lie neglected and unfrequented, and God would seldom hear from us; therefore doth he keep grace in his own hands, to oblige us to a continual intercourse with him.

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(2.) Because it is much opposed by the devil, the world, and the flesh. Within there is corruption, and without there are temptations; within there is the flesh always warring against the better part; our cure is not fully wrought: Gal. v. 17, 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.' The flesh is importunate to be pleased, and it will urge us to retrench and cut off a great part of that necessary duty which belongeth to our heavenly calling; yea, if we hearken to it, it will crave very unlawful and unreasonable things at our hands. And as there is opposition within, so it is exposed to temptations from without; from Satan, who watcheth all advantages against us: 1 Peter v. 8, 'Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour.' Now when his temptations assault us with considerable strength, without seasonable relief or grace to help in time of need, how shall we be able to stand? Adam had habitual grace, but he gave out at the first assault. So for the world, either its terrors or its delights will shake and weaken our resolutions for God and heaven. Its terrors, which was the case in the text, and the power of God can only relieve us against them: 2 Tim. i. 8, 'Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God.' So delights corrupt us while the soul dwelleth in flesh, looketh out by the senses; these things are grateful to us, to wean our hearts from them, and that we do escape the corruption that is in the world through lust, is the fruit of God's grace: Mat. xix. 26, 'With God all things are possible.' That our affection to riches, and the pleasures and honours of this life, may not corrupt us, and hinder us in our duty to God, and pursuit after the happiness of the world to come.

[2.] The sufficiency of this power. It is the power of God, and surely that is sufficient for all things: ver. 24, ‘To him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory.’ God is able and ready to help the diligent and waiting Boul.

(1.) His power is enough to enable for all our duties: Phil. iv. 13, ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me;’ Eph. iii. 16, ‘That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.’

(2.) To support us under all our trials: Deut. xxxiii. 22, ‘The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are his everlasting arms.’ God telleth Paul, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.’ It was Austin’s observation, Job *in stercore*, Job is more happy in his misery than Adam in innocency; he was victorious on the dunghill when the other was defeated on the throne; he gave no ear to the evil counsel of his wife, when the woman seduced Adam; he despised the assaults of Satan, when the other suffered himself to be worsted at the first temptation; he preserved his righteousness in the midst of his sorrows, when the other lost his innocency in the midst of the delights of paradise.

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(3.) To resist temptations. The devil hath great strength, but the Spirit of God hath greater: 1 John iv. 4, ‘Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.’ Satan is in the bait, but God supporteth: Eph. vi. 10, ‘Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.’ When the spiritual armour is spoken of, we have the all-sufficient and omnipotent power of God engaged for us; and therefore he is able to sustain us against the opposition of men or devils. It is a lamentable thing to see what a poor spirit is in most christians, how soon they are captivated or discouraged with every slender assault or petty temptation, and their resolutions are shaken with the appearance of every difficulty they meet with in the heavenly life. This is affected weakness, not so much want of strength as sluggishness and cowardice, or want of care. Men will not set about their duty, then cry out they are impotent; like lazy beggars, that personate and act diseases because they would not work. They are not able to stand up before the slightest motions of sin, because they do not improve the strength God vouchsafeth to them by his Holy Spirit. There are two extremes pride and sloth. Pride and self-confidence is when we think we do not need God’s power; sloth, when we do not improve it, neglect what is given, and complain rather than encourage ourselves to make use of his grace.

Use 1. If the whole business of our salvation floweth from the pleasure of God’s goodness, and is accomplished by his divine power, then God must have all the praise; for no consequence can be so naturally deduced as that which the apostle inferreth from this principle: Rom. xi. 36, ‘Of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever, amen.’ Under the law the first-fruits and the tenths were the Lord’s portion; the first, which is the beginning, and the tenth, which is the perfection of numbers. All things are upheld by him as their continual preserver, therefore all things must tend to him as the ultimate end; especially the whole dispensation

of grace in the calling and converting of sinners is to be imputed to the pleasure of his goodness and almighty power. God is not to be robbed, neither in whole nor in part, of this glory.

1. If you consider the pleasure of his goodness, you will see abundant cause to praise God. First let us state the difference between man and man, which can come from God only. That there is a heaven and a hell is not only evident by the light of scripture, but in a great measure by the light of nature. That heaven is for the good and just, and hell for the naught and wicked, is as evident as the former; for men's different course of life causeth the apprehension of these different recompenses. It cannot easily go down with any man, that hath but a spark of reason and conscience left, that good and bad should fare alike. Well, but now let us inquire into the causes of this difference, why some are good, others bad. Nothing can be assigned but their different choice; some choose the better part, others abandon themselves to their lusts and brutish satisfactions; for this is indeed the next cause, their own choice and inclination. But we will carry the inquiry higher. Whence cometh this different choice and inclination? And there is reason for this question, for both scripture and experience will tell us that man from his infancy and childhood is very corrupt, and more inclinable to evil than to good: and you may as well expect to gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles, as that man of his own accord should be good and holy. Whence is it? Either it is from temper and education, or, which is akin to it, the advantages of means and outward instruction that some have above others. Is it from temper and constitution of body? The truth is, this is a benefit and a gift of God to have a good temper and constitution, the dispositions of the mind following very much the temperament of the body. But this cannot be all; if it be any cause, it is but a partial cause; it cannot be the whole, for then the blemish of a man's actions would light upon the Creator who formed him in the womb with a diseased temper; and when the foolishness of his heart perverteth his way, he would be in a great measure justified in his fretting against the Lord, who gave him no better temper of body. Besides, experience contradicteth it; how many are there who be of brave wits, and spoil an excellent constitution of body by their intemperance and incontinency, and so do not make this good choice by which they might be everlastingly happy? And on the other side, we see many of crabbed and depraved tempers, that master their ill dispositions by grace; and God doth often choose beams and rafters for the sanctuary of the most crooked timber, and doth wonderfully change them by his grace, and of a sour and rugged temper maketh them to become meek and holy. Surely temper is not all, the wise men among the heathen themselves being judges.

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Come we then to the next cause, good education, and setting their inclinations right from their infancy. I cannot wholly reject this; it is an advantage, and parents are justly culpable before God for not bringing up their children in the nurture and information of the Lord, and setting them straight betimes in a course of virtue and religion. Hearken to Solomon: Prov. xxii. 6, 'Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' There is very much in the education of children; the first infusions in our instruction stick by us, and conduce much, if not to conversion, yet at least to conviction, and reproach men all their days for warping from that good way wherein they are educated. But allowing this a means, it doth not exclude the

first cause and author of grace; and besides, we see many not only quench brave wits and spirits in filthy excess, but also wrest themselves out of the arms of the best education; and though they have been brought up in the most religious families, where they are little acquainted with vice and sin, and have been choicely educated in the grounds and principles of christian religion, yet have spit in the face of their education, and turned the back upon those holy instructions and counsels that have been instilled into them.

Well, then, let us go to the third cause, since education, though it does much to fashion men, yet it cannot change their hearts. The third is the means of grace, or the institutions of Christ, which certainly in a way of means have great authority and power; for Christ is so good and wise, that he would never set us about fruitless labours; he knoweth what keys will fit the wards of the lock, and what is most likely to do the deed, and prevail upon the heart of man: Ps. cxix. 9, 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word;' Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' The doctrine of the gospel well understood and applied will do it, or nothing will do it; but many hear the gospel who are not one jot the better: Rom. x. 16, 'They have not all believed the gospel; for Isaiah saith, Who hath believed our report?' We see the same sun that softeneth wax hardeneth clay; the same seed that thriveth in the good and honest heart is lost on the highway, the stony, thorny ground; the difference is not in the seed but in the soil; therefore whatever helps or means you can imagine, good temper, good education, powerful ministry, all will do nothing, till God puts a new heart and life into us, to incline us to seek after him, and other things as they lie in subordination to him.

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Let us gather up this discourse now. Surely man doth not determine himself to good, is not the supreme cause and author of his own happiness. Man is evilly inclined, and no culture, no education, no institution, can subdue and alter it: Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' Man's heart will not be changed, and so no foundation laid for a different course. Suppose, for disputation's sake, the means could do it without God, yet the question returneth, how is it that some have better tempers, better education, better institution than others? There is a kind of election and reprobation within the sphere of nature: Ps. cxlvii. 20, 'He hath not dealt so with every nation.' Some have fairer advantages, and more favour in the use of outward means; that is only to be ascribed to God's providence: but besides external providence, the scriptures teach us there is a necessity of internal grace, that all saving faith is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 8; it must come from him.

Why doth God work faith in some, not in others? Inquire as long as you will, you must come to this at last: 'Even so, Father, because it pleased thee,' or, as it is in the text, it is merely the pleasure of his goodness. God acts freely, and giveth grace when and to whom he pleaseth. The free gift of God dependeth on some eternal decree and purpose; for God doth nothing rashly and by chance, but all by counsel and predestination. There was some eternal choice and distinction made between man and man. Why we, not others? It was merely the good will of God and his free choice that made the difference. Election implieth a choice; for where all are taken, there is no

choice: ‘One of a city, and two of a tribe,’ Jer. iii. 14; or, as it is, Mat. xxiv. 41, ‘One taken, and the other left.’ Jacob, not Esau; Abel, not Cain. Why will he reveal himself to us, and not to the world? Others were as eligible as we, our merits no more than theirs, we were as bad as they. All souls are God’s, Ezek. xviii. 4. He created them as well as you, saw as much original sin in you as them. ‘Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ Mal. i. 2. They had as much means as you, your prejudices and obstinacy as strong as theirs, as blind in mind, as perverse in heart: ‘Who made you differ?’ 1 Cor. iv. 7. Why you, not they? You were as ignorant of God, as averse from him, as corrupt in manners; so that when God had all Adam’s posterity in his prospect and view, it was mere grace distinguished you.

2. His almighty power. It is very great sacrilege to rob God of his glory. Surely every thankful christian should say, ‘By the grace of God I am what I am.’ It is by his all-conquering Spirit that any are brought in to him: Acts xi. 21, ‘The hand of the Lord was with him, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.’ So Isa. liii. 1, ‘Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?’ How diversely are people affected with the same things? One is convinced of his misery, the other not at all moved; one is drawn to Christ, the other goeth away dead and still averse to him. Some are pricked at heart, Acts ii. 37, others cut at heart, and gnash with their teeth at the delivery of the same doctrine, Acts vii. 50. Consider—

[1.] God doth not only invite and solicit us to good, but doth incline and dispose the heart to it. They are taught of God, and drawn of God: John vi. 44, 45, ‘No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him. Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.’

[2.] God doth not only help the will, but give the will itself; not by curing the weakness, but by sanctifying it, and taking away the sin fulness of it. If the will were only in a swoon and languishment, a little excitation would serve the turn; it is not dead, but sleepeth; but it is stark dead to spiritual things. And God’s grace is not only necessary for facilitation, as a horse for a journey, that a man might not go on foot, but absolutely necessary. God giveth us not only a power to will if we please, or a power to do if we please, but the will itself: Jer. xxiv. 7, ‘I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord;’ Ezek. xxxvi. 27, ‘I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.’

[3.] Not only at first, but still all our work is done by his power. As he giveth us the habits which constitute the new creature, so he furnisheth us with those daily supplies by which the spiritual life is maintained in us; therefore we must still put the crown on grace’s head, in whatever we have done and suffered for him: Luke x. 16, ‘Thy pound hath gained,’ &c.; Gal. ii. 20, ‘I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God;’ 1 Cor. xv. 10, ‘By the grace of God I am what I am.’ Of his own we still give him, therefore let us ascribe all to him.

Use 2. To encourage prayer for grace; God is able and willing.

1. For his willingness, here is the pleasure of his goodness. We are conscious to ourselves of undeservings and ill-deservings; but when we can see no reason for his showing mercy to us, his goodness should keep up our addresses to him. We are unworthy, but these blessings come not from our deserts, but the pleasure of his goodness; he is not moved by any foreseen worthiness in us. You will say, His goodness I could depend upon, but I doubt of his pleasure, whether to me. I answer—We must not dispute away the help offered to us. A man in danger of drowning with others will catch at the rope that is cast forth to him, not dispute what is the mind of him who casts out the cords and lines by which he is brought to shore. If a rich man cast money among the poor, would they stand scrupling whether the giver intendeth it to them? No; every one would take his share. These scruples are affected, and must be chidden, not cherished.

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2. For his power. He that can turn water into wine can change the heart of a graceless sinner, and make it gracious, a bad man to become good. Wait for this power in the use of means: Jer. xvii. 14, ‘Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved;’ Jer. xxxi. 18, ‘Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God.’ No creature can be too hard for him; God can find a passage into the most obstinate heart.

SERMON XL

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.—2 THES. i. 11.

WE come now to examine the particular expressions which contain the matter of the apostle’s prayer. The first is, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ἀξιώσῃ τῆς κλήσεως, ‘That he would count you worthy of his calling.’ Thence we note—

Doct. That it is an excellent benefit, and the mere fruit of the Lord’s grace, to be counted worthy of the calling and privilege of being christians.

First, Let us see what is this calling. It is to be called to christianity. Now our christian calling is set forth by a double attribute—it is a holy calling: 2 Tim. i. 9, ‘Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling;’ and it is a heavenly calling: Heb. iii. 1, ‘Wherefore, brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,’ &c. The one relateth to the way, the other to the end; therefore it is said, ‘He hath called us to glory and virtue,’ 2 Peter i. 3, meaning by ‘glory,’ eternal life, and by ‘virtue,’ grace and holiness; the one is the way and means to come at the other.

Now both may be considered, either as they are represented in the offer of the word, or as they are impressed upon our hearts by the powerful operation of the Spirit.

1. In the offer of the word. There God is often set forth as calling us from sin to holiness: 1 Thes. iv. 7, 'God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness.' The end of his calling is to make us be come saints: and this must be the business of our lives, to be such, and show ourselves as such more and more. So also he hath called us from misery to happiness; as 1 Peter v. 10, 'The God of all grace, who hath called us to obtain eternal glory by Jesus Christ.' So 2 Thes. ii. 14, 'He called you by my gospel to the obtaining of eternal glory by our Lord Jesus Christ.' The Lord doth not invite us to our loss when he calleth us to christianity, but to our incomparable gain and eternal happiness. There is a rich prize set before us, a blessed estate offered to us, if we will take it out of Christ's hands upon his terms.

2. As it is impressed upon us by the powerful operation of the Spirit. And the calling hath had its effect upon us, if we heartily listened to God's call, to seek after eternal glory in the way of faith and holiness. God offereth it, and we embrace. This is that which is termed 'effectual calling,' by which the heart is changed and sanctified and turned unto God, and so we are made a holy people: Rom. i. 7, 'Be loved of God, called to be saints.' And also by this we have a right to the heavenly blessedness: Heb. ix. 15, 'They who are called do receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.' So that they are effectually called who are altered both in their disposition and condition. As to their disposition, of unholy they are made holy; as to their condition, of miserable they are made happy. They are a people called out of the world, and set apart for this use, to honour and glorify God; and also for the present they are heirs of the heavenly kingdom, and in due time shall be brought into the possession of it.

Secondly, What is it to be counted or made worthy of this calling which the apostle prayeth for? The word ἀξιώσῃ is indifferent to either interpretation. To be made worthy is to be enabled, to be counted worthy is to be accepted; and so the sense may be, that God by his grace would enable you to walk worthy of the calling and privilege of being christians, or count you worthy to be taken into this holy and heavenly estate, or preserved therein until the participation of that glory to which he hath so graciously called you.

But for more distinctness, let me observe to you, that there is a threefold worthiness—

1. A worthiness of desert and proper merit. So the word is some times taken: Rev. iv. 11, 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power.' Surely God deserveth all that the creature can give him, and infinitely much more. So Rev. v. 12, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, and honour;' that is, to be served with our best. There is no doubt on that side, but God and Christ deserve not our best only, but our all. But let us give it in a lower instance, between man and man, where worthiness signifieth merit: Mat. x. 10, 'The workman is worthy of his meat.' When preachers are sustained by their hearers, it is not an alms,

but a debt; they are worthy of their sustenance, or to be entertained for all necessaries by them, taking so much pains for the benefit of others. So 1 Tim. v. 17, ‘Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour.’ Allowed to enjoy it. The double honour was the elder brother’s portion; but is it so between us and God? Are we worthy of those favours bestowed upon us by Christ? Oh no; there is no such merit, no such worthiness, no not of the mercies of daily providence, much less of the eternal recompenses: Gen. xxxii. 10, ‘I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies.’ In this sense the apostle would never pray that God would count them worthy of this calling.

2. There is a worthiness of meetness and suitableness, without any respect to merit and proper justice. So we are said to ‘walk worthy of God,’ Col. i. 10;’ Worthy of the gospel,’ ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελιοῦ. We translate it ‘becoming the gospel.’ So ‘worthy of our calling,’ Eph. iv. 1, so as may beseem the duties and hopes of christians, that the life of christianity may show forth itself in us. In this sense God maketh us worthy, when we are made more holy and more heavenly, for this is becoming our calling. So 1 Thes. ii. 12, ‘Walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom and glory.’ God is a holy God, and the happiness we are called unto is a glorious estate; then we are worthy when we are made more suitable to this holiness and happiness. Both together are expressed, Col. i. 12, ‘Made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.’ It is the inheritance of saints, and therefore the meetness consists in sanctification. It is in light; by it I understand glory, or a happiness abstracted from those dreggy contentments wherein men usually seek their satisfaction. Therefore this meetness must consist in a heavenly frame of heart, that can forsake or deny all earthly things for Christ’s sake.

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[1.] This meetness consisteth in holiness: 1 Peter i. 15, ‘As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.’ The calling puts a holy nature into us, obligeth us to live by a holy and perfect rule, offereth us a pure reward, and all to engage us in the service of a God who is pure and holy, who will be sanctified in all that are near unto him. Therefore to make his people such who were once sinners, he hath appointed means and ordinances, Gal. v. 26, and providences, Heb. xii. 10, and all accompanied with the almighty operation of a Holy Spirit: 2 Thes. ii. 13, ‘Through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.’ Therefore the more pure and holy, the more doth God make us meet.

[2.] This meetness consisteth in heavenliness; for God by calling inviteth men, and draweth them off from this world to a better; the more they obey this call, the more heavenly they are. It is heaven they seek: Col. iii. 1, 2, ‘If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God: set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.’ Heaven they hope for: 1 Peter i. 3, ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.’ Heavenly things they savour and count their portion: Mat. vi. 20, 21, ‘Lay up treasures in heaven, &c.; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.’ They count heaven their home and happiness:

Heb. xi. 13, ‘These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on earth.’ Their work and scope: Phil. iii. 14, ‘I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ.’ Their end, solace, and support: 2 Cor. iv. 18, ‘While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.’ Their course becometh their choice: Phil. iii. 20, ‘Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour,’ These are worthy, or made meet.

There is *dignitas dignationis*, or worthiness of acceptance. So it is taken, Acts v. 41, ‘They went away, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Christ;’ that this honour was put upon them. So we in common speech say, Such a one counted me worthy of his company or his presence, or conference with him, or to sit down at his table; by these phrases of speech, not ascribing any worth to ourselves, but condescension in the party vouchsafing the honour to us. So here the apostle prayeth that they may be accounted worthy of this calling; that is, that God would vouchsafe them to partake of his grace and glory. This worthiness is nothing else but God’s gracious acceptation of a sinner through Jesus Christ, calling them to this grace by the knowledge of the gospel, and giving them eternal life because they are worthy; which noteth liberality in the giver, but no worth in the receiver. So it is taken, Luke xxi. 36, ‘That ye may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of Man;’ and Rev. iii. 4, ‘They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy;’ because in Christ they are accepted as worthy, having given them a right by his grace. All is to be ascribed to God’s dignation; for Christ’s sake God doth take our carriage in good part, though many failings.

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Thirdly, That this is an excellent benefit, and the mere fruit of the Lord’s grace.

I shall prove two things—

1. That it is an excellent benefit to be counted worthy of the calling and privilege of christians.

[1.] By this calling your natures are ennobled. You are made most like God of all creatures under heaven: 2 Peter i. 4, ‘Partakers of a divine nature;’ 2 Cor. iii. 18, ‘We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.’ There is no such glorious and valuable being on this side heaven as the new creature. God is a holy and happy being; here you are made like him in holiness, hereafter in happiness. The heathen, when they would express the excellency of any person, they would say, He is like to God. Certainly holiness is the beauty of God, for it is his image impressed upon us.

[2.] This calling bringeth us into an estate, wherein not only we are amiable unto God, but God is amiable unto us; for he doth adopt us into his family, pardon our sins, accept our persons, deliver us from the flames of hell and wrath to come; for we are called to be the sons of God, 1 John iii.

1. By this calling we are severed from the world, to be a peculiar people unto God: Rom. i. 6, 'Among whom are ye the called of Jesus Christ.' It is a great and excellent privilege.

[3.] Being called unto this estate, we are under the special protection and care of God, so that all things that befall us are either good or turn to good, Rom. viii. 28. The called, κατὰ πρόσθεσιν, are his special charge, and God will not be unmindful of them; all things do concur and co-operate to their advantage.

[4.] They are not only preserved by the way, but are admitted into everlasting blessedness at the end of their journey; for this calling mainly respects our estate in heaven: Eph. i. 18, 'That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints.' So it is called, Phil. iii. 14, 'The high prize of the calling of God in Jesus Christ.' We are called to the participation of glorious things; and where this calling is effectual, we have a sure right. When once we are renewed by the Spirit, and believe God's offers, and give hearty obedience to them, what a large door of hope is opened to us of access to an excellent and glorious inheritance! So it is said elsewhere, 1 Peter iii. 9, 'We are called to inherit a blessing.' A blessedness which consists in the clear vision and full fruition of God, which is much for us, who are naturally under the curse, that we should be called to possess this blessing; it should make us more apprehensive of the greatness of the privilege.

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2. That it is the mere fruit of the Lord's grace. This will appear, because the scriptures are so tender in this point of preserving the honour of grace in our calling, and do everywhere show that on God's part the grace is rich, on ours undeserved; as Rom. ix. 11, 'That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.' That the purpose of God, founded in his own free choice, and manifested and declared by the effectual vocation of his Spirit, enlightening their minds and changing their hearts, was the only reason of their calling or bringing them into a state of grace. So again, 2 Tim. i. 9, 'He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ before the world began.' God recovered us, and rescued us from the evil sinful estate, not because we had deserved this mercy, but out of his mere goodness, designed to us in Christ long ago. No work of ours did merit this calling, or move him thereunto, but only that mere grace which he appointed to the elect by Christ. So that you see how tender the scriptures are in this point, to make effectual calling the fruit of his elective love; for as by elective love we are distinguished from others before all time, so by calling in time separated and set apart from others to honour and please God, and seek after eternal life.

But that you may more distinctly see how freely he loved us and called us, let us distinctly consider—(1.) The beginning; (2.) The progress; (3.) The final consummation of this calling in our eternal reward; and then your souls will be fully possessed with this truth, that all is to be ascribed to God's dignation, and that it is merely his grace which counteth us worthy of this calling.

1. For the beginning, that he was pleased to call us at first. Two. considerations will evidence that—

[1.] The estate wherein he found us; in an estate of sin and wrath, opposite to God and our own happiness, and unwilling to come out of our miserable condition, being blinded by the delusions of the flesh.

(1.) Wretched and sinful was our estate, objects of his loathing rather than of his love: Ezek. xvi. 8, 'I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live.' It is twice repeated, for the more emphasis. He called us, and gave us life, when we were wallowing in our own filthiness. We were indeed God's creatures, and so bound to serve him, but then we were not what we were when we were first his. As we came out of his hands we were pure and holy, but strangely altered and changed after we had departed from God, and had cast away the mercies of our creation. Like a servant that runneth from his master sound and healthy, but by bad diet and ill-usage is altogether become blind, deformed, and diseased; will a master look after or care for him in such a case? This was our estate before, we were become wholly depraved and unfit for his service.

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(2.) We were loath to come out of it: John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.' We are not only careless of our remedy, but averse from it: Col. i. 21, 'Alienated, and enemies in our minds by wicked works.' Out of an indulgence to our fleshly and worldly lusts. How freely then did he love us, how powerfully did he work upon us, e'er we would, be brought off from observing lying vanities to seek our own mercies! Sin having prepossessed us, and being affected by us, what through carnal liberty, what through legal bondage, we stood aloof from God, and would not come at him. Long did he continue calling and conquering, ruling and overruling all the passages of our hearts, until he had converted us to himself.

[2.] The second consideration is, how many were passed by. Thou sands and ten thousands, who for deserts were all as good as we, and, for outward respects, far better than we: 1 Cor. i. 26, 'Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.' Some are altogether uncalled by the voice of scripture, whatever invitations they had to remember God by the voice of nature. Some only have an external call, that endeth in mere profession: 'Called, but not chosen,' Mat. xxii. 14. Some enjoyment of church privileges, and a participation of some common operations of the Spirit they have by it, but they are not effectually called and translated out of their natural estate into the state of grace; these are but few, very few, like two or three berries upon the top of the uppermost bough. Surely then it was the mere goodness of God that counted us worthy of this calling, and took us out of a state of sin, that we might be capable of everlasting glory.

2. For the progress, that we may walk suitably. God, that began the saving work of calling us to holiness and glory, still goeth on with it: 1 Peter v. 10, 'The God of all grace, who hath called

us to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.' Mark, he speaketh to those that were already called, effectually called to the faith of Christ and hope of glory, yea, to those who had suffered for these hopes in some measure; yet these needed grace to make them perfect, and strengthen and settle them, and to carry them through their remaining conflicts. So in the text; he had given thanks for the growth of their faith, and the abounding of their love, yet because their trials were not over, nor their course ended, he still prayeth that God would count them worthy of this calling; for calling is not all perfected in the first instance of conversion. God must call us again, and by his efficacious persuasion confirm us in our christian hopes, and continue that grace which he hath begun. So elsewhere, when the apostle speaketh of progress in sanctification: 1 Thes. v. 24, 'Faithful is he that calleth you;' not that hath called, but still calleth; the present tense noteth a continued call. And the same means by which grace was begun are blessed and sanctified, that it may be continued and increased.

Now this is necessary for two reasons—

[1.] Because of the indisposition of the subject, our waywardness and mutability. We are blind, and wander out of the way; God needeth to reduce us by his word, Spirit, and providence: Ps. cxix. 176, 'I have gone astray like a lost sheep;' ver. 57, 'Before I was afflicted I went astray.' And we do not only err in our minds, but in our hearts: Jer. xiv. 10, 'They have loved to wander.' Nothing more fickle and changeable than man, soon weary of a holy and heavenly frame; and except God did warn and guide us continually, how soon shall we mistake our way! Isa. xxx. 21, 'Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk in it, when ye turn to the right hand or to the left.' Unless God did give continual direction by his word and Spirit, we should never walk evenly nor uprightly in the way that leadeth to heaven and happiness. We are apt to languish and loiter, as well as to step aside and turn out of the way; and therefore we need that God should excite us and quicken us by his repeated calls. Certainly they never were acquainted with calling who despise further calling. So much of our old enmity remaineth as to beget at last a slowness and backwardness of heart to heavenly things. The spouse needeth to beg a new drawing, Cant. i. 4, and further grace to overcome our sluggishness.

[2.] The opposition and temptations to draw us off from the duties of this holy and heavenly calling, which we meet with from the devil, the world, and the flesh.

To begin with the flesh. The back-bias of corruption draweth us another way: James i. 14, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts.' If we consider how averse the nature of man is from a strict course of holiness, and how addicted to carnal vanities, and that this nature is but in part broken in the best, how apt we are still to indulge the laziness of the flesh. You will find the best too backward and slothful, and need a renewed drawing.

So for the devil. How cunning he is, how assiduous in his temptations, that he may draw us back from the liberty which we have by Christ into our old slavery; how many cheats he puts upon

the soul, that we may distinguish ourselves out of our duty, or live in a sin without remorse, by turning our liberty into an occasion unto the flesh!

Lastly, what lets and hindrances, what baits and snares, we shall find in the world; how much these hinder at least our growth in godliness and heavenly-mindedness! Surely we need more grace, that we may not be flattered by a vain tempting world, but may learn to live as heirs of glory.

3. That we may obtain the reward of our heavenly calling. It is God that must count us worthy to the very last; when we have done and suffered all, mercy alone counteth us worthy. This will sooner appear—

[1.] If we consider the infinite disproportion between our best ser vices and greatest sufferings and the promised glory: Rom. viii, 18, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' As they should not be worthy in our reckoning, to weaken our resolution, so they are not in God's reckoning, to deserve our reward. There is no equality between the eternal enjoyment of the infinite God, and that little that we do and suffer here in the world; therefore the same God that took us with all our faults, and accounted us worthy of the first grace, doth still account us worthy of glory.

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[2.] The imperfection and pollution of our best obedience: Isa. lxiv. 6, 'We are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' We deserve rather to be sequestered from his sight, as unclean persons were shut out from the camp, than to be admitted into his glorious presence. Our best actions are not free from some default and defilement, as might render them odious to God, if he should look narrowly into them, and according to the exact tenor and rigour of his law. If you suppose that spoken as of the body of that people, yet the same truth is represented in other scriptures; as Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant.' Not with his enemies, but his servant. So Job ix. 2, 3, 'How should man be just with God? If he should contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.' Alas! how impossible is it for us to bring out or plead any righteousness of our own by way of merit before God! We do not see the thousandth part of what may be alleged against us. Again, Job xxx. 31, 'If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.' As if his own justification of himself would foul him the more, and render him impure in God's sight and his own.

[3.] Our unprofitableness to God, who is above our injuries and benefits: Job xxii. 23, 'Can a man be profitable to God, as he that is wise is profitable to himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it any gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?' Nothing that we do doth bring any advantage to God: Job xxxv. 7, 8, 'Thy righteousness may profit a man as thou art; but what is it to God?' Our good and evil reacheth not to him; so our Lord Christ: Luke xvii. 10, 'When you have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.'

[4.] The many interruptions of our obedience: James iii. 2, ‘In many things we offend all;’ 1 John i. 10, ‘If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.’

Use 1. To exhort us to behave ourselves as a people called by the Lord, or to walk worthy of the calling. I shall urge it upon you—

1. Because your calling is a peculiar favour vouchsafed to you, and denied to others. Certainly distinct privileges call for a distinct conversation, and they that have most favour from God should walk more holily and thankfully than others do, that they may comply with their obligations to him. Are all called? No; but a few only, that are distinguished by God’s converting grace from the rest that perish in their sins. And should not they that are made partakers of this grace do more for God than others? Surely when we consider what the grace of God hath made us, and the miserable estate of so many thou sands who have the image of Satan engraven upon them, it should raise our thankfulness. Thus should we have been, and thus we were before grace surprised us. Now, shall we live as others, and, when God hath made such a difference, unmake it again, and confound all again by walking according to the course of this world? We keep up the difference by holy conversation and godliness; but conformity to the world, if that still he, it is a confusion of what God hath separated and distinguished, a blending the children of light with the children of darkness, Eph. v. 8, ‘Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light.’

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2. Because the calling is a great honour, that God should adopt us, and take us into his family, and pardon our sins, and sanctify us by his Spirit, and qualify us for his glory, and continually set his heart upon us to do us good. Surely we should do some singular thing for God, who hath put such an honour upon us. Will not you honour him again who hath called you, and live to the great ends to which, and for which, ye are called? 1 Thes. ii. 12, ‘That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.’ So excellent is the dignity, so blessed are the privileges, so rich the enjoyments, that no mean thing will become you. Though this calling found you not saints, yet it should leave you so. We must have a spirit becoming the excellent estate we are advanced unto. Saul, when a king, had another spirit, a princely spirit put into him. So you should have a spirit and conversation becoming the honour you are advanced unto.

3. This calling is a rich talent, faculty, and power. As it is a favour and honour, it doth oblige us; but as it is a talent and power, it doth enable and incline us to do more for God than others. By calling we get a nature in part healed and sanctified: 2 Peter i. 3, ‘Through his divine power all things are given to us that are necessary to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue.’ By his first call he giveth us renewing grace, and by his continual calling he giveth us further degrees of grace, and power to walk acceptably in the ways of godliness; and if we be thus inclined and enabled, a singular sort of walking is expected from us; for all talents must be accounted for, the gifts of nature, the gifts of providence, the common gifts of the Spirit; much more God’s regenerating grace. God’s best gift must not lie idle, and be bestowed in vain.

4. It is a special trust. We are called by God, that we may be employed for his glory in the world: 1 Peter ii. 9, ‘Ye are a chosen generation, that ye should show forth the virtues of him that called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;’ τὰς ἀρετὰς; to be the image and visible representation of God in the world, that, from the effects of the singular change wrought in you, the world may know what God is, how pure, holy, wise, good. God trusts his honour in our hands. Now to fail in a trust, and disappoint a trust of so high a nature, how culpable doth it leave us before God! A christian should be the clearest glass wherein to see God, and the most lively resemblance of the divine perfections on this side heaven. But alas! most are but dim glasses; much of the satanical, little of the divine nature, is seen in them.

But now, what is it to show ourselves worthly of this calling?

It may be known by our suitableness to our principle, rule, and end.

[1.] To our principle, if we are suitable to the inclinations of the new nature. The apostle saith, ‘Fashion not yourselves to the former lusts of your ignorance,’ 1 Peter i. 14. Heretofore you gave up yourselves to folly, to the satisfaction of your sinful desires, shaping and moulding your lives according to the wisdom of the flesh; but it must not be so now. Your principle is the new nature, which begets in us a love to God and a hatred of sin, so that it must be an unnatural thing to sin: 1 John iii. 9, ‘Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.’ And you must be carried to God with such a bent and inclinations, as light bodies move upward; serve him with all readiness of mind, Ps. xl. 8.

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[2.] Our rule, which are the precepts of Christ: Phil. ii. 16, ‘Holding forth the word.’ Living in the constant practice of christian doctrine, that religion may be exemplified in you: 2 Cor. iii. 3, ‘Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ,’ ministered according to the seal and stamp.

3. Our end, the hopes of the other world, as those that have a deep sense of the life to come, driving on a trade for the other world, Phil, iii. 10. Either living for heaven, as seeking it, or upon heaven, as comforting yourselves with the hopes of it in all our tribulations. We do but play with religion till we do thus.

Use 2. Since God counts us worthy of this calling, and the beginning, progress, and consummation cometh from his grace as the fountain, and is accomplished by his power, he must be sought to by prayer, waited on in the word and sacraments. To encourage us, what may we not obtain—

1. From our God, who is so propitious and favourable to us, so able to help us? We have undeserved goodness and infinite power to bestow glory upon us.

2. God by calling doth engage himself to perform his promise, that which is promised to the man that is called: 1 Thes. v. 23, 24, ‘The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God

your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it;' 1 Cor. i. 9, 'God is faithful, by whom ye were called into the fellow ship of his Son Jesus Christ;' Phil. i. 6, 'He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.'

SERMON XII.

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.—2 THES. i. 11.

I COME now to the second expression in the apostle's prayer, 'And fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness;' that is, all those things which according to his good pleasure he hath determined to do for you. Now all the pleasure of his goodness respects both the kind and degree of the several graces to be wrought in them.

First, The several kinds of grace. Man is apt to divide; some will have one sort of mercy, and not another; whereas the whole mercy of God in Christ is necessary to our salvation, and none of us shall be saved without entire mercy. Thence note—

Doct. 1. That we must not sever God's benefits, and desire one with the exclusion of the rest.

Secondly, It respects the degree. Many, who imagine they have obtained some measure of grace and holiness, rest in those beginnings, and are asleep as to all desires and endeavours after growth and increase. Therefore—

Doct. 2. That a christian should not be contented with a little of God's grace, but seek to have all fulfilled in him.

For the first point, these reasons may enforce it—(1.) The causes of salvation must not be confounded; (2.) Christ must not be divided; (3.) The covenant must not be disordered; (4.) Our cure must not be disturbed.

First, The causes of salvation must not be confounded one with another, nor separated one from another.

What are the causes and means of salvation?

1. There are five things which do concur to this work, and all of them, in one place or another, are said to save—the love of God, the merit and satisfaction of Christ Jesus, the almighty operation of the Spirit, the conversion of a sinner, the word and sacraments, which in their place are said to

save also. You shall find it is ascribed to all these things. To God the Father: 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling;' because of his elective love in Jesus Christ. Mat. i. 21, To Christ: 'He shall save his people from their sins;' because of his merit and satisfaction. To the Holy Ghost, because of his almighty efficiency, and powerful operation and influence: Titus iii. 5, 'He hath saved us, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' To conversion, by which repentance and faith is wrought in us. So we are said to be saved by faith: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith.' And by repentance and turning to God, to save ourselves from this untoward generation, Acts ii. 40. To the word and sacraments: the word discovereth and exhibiteth the grace whereby we are saved: James i. 21, 'The engrafted word, which is able to save our souls.' Yea, it is said of ministers as instruments, because of their subserviency to God's work: 1 Tim. iv. 16, 'Thou shalt save thyself, and them that hear thee.' So of the sacraments, as they represent and seal this grace to our hearts: 1 Peter iii. 21, 'Baptism saveth,' &c. Well, now, all these things must be regarded in their place.

[1.] The love and wisdom of God, in finding out a way how, with safety to the honour of his holiness and justice, sinners might be brought to life; this is the bosom and bottom cause, and the first mover of all, that stirreth all the rest of the causes that conduce to our salvation: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,' &c.

[2.] The next is the merit and satisfaction of Christ, which is the result of that eternal wisdom and love, and without which the purpose of God could not take effect: Acts iv. 12, 'There is salvation in no other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.'

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[3.] The omnipotent operation of the Spirit of God, who worketh in us those things which are necessary on our part to the participation and application of the benefits intended to us by the love of God, and purchased for us by the satisfaction and merits of Christ. These things are indeed required of us, but because of our weakness and corruption cannot be performed by us, unless we be renewed and assisted by the Holy Spirit; so that as Christ is necessary to set all at rights between us and God, so the Spirit is necessary to qualify us, and fit us for the reception of the grace of Christ: 'He shall take of mine, and glorify me,' John xvi. 14. As it is not consistent with the holiness and justice of God to pardon sinners without a satisfaction, so not with his wisdom, and holiness, and justice, to dispense this grace to the unsanctified, who yet live in their sins.

[4.] Then cometh in the conversion of a sinner, as the fruit of the Spirit's work, which manifesteth itself in 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' Acts xx. 21. By repentance we return to God, and by faith we are united to Christ, and live in him, and to him, that we may afterwards live with him.

[5.] The word and sacraments, by which the Holy Ghost doth first work, and then confirm faith and repentance in us; for faith cometh by hearing. And that grace which is offered in the word is sealed in the sacraments, which bind us more closely to God, and excite us with the greater

confidence to wait for the grace offered by him, to bring us to life and salvation. Now these are the causes and means.

2. They must not be confounded one with another; we must not ascribe that to the sacraments which belongeth to the word. The word is appointed for conversion, as the sacraments for confirmation. A charter or indenture is first offered, and then sealed when parties are agreed: Acts ii. 41, 'They that gladly received the word, were baptized.' They received the word, then baptism is added; as in a treaty of marriage, consent to the proposals, solemnisation, and then cohabitation followeth. Neither must that be ascribed to one sacrament which is proper to the other. Initiation or implantation belongs to baptism: 1 Cor. xii. 13, 'By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.' Some things are proper to the holy supper which do not belong to baptism. We must live before we are fed. We must not ascribe that either to word or sacraments which belongeth to conversion, as the privileges of christianity. Many depend upon the out ward participation for their title to pardon and life: Luke xiii. 26, 'We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.' So James i. 22, 'Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only,' παραλογιζόμενοι. Frequenting the means is not our qualification, but sound and thorough conversion to God. Faith giveth the title, not the use of ordinances. Again, we must not ascribe that to our conversion which belongeth to the Spirit; our faith and repentance is necessary, but yet it is not of ourselves, but of God, Eph. ii. 8. Nor that to the Spirit which belongeth to Christ, as if our conversion were meritorious, or did deserve the benefits we are possessed of. No; that honour is reserved for Christ. Neither must we ascribe to Christ that which belongeth to God; for the mediator came not to draw us off from God, but to bring us to him: Rev. v. 9, 'Thou hast redeemed us to God.' Therefore all things must be ranged in their proper place, and we must distinctly consider what is proper to the love of God, what to the merit of Christ, what to the operation of the Spirit, what to the conversion of the creature; and so what to faith, what to works, what is proper to the word, what to sacraments, what is proper to baptism, what to the Lord's supper; otherwise we shall fall into dangerous errors and mistakes, and hinder both our spiritual profit and comfort. As, for instance, if we so ascribe all to the mercy of God as to shut out the merit of Christ, we quit a great part of God's design, which is to represent his goodness to fallen man, without any derogation to his justice: Rom. iii. 24, 25, 'To declare, I say, his righteousness,' &c. On the other side, if we cry up the satisfaction of Christ so as to lessen our esteem of the love of God, we draw an ill picture of God in our minds, as if he were all wrath, and needed blood to appease him; whereas Christ came to demonstrate the amiableness of God, and his goodness and love, to allure and draw our hearts to him; for he was first in this design: 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.' If we conceive otherwise, we set Christ against God, and so urge his merit against the eternal love, which was the bottom and original cause of our salvation. Again, if we ascribe that to the merit of Christ which is proper to the operation of the Holy Spirit, we confound things that are to be distinguished, and beget an ill persuasion in the minds of men; as if his blood would do us good without his Spirit, and there were nothing required of us but the believing of his

righteousness and sufferings, and he were the best christian that did only credit the history of the gospel. No; the Spirit of Christ is necessary to apply and enforce all upon us. And besides the elective love of God and the mediation of Christ, the Spirit's sanctification is necessary, 1 Peter i. 2, lest it beget looseness and licentiousness in us. Again, if a man should apply the conversion of the creature to his own power and strength, it is a wrong to the Spirit, by whose divine power this is accomplished, 2 Peter i. 3; or if he should apply the benefits of which we are possessed to the merit of our faith and repentance or new obedience, it is a wrong to Christ; or if upon pretence of conversion we should neglect the means, or ascribe to the means what is proper to Christ and the Spirit, as if the work wrought did all, we should fall into dangerous errors; for the means are but means, and the cause of all is God's mercy, which floweth freely to us by the merit of Christ, and procureth the Spirit for us, who worketh in us true conversion to God, evidencing and showing forth itself by faith and repentance, which are wrought by the word, and confirmed by the sacraments.

3. They must not be separated one from another. We cannot rest upon the grace of God without the satisfaction of Christ, for God will not exercise his mercy to the prejudice of his justice; nor can we take comfort in the satisfaction of Christ without regeneration or true conversion wrought in us by the Spirit; nor can we conclude that we are regenerated by the Spirit without faith and repentance, nor expect the operation of the Holy Ghost without the use of the word, neither must the word be used with the neglect of the sacraments: Eph. v. 26, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' Though the Spirit be not bound to these things, yet we are bound. Nor must one sacrament be separated from the other, as that we should content ourselves with baptism without a religious use of the Lord's supper. No; we make a dislocation of the method wherein God hath disposed his grace. Suppose, for instance, a poor creature troubled with the sense of his sin and misery, what shall he do? Keep away from God, or go to him? Not keep away, that is to shut the door upon himself. Go to him by all means, you will say. Well, to God he goeth. But he is a sinner, obnoxious to his wrath; how shall the poor man hope to speed? God heareth not sinners; true, but he hath declared his willingness to be reconciled in Christ; and so God doth in effect say, as the prophet Elisha said to Joram, 2 Kings iii. 14, 'Were it not that I regarded the presence of Jehosaphat the king of Judah, I would not look towards thee nor see thee.' So God saith, Were it not for Christ, I would have no respect to you. Suppose the distressed sinner addresseth himself to Christ, to help him and pity him, that he may come to God by him. Christ remitteth him to the Spirit: 'He shall take of mine, and glorify me.' Well, then, he waiteth for the Spirit, whose office it is to convert the creature to God; but the Spirit referreth him to the ordinances: 'Tarry at Jerusalem till ye be endowed with power from on high.' In the word and sacraments ye shall hear of me. What then becometh the distressed creature but to submit to this method, and improve it to the best of his power till he be brought home to God? Thus the causes and means of salvation must not be confounded.

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Secondly, Because Christ must not be divided. Surely men over look or depress one office whilst they magnify the other, and so set those things against each other which God hath joined

together, or at least we wholly spend our thoughts upon one thing, that we forget the other. As. for instance, in Christ, his natures and offices are considerable.

1. His natures, divine and human.

For his divine nature, there are ordinarily fewest practical mistakes about that, because it is a matter of faith, and we cannot sufficiently possess you with this truth, that Christ is the Son of God, yea, God, equal with him in glory. Yet there are found a sort of men who will be called christians that deny his godhead. But yet there may be an abuse of the orthodox assertion of the divinity of his person; for if we altogether reflect upon that, and neglect or overlook his great condescension in taking flesh, we miss the great intent of his design, the nearness of God to us in our nature, that he might be within the reach of our commerce. On the other side, if we altogether consider his human nature, and do not remember his godhead, we shall be in danger to deny his super-eminent power, virtue, and merit; as the Socinians do, who account him to be mere man, and deny him to be God. Man is always disturbing the harmony of the gospel, and setting one part against another. The Socinians on the one hand deny him to be God, and so impeach his merit and satisfaction, and press only his example and doctrine; but the carnal professor, on the other hand, only reflects upon his redemption as a means of our atonement with God, and so overlooks the necessary doctrine of his example, and Christ's coming to be a pattern of obedience in our nature, so often pressed in scripture: John xiii. 5, 'I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done;' and 1 Peter ii. 21, 'Christ hath suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.' So 1 John ii. 6, 'He that saith, he abideth in him, ought also to walk as he hath walked.' So 1 John iv. 17, 'As he is, so we are in the world.' As the others make light of his merit, so these of his example. Now both together will do well. Our duty is not prejudiced when we consider we live by the same laws God lived by when he was in flesh; and our comfort is the stronger when we consider that the merit of his obedience and satisfaction, by reason of his godhead, expiates our defects.

2. His offices. His general office is but one, to be mediator or redeemer; but the functions which belong to it are three—to be king, priest, and prophet; for all these belong to the anointed Saviour. Note, one of these concerns his mediation with God, the other his dealing with us. We are to consider him in both parts: Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the Lord Jesus, the great high priest and apostle of our profession.' The work of a high priest lieth with God, the work of an apostle with man. Now some look so to his mediation with God that they scarce observe his dealing with man; others so look to his mediation with man that they overlook his mediation with God. Nay, in his very priesthood, or dealing with God, some so observe his sacrifice that they make light of his continual intercession, and do not apprehend what a comfort it is to present our suits by such a worthy hand to God; yet both are acts of the same office.

[1.] Let us deal with these first, these that cry up his sacrifice and intercession, so that they make light of his doctrine and government. They look so much to the saviour that they forget the teacher and lord. You may observe that their whole religion runneth upon depending on Christ's

merit, without any care of his laws or holy doctrine, by believing and obeying of which they are interested in the fruits of his merit and righteousness. The scriptures direct us to another sort of religion, and do not make one office destructive of the rest; but represent Christ under such terms as do not only intimate privilege to us, but bespeak duty and obedience; as Acts ii. 36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.' He is lord and supreme governor, as well as Christ an anointed saviour; not only a saviour to bless, but a lord to rule and command. So again, Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God anointed to be a prince and saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins unto Israel.' Still the compounded terms occur, because of his double work, to require and give. Christ is such a saviour that he is also a prince, such a prince that he is also a saviour; and in this compounded notion must we represent him to our souls. So Eph. v. 23, 'Christ is the head of the church, and the saviour of the body.' On the one side, as Christ saveth his people from sin and misery, so he doth also govern and rule them; and on the other side, Christ's dominion over the church doth tend unto, and is exercised in, procuring and bringing about the church's salvation. The usual carnal part of the world catch at comforts, but neglect Christ as a teacher and lord. A libertine yokeless spirit is very natural to us: Ps. ii. 3, 'Let us break his bonds asunder, and cast his cords from us.' They stick at his reign: Luke xix. 19, *Nolumus hunc regnare*, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' If he will come as a saviour, he shall be welcome. He may have customers enough for his benefits, for pardon and glory, hut we cannot endure to hear of his laws and strict doctrine, that he will be sovereign and chief. Men would not willingly obey him.

[2.] Some so cry up his mediation with man that they forget his mediation with God. They are of two sorts—

(1.) Some that cry up his doctrine, that they forget his giving of the Spirit, as if objective grace did all. No; they must be taught and drawn, John vi. 44, 45. But men are apt to run into extremes; they cannot magnify one thing but they depress, depreciate, and extenuate another; as if the Spirit's work and all-conquering force did signify little, and his business did only lie in inditing scriptures, not in opening hearts, Acts xvi. 14.

(2.) Others urge him as a lawgiver, that they forget him as a fountain of grace. It is said, Acts viii. 35, that 'Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch.' The Greek word is, εὐηγγελίσατο αὐτῷ τὸν Ιησοῦν, he evangelised Jesus, not legalised Jesus; as the Samaritans had a temple at Mount Gerizim, but they had no ark or mercy-seat. They turn christianity into mere legislation; they cry up the rule of the gospel and the example of Christ, but they depreciate his merit and satisfaction, do not represent Christ as a fountain of grace who worketh all in us.

Thirdly, The covenant must not be disordered, which, as David telleth us, is in all things ordered and sure, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. There God hath so ordered all things that they may not hinder one another. None shall have any part in the covenant unless he take the whole bargain. The order of the covenant

chiefly appeareth in the right stating of privileges and conditions, means and ends, duties and comforts.

1. Of privileges and conditions. He offereth pardon and life, but to the penitent and obedient believer: John iii. 36, ‘He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.’ Is not this a condition which excludeth the infidel and includeth the penitent believer? Without it we cannot, by it we may, obtain life. So John xiii. 8, ‘If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.’ Unless cleansed from the guilt and filth of sin by Christ, we can have no part in him or with him, that is, in his benefits. So Heb. v. 8, ‘He is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.’ Christ would contradict his own method, not act according to the covenant stated and agreed between him and us, if he should dispense his grace upon other terms. Now there are two extremes in the world; some trust in their own external superficial righteousness, as if that were the only plea to be brought before God: Luke xviii. 9, ‘He spake this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous.’ The other extreme is of those who teach men to look at nothing in themselves, neither as evidence, condition, nor means, and think the only plea is Christ’s satisfaction, righteousness, and merit, and no consideration is to be had of faith, repentance, and new obedience. Do you think these men deliver you the covenant of grace? No; it is a covenant of their own making and modelling, not the covenant of God, which is your charter and sure ground of hope. The blood of Christ doth what belongs to it, but faith and repentance must do what be longs to them also. They have not the least degree of that honour which belongs to the love of God, or blood of Christ, or operation of the Spirit; yet faith, repentance, and new obedience must be regarded in their place. Surely none of the privileges of the new covenant belong to the impenitent and unbelievers; these are the portion of the faithful only. It is the Father’s work to love us, of his own accord and self-inclination; Christ’s work to be a sacrifice for sin or propitiation for us; the Spirit’s work to convert us to God; but we must accept of the grace offered, that is, repent, believe, and live in obedience to God.

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2. A right order of means and ends, that by the one we may come to the other. The great end of christianity is coming to God; the prime and general means is by Christ: 1 Peter iii. 18, ‘Christ hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;’ and John xiv. 6, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me;’ Heb. vii. 25, ‘He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him.’ The subordinate means are the fruits of Christ’s grace, in sanctifying us, and enabling us to overcome temptations, more expressly by patient suffering and active obedience. Suffering: Rom. ii. 7, ‘To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.’ Obedience: 1 Cor. xv. 58, ‘Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.’ The great difficulty of religion lieth not in a respect to the end, but the means. There is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity; but there is more about the means, not only to convince their minds, but to gain and convert their hearts, and bring them to submit to this patient, holy, and self-denying course, whereby we obtain

eternal life. Many wish the end, but overlook the means, as Balaam, Num. xxiii. 10. When the Israelites despised the pleasant land, it was because of the difficulty of getting to it, Ps. cvi. 24, 25. The land was a good land, flowing with milk and honey; what ailed them? There were giants, sons of Anak, to be overcome first, walled towns to be scaled, numerous inhabitants to be vanquished. Heaven is a good heaven, but the way to it is to deny themselves. Few come to the apostle's resolution: Phil. iii. 11, 'If by any means I might obtain the resurrection of the dead.' To forsake what we see and love for a God and glory we never saw, there is the difficulty of religion. But the covenant bindeth this expressly upon us: Mat. xvi. 24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me;' Luke xiv. 26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, &c., he cannot be my disciple.'

3. A right order of duties and comforts: Mat. xi. 28, 29, 'Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' Commands and promises are interwoven; comfort is more vanishing than grace, enjoyed only by him that works closely. If we will not be at the pains of seeking after the blessings of the covenant, no wonder if we miss them. Comfort is possessed more inconstantly, and with more frequent interruption, if we be not thorough in obedience.

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Fourthly, Our cure must not be disturbed, to which many sorts of grace are necessary.

1. General and particular grace. There are some common benefits, as the offer of a new covenant to all sinners: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;' John iii. 16, 'Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish;' 2 Cor. v. 19, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.' This common grace must not be neglected. Then peculiar grace to the elect: John vi. 37, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' Special grace is built on general, as the application to us upon the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice and ransom, and the offer of the covenant.

2. In the application we need Christ's renewing and reconciling grace: Isa. liii. 5, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' Peace and healing, justification and sanctification; both a relative and real change, in converting us to God and changing our natures, as well as redeeming us from the curse, are necessary.

3. In renewing grace, we must consider both the moral and powerful work: John vi. 44, 45, 'No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God; every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.' God worketh on us by his word and persuasion, and the secret influence of his grace: Acts xvi. 14, 'Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, attended to the things spoken of Paul.' The moral way is by counsel, winning the consent of the sinner; the physical work by inclining the heart: *Fortiter per te, Domine, suaviter per me*—Powerfully

by thee, O Lord, sweetly by me. He doth allure and persuade: Hosea ii. 19, ‘I will betroth thee unto me for ever,’ &c.; Gen. ix. 27, ‘God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem;’ and powerfully overcome the heart.

4. Besides renewing we need preserving grace, that God should continue and increase what he hath begun, till all be perfected in glory: Phil. i. 6, ‘He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Christ.’ Some graces co-exist, others in due time follow one upon another; as after conversion, preservation in holiness, and then perfection in holiness, and final enjoyment of God in glory are to come.

Use. To persuade us to look after, both in our desires and practice, an entire christianity. We must not pick out what liketh us best, and pass by the rest, but desire God, and labour by all due means, that he may fulfil in us all the pleasure of his goodness: Hosea x. 11, ‘Ephraim is as a heifer that is taught, that loveth to tread out the corn, but will not break the clods.’ We affect privileges, but decline duties; desire one sort of grace, but neglect another; some graces serve our turn more than another.

1. In regard of God, his way of giving, Eph. i. 3, with all spiritual blessings: blessings which are absolutely necessary to salvation are linked together, and cannot be separated. Where God bestoweth one, he bestoweth all. The concatenation you find, Rom. viii. 30, ‘Whom he did predestinate, them also he called,’ &c.

2. Our first entry into the covenant bindeth us to it: 1 Peter iii. 21, ‘Baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience.’ It is an answer to the Lord’s offers and commands in the gospel, accepting the blessings offered, resolving upon the duties required.

3. The great hurt that redoundeth to us when we are partial, in with one thing and out with another; it holdeth good in sins, graces, duties.

[1.] Sins. Many escape sensuality, but not worldliness, or escape fleshly lusts, but fall into errors. There is carnal wickedness and also spiritual wickedness, Eph. vi. 12. Now the grace of sincerity is to escape all, especially those that are most incident to us; therefore the more hearty must our prayers be that God would ‘order our steps in his word,’ Ps. cxix. 133.

[2.] In graces. Men look so much to one that they forget the other. We are bidden to ‘take to ourselves the whole armour of God,’ Eph. vi. 11; not a piece, a breastplate without a helmet; and 2 Cor. vi. 7, ‘On the right hand and on the left.’ Then we are provided against all temptations. Every grace is a help to the rest, and the neglect of one is a hindrance to all. We must not mind faith so as to forget love, or both so as to neglect temperance: 2 Peter i. 5, 6. ‘Add to faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,’ &c. Not one must be left out, not cry up knowledge so as to neglect practice, nor fervours of devotion so as to betray men to ignorant and blind superstition.

[3.] Duties. Every duty must be observed in its place and season. Most use one grace or duty against another; as some set their whole hearts to mourn for sin, but little think to get a thankful sense of their Redeemer's love; others prattle of free grace, but give over penitent confession, and care, and watchfulness against sin, and diligence in a holy fruitful life: Jude 4, 'Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.' Some cry up repentance without faith, Others faith without repentance and new obedience.

Doct. 2. That a christian should not be contented with a little of God's grace, but seek to have all fulfilled in him.

These already were converted, and had attained to a good degree of eminency in faith and holiness, yet still the apostle prayeth for them, that 'God would fulfil in them all the pleasure of his goodness.'

1. While God hath a hand to give, we should have a heart to receive. If the oil faileth not, the vessels should not fail: Ps. lxxxi. 10, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' There is no want in God, only we cannot take it in as fast as God freely giveth.

2. The latter grace doth not only increase, but secure the former. A weak measure of grace is often interrupted, and can hardly maintain itself in the midst of oppositions within and temptations without: Rev. iii. 2. 'Strengthen the things which are ready to die.' Sin maketh daily breaches upon us; Satan assaults us; our hopes disturb our comfort, and too often betray the honour of God, and expose religion to contempt.

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3. Though we have grace enough for safety, yet we may not have enough for comfort. Some may make a hard shift to get to heaven with weak grace: 'Scarcely saved,' 1 Peter iv. 18, and 'Saved as by fire,' 1 Cor. iii. 13. Yet they are not capable of the rich consolations of the gospel, have no peace and joy in believing, do not taste of God's feast, nor eat of that choice fruit which groweth upon the tree of life in the midst of paradise. The comfort of the gospel, it is called a strong comfort, Heb. vi. 18, because it overcometh the sense of all present infelicities; a full comfort answereth all necessities, John xv. 11. A ravishing comfort, Phil. iv. 7; it may be felt better than told. A glorious comfort, 1 Peter i. 8, because it is a taste of heaven, and it is the portion of the eminent fruitful christian.

4. Though we may have enough to save us and bring us to heaven, yet we have not enough to glorify God, by doing some eminent thing for him in the world. Surely it concerneth a christian to get his heart enlarged to such actions and services as may be most to the praise and glory of God, that we may carry his name up and down with honour. Now this is only done by some eminent degree of grace: John xv. 8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;' Phil. i. 11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise and glory of God;' and Mat.

v. 16, ‘Let your works so shine before men, that ye may glorify your Father in heaven.’ When the grace is so plentiful, then it shineth forth.

Use. To press us to enlarge our desires, affections, and endeavours after grace. It is mere laziness to sit down with any measure of grace as enough, and not to care for an increase. The life of a christian must be a continual progress in holiness. We have not yet attained our full and perfect measure of spiritual growth. Our light must in crease: Prov. iv. 18, ‘The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.’ It is not high noon or perfect day with us yet; therefore we must propound to ourselves a higher pitch and further degree than yet we have attained unto: Phil, iii. 13, ‘I have not apprehended, but forgetting those things that are behind, I press forward.’

1. For the honour of Christ. We should seek to return to our first estate, that Christ may be found as able to save as Adam to destroy; Christ aimeth at this, to present us faultless.

2. It is for our comfort that we should go to heaven with full sails: 2 Peter i. 11, ‘So an entrance shall be administered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom.’ Some are afar off, some not far, Mark xii. 34. Some enter with much ado, some with full sail.

3. Nothing engageth us to maintain communion with God so much as this, that we are filled with all his goodness. Narrow-mouthed vessels cannot take in all at once. Desire the word, 1 Peter ii. 2; prayer, 1 Thes. v. 23, ‘I pray God your whole spirit,’ &c.

4. Encouragement. *Deus donando debet.* Life, food, body, raiment. God giveth the former grace to make way for more, Zech. iii. 2.

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SERMON XIII.

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.—2 THES. i. 11.

DOCT. Then is the pleasure of God’s goodness fulfilled in us, when we accomplish the work of faith with power.

1. What is the work of faith?

2. Why it is a sure note that the pleasure of God’s goodness hath its effect in us.

I. What is the work of faith? Two things must be explained—faith, and the work of faith.

First, In what sense faith is here taken. For a belief of the truth of the gospel, or a receiving the testimony which God hath given us in the word concerning salvation by Christ. So it was taken ver. 10, ‘Our testimony among you was believed.’ And presently he prayeth that God would fulfil in them the work of faith with power, the work proper to this faith. And so it is described 1 John v. 9-11, ‘If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; and this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son: he that believeth the Son of God, hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believed not the record which God gave of his Son: and this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.’ Where—(1.) Faith is made to be a receiving God’s testimony; (2.) That the sum of this testimony is eternal life, to be had by Christ; (3.) That this testimony is transmitted and conveyed to us by some unerring record, to which, if we give not credit, we put the lie upon God, rejecting a truth so solemnly attested; but if we do, we find the fruit of it in our own souls. I shall prove it by arguments.

1. That this truth is apt to produce the work here spoken of, that is, all holy conversation and godliness; for the gospel, or the doctrine of salvation by Christ, is a mystery of godliness: 1 Tim. iii. 16, ‘Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh,’ &c.; and 1 Tim. vi. 3, ‘If any consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness. ‘The doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ is said to be a doctrine of godliness; that is, apt to breed it in the hearts of men, as delivering the most exact way of serving and pleasing God, upon the highest motives and encouragements. So that men offer violence, and resist the force of it, if they be not made godly by it; as the apostle speaketh of some who, having a form of godliness, deny the power thereof, 2 Tim. iii. 5. By ‘a form of godliness’ I understand a map or model of christian doctrine, as μόρφωσις τῆς γνώσεως ἐν τῶ νόμω, Rom. ii. 20, is a scheme of legal knowledge, or a delineation of the truths which concern legal doctrine: ‘An instructer of the foolish, a teacher of babes, who hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.’ The meaning is, that, pretending to believe as christians, they do nothing like christians.

2. That where it is soundly believed and received, it will produce this effect: 1 Thes. ii. 13, ‘When ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.’ Let truths be never so weighty and conducing to such an end, yet they do not attain that end unless they be rightly received by a sure faith; for the manner of receiving is as considerable as the importance of the doctrine itself. As to a fruitful harvest and crop, there needeth not only good seed, but a prepared soil, so that the work may be brought forth into sight and view; it is not enough to look that we receive the word of God, or his testimony concerning his Son, but also how we receive it, as the word of God, or his message sent us from heaven, as if he had spoken to us himself by oracle and audible voice.

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3. The power of God goeth along with the preaching of the word and receiving of it, that it may attain those ends to which it is appointed. With the preaching: Col. i. 29, ‘We preach Christ in you,

the hope of glory, whereunto I labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.' In publishing the doctrine of salvation by Christ, the power of God did effectually concur with him. So in receiving the word: 1 Thes. i. 5, 'Our gospel came to you, not in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and much assurance.' To gain them to Christ by this doctrine, there was a mighty working of the power of God. Well, then, this is the true notion of faith, which must be fixed here; a sound belief of the truth wrought in them by the power of God, whereby they receive God's word as God's word, and as it becomes those that had God's testimony to secure them in their obedience and confidence. This needeth first to be stated, that we might the better proceed, and because there is an unusual[6] mistake of faith among christians, as if it were only a strong and blind confidence, which admits no doubt in the soul concerning their own salvation; a vain conceit, which both hardens the impenitent and discourageth the serious.

[1.] It hardens the impenitent, for this strong confidence of their own good estate may happen to be the greatest unbelief in the world; for in many it is a believing that to be true, the flat contrary of which God hath revealed in his word: 1 Cor. vi. 9, 'Be not deceived; know ye not that the unrighteous cannot inherit the kingdom of God?' They flatter themselves with the belief of the contrary, and if they can but bless themselves in their own hearts, and get the victory over their consciences and fears of wrath, and cry Peace, peace, loudly enough, they think all is well, and so embrace an imagination and dream of their own for true faith. This confidence is absolutely inconsistent with the doctrine of salvation by Christ.

[2.] It discourageth the serious, who foolishly vex their own souls, and disquiet themselves in vain, thinking they have no faith, because they have not such a peace as doth exclude all doubts and fears about their eternal estate, whereas faith is a receiving God's testimony concerning his Son, or such an embracing of the doctrine of salvation by Christ, that we set ourselves about the duties required, that we may be capable of the blessings offered, even reconciliation with God, and the everlasting fruition of him in glory. The mistake of the nature of faith leadeth christians to most of their perplexities. Do you receive the word as the word of God, that will put an end to your scruples? then thankfully accept Christ as the offered remedy, and take his prescribed way to come to God; depend on his mercy, and continue in obedience to his precepts, and you will soon find that he is the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him, Heb. v. 9.

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Secondly, What is the work of faith?

I answer in the general, all that work and business which belongeth to faith.

More particularly, let me tell you that there are two sorts of acts ascribed to faith, elicit and imperate, internal and external.

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6 Qu. 'usual'?—ED.

1. The internal and elicit acts of faith are assent, consent, and affiance.

[1.] Assent to the truth of the doctrine of salvation by Christ: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' It hath a just title to our firmest belief and choicest respect.

[2.] Consent; either to accept Christ for our Redeemer and Saviour: John i. 12, 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to be come the sons of God.' Jesus is made welcome to the broken-hearted sinner, they then open the doors to him, receive him with the dearest embraces of their affection, subjecting themselves to him as their Lord, and waiting for his salvation. Or receiving the word as it is stated into the form of a covenant: Acts ii. 41, 'They received the word gladly,' resolving to live by the rule, and earnestly to seek the happiness of that covenant God hath made with the world in Christ.

[3.] Dependence, called a trusting in Christ: Eph. i. 12, 13, 'That we should be to the praise of the glory of his grace, who first trusted in Christ,' &c. Leaving the weight of our souls, and all our eternal interests, on this foundation-stone, which God hath laid in Sion, or depending on his promises, and looking for the performance of them.

2. The external and imperate acts.

[1.] A bold and open confession of Christ, and owning his ways, not withstanding the sharpest persecutions. This is the work of faith, as put into the covenant: Rom. x. 9, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thy heart, thou shalt be saved.' There the duty of a christian is made to consist of two parts; one concerneth the heart, the other the mouth. There is believing with the heart, which is the internal principle; the other for the mouth, and that is open confession or profession, in spite of all persecution and danger; for all christians are saved, either as martyrs or as confessors; and therefore christianity is called a profession: Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession.' And because this exposeth to danger, we must venture all to make this profession; and that is the reason why the kingdom of God is compared to a wise merchant man, that sold all for the pearl of price, Mat. xiii. 45, 46. It is the work of faith; therefore it is said, Heb. iii. 6, 'Whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope firm to the end,' παῤῥησίαν καὶ τὸ καυχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος; that is, if we undauntedly continue our christian profession and cheerfulness in all that befalleth us for Christ's sake, knowing we can be no losers by Christ: Heb. x. 23, 'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that hath promised.' Here faith produceth its work, when we are fortified against the terrors of the world, and the dangers feared do not make us waver in the ways of Christ, or the profession of his name. And this is that work of faith which is accomplished with power, meaning the divine power; as Col. i. 11, 'Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.' It is the grace and power of God that beareth us up under the afflictions we meet with in our christian course. So 2 Tim. i. 8, 'Be thou partaker of

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the afflictions of the gospel, by the power of God;' and here, 'The Lord fulfil in you the work of faith with power;' that is, complete in you all the good fruits of faith and patience; or enable you to bear christianity, whatever you suffer for embracing the truths of the gospel.

[2.] The next is ready obedience to the will of God, forsaking all sin, and walking in all newness of life to his praise and glory; then is our practice conformed to our faith. And faith is said to work by love, Gal. v. 6, that is, to produce holiness and obedience; when the drift and bent of our lives is for God and heaven, to please, glorify, and enjoy him. What we are to believe and do is the sum of religion, and the one i inferred out of the other. Doing ariseth out of believing, as the branch doth out of the root: 2 Peter i. 5, 'Add to faith virtue.' And therefore our obedience is called 'the obedience of faith,' Rom. xvi. 26, be cause it is animated and inspired by it.

Well, then, that which the apostle intendeth here is not the interior and elicit acts of faith, but the exterior and imperate; for the drift of his prayer is, that God would enable them to ride out the storm of those troubles which came upon them for the gospel's sake. And a christian, in judging his condition, will better discern it in the external acts than the internal; for—

(1.) The upright cannot always discern the interior acts, or the strength of them, but the exterior are more sensibly and visibly brought forth in the view of conscience. God seeth what is in our hearts, but we see it not till the effects manifest it. The sap is not seen when the apples and fruits do visibly appear. Look, as we judge of the soundness of men's repentance by the fruits thereof, otherwise men may be deceived, and think there is a change of mind when there is not. When John suspected the pharisees, Mat. iii. 8, he saith, 'Bring forth fruit meet for repentance.' Yea, to men of better temper than they, the apostle exhorted them to repent, and turn to God, and to do 'Works meet for repentance,' Acts xxvi. 20. So we judge of men's fear of God not by the internal elicit act of reverence, but by departing from evil, Prov. viii. 13. Of their love by their obedience: John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;' and 1 John v. 3, 'This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' So of their faith, by their holy and heavenly walking. There is no faith in them that live an unsanctified life; but where men set their faces heavenward, make it their business to please God, here is true faith; they have received God's testimony, and therefore upon the encouragement of his promises continue with patience in well-doing.

(2.) Hypocrites will pretend a strong faith, be ready to challenge them of injustice and injury that shall question their belief of the doctrine of salvation by Christ; but they deny in their practice what they assert in their words: Ps. xiv. 12, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' Atheism is a heavy charge, but how is it made good? Partly by their sins of commission: 'They be corrupt and abominable.' Partly by sins of omission: 'There is none that understands and seeketh after God.' It is not facing it out with big and stout words, that they are no atheists, and saying they do certainly believe there is a God; what could they do more in a way of sin, or less in a way of duty, if there were no God? So Ps. xxxvi. 4, 'The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart,

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There is no fear of God before his eyes.' The current of a man's life and actions doth best expound and interpret his heart. Every considerate man may collect from their actions they have no true sense of the being of God; for they are not watchful over their own ways, and their actions are so absolutely contrary to God's laws, threats, and promises, yea, to all that is known of God, that certainly they do not believe there is a God, or are not in earnest when they think and speak so. It may be their mouths are not let loose to that boldness openly to deny or question God's being; but their dealings are so false and detestable, that a man may certainly conclude they never expect to be accountable to God for what they do. So for the belief of christianity, many seem to believe as christians, but live as infidels; nominally they are christians, but really deny the faith: John viii. 31, 'Then said Jesus to those Jews that believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.' There are disciples in name and disciples indeed. Some take up the current opinions of the country where they live upon human credulity, but they have no force and efficacy upon them to change their hearts or lives. They talk as honourably of Christ as others do; but Christ will not take compliments for service, nor words for practice: Mat. vii. 21, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father.' Or as it is, Luke vi. 46, 'Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' Now how shall we confute men's confident presumptions and boastings but by their lives? Fornication, drunkenness, gluttony, oppression, covetousness, are not the works of faith, but of that fleshly mind that possesseth men in their apostasy from God; and therefore the surest note will be holy conversation and godliness.

II. Then may we conclude that the pleasure of God's goodness is fulfilled in us—

1. Because true grace is of an operative and vigorous nature, and if it lie idle in the soul, it is but an image and shadow of grace, some thing that looketh like it, but is not it. As, for instance, faith is but a dead opinion unless it break out into practice: James ii. 14, 'What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him?' Talk as much of faith as you will, yet no man will believe that you are in earnest, and indeed look for salvation by Christ, when you plainly take the way that leadeth to hell. Faith is but a cold approbation of the ways of God, or some ineffectual liking of that course, which is overborne by a contrary bias, or love to earthly things: Rom. ii. 18, 'Thou approvest the things that are excellent.' True love will constrain us to live to God: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'The love of Christ constraineth us,' &c. Hope will be seen, not by some naked cold thoughts of heaven, but by an earnest pursuit: Acts xxvi. 7, 'To which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God, hope to come.' It quickeneth to the use of all the means by which we may obtain it. Of all graces it is said, 2 Peter i. 8, 'If these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall not be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;' that is, you will behave yourselves so as becometh good christians. Where graces are lively, they can never be without works, or such fruits as will tend to God's honour; it will not let him be quiet, or have any peace in himself, till he do some thing considerable for God, as a thing that is ever seeking to break out.

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2. Because the Spirit of God dwelleth and resideth in the heart, to keep these graces in continual work: John iv. 14, 'A well springing up into everlasting life;' and John vii. 38, ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας. It is springing up, it is flowing forth. A man is not to keep grace to himself, but to exercise it for the glory of God and the good of others. Therefore is the presence of the Holy Ghost necessary, that the grace which he hath wrought may not lie dead in sleepy habits, but be continually acted and drawn forth, in such lively operations as may demonstrate the cause whence they do proceed.

3. When the work of faith is accomplished, internal and external acts concur. There is a principle within, and there is the effect with out. Within there is faith, which is the most noble principle to produce a holy life, without which bodily exercise profiteth little, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Faith partly doth it, as an assent to those sublime and weighty truths concerning redemption by Christ which breed love; and so faith worketh, Gal. v. 6; and also the doctrine of everlasting life and death, which have great efficacy and moving power to sway us to obedience. Again, faith doth it as a hearty consent both of subjection and dependence. We consent to obey Christ, and trust him for our assistance, acceptance, and reward; all this is within, and without there is the effect of serious holiness and doing good, whatever we suffer for it, without which all our pretence of subjection to Christ, and dependence upon him, is but talk and empty prattle. Now, when both internal and external acts concur we have these advantages:—

[1.] We have a surer rule to judge by. We judge others by external works alone, for the tree is known by its fruits, Mat. vii. 16. Charity forbids us to pry any further; but we judge ourselves according to internal and external works together. If within there be a love of God, faith in Christ, hatred of evil, a delight in holiness, a deep sense of the world to come, and all this evidenced by a holy conversation, we need no further proof. If a man would make a judgment of his own estate, he must consider the temper of his heart and course of his life both together.

[2.] Our religion is more noble and better tempered; for though the internal acts in themselves are nobler and greater than the acts of the outward man; that is, considering them abstractly and apart; it is more to love God than to do an outward act of charity or piety, because the soul is more noble than the body; yet outward duties are most frequently greater than internal acts only; partly because in out ward duties it is supposed that both parts concur, both soul and body, and the operations of both are more than of one alone; partly because the nobler ends are obtained by both, more than by one only, for God is more honoured, and man benefited by them: John xv. 8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;' and Phil. i. 11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise and glory of God.' Christ is not glorified by faith, but by the work of faith, as ver. 12 of this chapter. When it breaketh out in good fruits, then is Christ honoured. The reflection of the heat from the earth in ripe and pleasant fruits is more than the bare reflection of the heat alone from a dead wall. Take this rightly.

(1.) All outward duties are nothing unless they begin at the heart; they are but as the washing of the outside of the platter; therefore unless faith and love animate them, they are not valued by God: 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3, 'Though I give my body to be burnt, remove mountains, give all my goods to the poor, speak with the tongue of men and angels, understand all mysteries,' οὐδὲν εἰμὶ, I am never the better for it; for external acts, however materially good, are not valuable; unless they come from a rectified will, faith in Christ, and love to God, they are of no respect.

(2.) Where there is a right constitution of soul, if the external act be restrained by a natural and not a sensible impediment, there the internals are accepted. The lover's mite cast into the treasury is more than ten times so much outward obedience from another man: 2 Cor. viii. 12, 'If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, not according to that he hath not.' If a man is resolved to obey God in all things, if he do according to his ability, he shall be accepted, though in some cases he is impeded and hindered; but now when both parts concur, the religion is well tempered; he believeth, and doth what his belief binds him unto.

(3.) The next and last advantage is this: those outward acts which flow from an internal principle move the heart again, and do increase the habit, and thereby a man is more confirmed in his gracious estate. As the right arm is bigger than the left, and is more ready for action, because by constant exercise it is fuller of spirits; so faith and all other graces are increased by much action; partly of their own nature, and partly by divine reward. Do, and have more: 'To him that hath shall be given,' Luke viii. 18. There is a circular motion between the heart and the hand; the more men actually sin, the more prone they are to sin; as a brand that hath been once in the fire is more apt to take fire again, so grace exercised is rewarded with grace. The acts increase the faith and love which did first produce them, and we are still provoked to do more for God, and go on in the way which we have begun. Diligence is the means, and God's blessing is the cause of all increase; not only contrary acts, but a remission of acts doth weaken habits. God, that punisheth sin with sin, doth also reward grace with grace. Well, then, these three advantages we have by this concurrence—the note is more sure, the religion is the better tempered, and the grace is increased.

4. When the work of faith is accomplished, both objective and subjective grace hath its proper end and use, for they both tend to put us upon work. Objective grace is the doctrine of the gospel. Subjective is the powerful impression of the soul.

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[1.] For objective grace. All truths are revealed in order to a holy life, not barely to make us wiser, but better. The scriptures were not written to try the strength of men's wits, who can most accurately distinguish and conceive of these things; nor the strength of their memories, who can most firmly retain them; or the plausibleness of their discourse, who can most eloquently speak of them; but the readiness of their obedience, who will most readily set themselves to the practice of them: Mat. vii. 24, 'Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, I will liken him to a wise man, that built his house upon a rock;' that is, he that believeth and practiseth my commands, he buildeth his

confidence well: Ps. cxix. 48, ‘My hands will I lift up to thy commandments, which I have loved;’ that is, I will make it my endeavour to practise them. Whatever love we pretend, if our hands be remiss and faint, it is not accepted with God. Getting knowledge, it is but like having tools, and tools are in order to work, otherwise they lie by and rust. Speculation is useless and idle if it tend only to curiosity, and not to practice.

[2.] Subjective grace. All that internal grace that is given to us by Christ was given to this end; life, not that we might have it, but use it for God. The new creature was not made as a statue to gaze upon, but that he may walk, and perform all the functions and offices which belong to the new creature: Eph. ii. 10, ‘We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which he hath before ordained that we should walk in them.’ We are new made to this end and purpose. Christ died to restore us to this captivity[7] and ability, and hath given us his Spirit to this end. Now graces are imperfect till their end be obtained, whilst they remain as idle and useless habits; but they are perfected when they have their use. So by works faith is said to be perfected, James ii. 23, that is, hath obtained its end. So 1 John ii. 5, ‘Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected;’ that is, hath produced its consummate act, to which it tendeth; then the force of it is discovered, whereas before it suffered a kind of imperfection. The plant is perfect when it ariseth into stalk and flower, and begins to seed.

5. Practice giveth us experience of the comfort of that religion which we embrace by faith, so that the man is confirmed greatly in believing those supernatural revelations, which before he received without that help: 1 John v. 10, ‘He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.’ But when hath he the witness within himself? When he hath a testimony in his own bosom, when he cometh to practise what he believeth. It is a ravishing thing to understand heavenly doctrine, and see the apt proportion and connection between ends and means: Prov. xxiv. 13, 14, ‘My son, eat thou honey, because it is good, and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: so shall the knowledge of wisdom be to thy soul, when thou hast found it; then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.’ The delights of the mind do far exceed those of the body; there is a ravishing sweetness in the study and contemplation of truth, such as the epicure findeth not in the most exquisite entertainments of sense; especially when this contemplation is employed about divine truths, such as reconciliation with God and eternal life. But the pleasure of contemplation is nothing to the pleasure of practice, for then we find these things verified and confirmed in ourselves. Contemplation giveth us only a sight, but experience a taste, and so we are more deeply and intimately affected with them: 1 Peter ii. 3, ‘If so be we have tasted that the Lord is gracious,’ Besides, the delight of contemplation is more vanishing, but the taste of these things is kept up on our hearts by a serious and constant obedience; it abideth with us, and the pleasure is more durable; it is but a flash of joy that is stirred up by contemplation, but the delight of practice and fruitful

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[7] Qu. ‘capacity’?—ED.

obedience is constant, solid, and permanent. Every holy action is rewarded by peace of conscience, and our right to heaven is more confirmed.

6. A christian will be judged at the last day, not by what he hath believed, but by what he hath done; not by what he hath approved, but by what he hath practised. Many profess faith and love, but if it be not verified in our practice, they are not accepted with God: 1 Peter i. 17, 'If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear;' Rev. xx. 12, 'The dead were judged according to their works.' God will judge men according to their works, and what they have done in the flesh, whether it be good or evil: John v. 29, 'They that have done good shall rise to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.' So that according to the doctrine of Christ, we must be judged, not by faith, but by the work of faith; and shall be either justified or condemned at the last day, according as our faith hath been barren, or else operative and fruitful in good works; even though we be judged according to the law of grace, this must be the process.

Use 1. Information. That we should not judge of our spiritual condition by an airy religion, that consists in contemplation only, nor rest in an idle faith: James ii. 20, 'Show me thy faith by thy works;' for faith without works is dead. The practical christian is most sure to be guided right in point of opinion: John vii. 17, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' To have more solid comfort: John xv. 11, 'These things have I spoken, that my joy may remain in you.' And certain acceptance with God at the last day: Mat. xxv. 21, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' &c. It is not the sharp wit, the firm memory, the nimble tongue, but the fruitful life, the obedient practice, which then will be respected. If our work do not correspond with our faith and profession, it is a practical lie and cheat, which God will soon find out and discover.

Use 2. For caution. See that your work be the work of faith. Moralities are not kindly, unless they proceed from love to God and faith in Christ: 'For without faith it is impossible to please God/ Heb. xi. 6; and till we be married to Christ we cannot bring forth fruit to God, Rom. vii. 4. All that justice, temperance, charity, is but a mock grace and bastard holiness, as the children born before marriage are illegitimate. Good works are but wild fruit, unkindly, till they have this principle; there is no living to God that can be carried on to any purpose till we are persuaded of his love in Christ, who hath purchased pardon and life for us. Yea, we are utterly unable to live to God without the grace of the Redeemer: Gal. ii. 20, 'The life I now live is by the faith of the Son of God.' The knowledge of him and the mysteries of his grace is our great motive, and his Spirit is our proper principle and cause of holy living.

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Use 3. To press us to accomplish the work of faith.

1. This may be well afforded, if we consider what Christ is, and what he hath done for sinners, and what he will do; our obligations past, our privileges present, and our hopes to come. When we consider what Christ hath done for us, and is, and will be to us, have we the heart to refuse any of

his commands? Out of what rock were we hewn, that we can stand out against all these charms of grace? Unnatural, unthankful creature, that canst deny a loving Saviour, who requireth nothing of thee but what is for thy good!

2. The divine power is engaged for thy defence: Eph. in. 16, ‘That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might;’ and Eph. vi. 10, ‘Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;’ 2 Peter i. 5, ‘Give all diligence to add to your faith virtue.’ You will meet with difficulties in carrying on the work of faith; but be not discouraged, God is on your side, and Christ will bear all your expenses to heaven. He that was perfected by sufferings will not suffer you to be destroyed by them. You conquer not in your own strength, but by the power of his Spirit. Say then, 2 Tim. i. 12, ‘I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him unto that day.’

3. Other faith will be a snare and temptation to you, besides that which produceth its proper work, which is an invincible resolution to deny the importunities of the flesh, and to despise all terrors of sense; yea, to forsake all things rather than be unfaithful to Christ. Other faith, that consists in loose and slight apprehensions of grace, destroys thou sands. Consider how many abuse the mercy of God and the merits of Christ, and turn grace into looseness or laziness.

SERMON XIV.

That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.—2 THES. i. 12.

IN these words you have the end of the things prayed for. In the apostle’s prayer you may take notice of these three things—(1.) Causes; (2.) Means; (3.) Ends.

1. Causes, which are God’s free goodness and power.

2. Means, effectual calling, faith, works. The one proceeds from the other, faith from calling, and works from faith.

3. The ends. In the text, ‘That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,’

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Where—(1.) There is a double end mentioned; (2.) The influence of grace is asserted.

[1.] The double end mentioned, ‘That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him.’

These words may be conceived to have a threefold reference—

First, To the persons concerned, Christ and the Thessalonians. The first clause belongeth to Christ, ‘that he may be glorified in you;’ and the second to the Thessalonians, ‘and you in him.’ The fulfilling of the work of faith with power is not only for Christ’s honour, but our advantage. Christ is glorious enough in himself, whether he hath disciples, yea or no; but if we had not such a lord and master, we could not be glorified. Therefore there is not only Christ’s glory in the case, but ours; you do your own business when you do his; Christ hath the honour, and you have the reward.

In the second reference, the first clause respects this life, the second the life to come. Christ is glorified in us when we uphold his honour in the world; and we are glorified in him when we are taken into his heavenly kingdom. It is true both clauses may be understood of this life; we are glorified in him, because it is glorious to suffer for a good master and a good cause. We do not glorify Christ so much as he is an honour and glory to us: Acts v. 41, ‘They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.’ But I take the most famous sense, that Christ is the cause of all the glory and happiness we have in the other world.

The third reference is to the union in the mystical body. So Christ is glorified in us as his members, and we in him as our head; and so you have a reason why it is not said, God is glorified in us, and you in him. The glory of God is included in the glory of Christ: Phil. ii. 11, ‘Every tongue shall confess that Christ is Lord, to the praise and glory of God.’ And Christ only is mentioned, because the gospel is preached in his name: Acts x. 43, ‘To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.’ And faith in Christ was that which was opposed by Jew and gentile, not faith in God. Owning the name of Christ was that which brought their troubles upon them; but chiefly because he is the head of the mystical body. Therefore the terms are framed so as to express the union. It is not said, the name of Christ is glorified by us, and we by him; but in us, and we in him.

[2.] The influence of grace upon this end, ‘According to the grace of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.’ Κατὰ noteth not the measure that every one of us doth glorify God, and is glorified by him, so far as to every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, Eph. iv. 7, but the motive, which is the unmerited favour and bounty of God towards us in Jesus Christ. Now this may have respect either to the means formerly mentioned, calling, faith, work of faith; all this is done by the mere grace of God in Jesus Christ; or more specially to the ends mentioned; not only is the grace of God the supreme cause of salvation, but all the means are ordered and influenced by it; yea, the ends are wholly to be ascribed to the grace of God, all the glory Christ hath from his people, or communicates to them. It is from grace that he is glorified in us. To suffer is a grace: Phil, i 29, ‘To you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, to suffer for his sake.’ But more peculiarly it is to be referred to the last clause, ‘We in him;’ his giving glory and immortality to us. His glorifying of us, notwithstanding our glorifying of him, issueth from grace. Only observe,

grace is ascribed to God the Father as the giver, and to Christ as the meritorious procurer of it; for the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned.

Observe, then—

1. That when the work of faith is fulfilled with power, Christ Jesus is glorified in his servants.

2. That in promoting the glory of Christ we do also promote the salvation of our own souls; for when he is glorified in us, we are glorified in him.

3. That our glorified estate is to be ascribed to the mere grace and goodness of God in Christ.

First point. That when the work of faith is fulfilled with power, Christ Jesus is glorified in his servants.

To evidence this I will consider—(1.) How many ways God and Christ is glorified; (2.) That when the work of faith is fulfilled with power, Christ is thus glorified.

First, How many ways God or Christ may be said to be glorified.

I answer—Two ways—(1.) Passively and objectively; (2.) Actively, and by our voluntary concurrence.

1. Passively. God is glorified in all his creatures and works, as his glorious excellencies are visibly represented in them. Now there are two sorts of creatures in the world—some that may be called merely natural, others that are free and voluntary agents. The mere natural agents are heaven and earth, and the beasts of the field, &c.; these all declare the glory of God, Ps. xix. 1, 2. The free and voluntary agents are men and angels: Ps. cxlv. 10, ‘All thy works praise thee, and thy saints bless thee.’ All his works offer matter of praise, but men and angels do voluntarily ascribe it to him, and not the rest of the creation. Now, God is glorified merely passively and objectively in the dumb and senseless creature, but both objectively and actively too in the saints and angels. As, for instance, God is glorified objectively in the new creature; his very being is to the praise of his glorious grace, Eph. i. 12. Though the man be silent, yet the work of the new creation speaketh for itself. And in the new creature, discovered in its fruits, there is a greater appearance of God’s excellency than in any other being on this side heaven; so that this objective way of glorifying God in his saints is the discovery and appearance of God in his holy ones, or the impression of his excellency upon us.

2. Actively. So men are said to glorify God, as they do conceive and declare his excellency in word or deed. Three ways we may be said to glorify God—in our hearts, tongues, and lives.

[1.] In our hearts, by estimation and love: Luke i. 46, ‘My soul doth magnify the Lord.’ We are said to magnify or greaten the Lord, as we conceive more largely of his excellency, with suitable affections, fearing, loving, trusting, delighting in him above all, with such a fear as banisheth the

fear of man from our hearts. All the fears and frowns of a worm are more contemptible to us in comparison of that reverence and dread that we have of God: Isa. li. 12, 13, 'Who art thou that art afraid of a man, and forgetteth the Lord thy maker?' So for love, so that other things are as nothing to them: Ps. lxxiii. 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' So trust; they have a full security in God's promises, and count God's word better than man's performance, than anything man offereth or can bestow upon them: Isa. xxvi. 3, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.' Delight: Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance on us: thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased.' They reckon their happiness by his favour, and this is more than the highest enjoyments; that which is most precious and desirable is nothing worth without it: Ps. lxiii. 3, 'Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.'

[2.] They glorify God with their tongues, as they do declare his excellency: Ps. 1. 23, 'Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me.' They give God his due, and express what they conceive and esteem; for praise is nothing but the breath of love, joy, esteem, or gratitude. Our tongues were given us for this end and purpose: James iii. 10, 'Therewith we bless God, even the Father.' Angels have minds; they adore and admire God, but have no tongues; beasts have tongues, but they have no reason; but we have tongues, and have reason and speech also; therefore, unless we be the mouth of the whole creation of God to declare his excellencies, we frustrate God's end, who brought man into this lower world as the admirer and praiser of all his works.

[3.] In our lives we glorify God; as Job said the sides of the poor blessed him, so must our lives bless God. Thus we glorify God two ways—(1.) By fixing his glory as the end of our lives and actions; (2.) By doing such things as may most suit with this end.

(1.) By fixing his glory as the last end of all we do. All that we are, do, and have, must be to please and glorify God, and to promote the kingdom of Christ to the uttermost of our power.

(1*st*.) The ultimate and great end of man is to glorify God: 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God;' 1 Peter iv. 11, 'That God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ;' Isa. lxi. 3, 'Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.' This must be the scope which we all propound to ourselves.

(2*d*.) Next to the glory of God is the honour of Christ, by promoting his kingdom; that appeareth by the method of the Lord's prayer, 'Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,' Mat. vi. 9, 10. The glory of God and the interests of Christ's kingdom are nearly conjoined; since the dispensation of grace by a redeemer we cannot separate them. The first means of hallowing God's name is by the coming of Christ's kingdom. If we would have God to be known, loved, and pleased, and honoured in the world, and well pleased in us, then we must pray and aim at this, that the kingdom of grace may be enlarged, and that the kingdom of glory as to the church of the perfectly sanctified

may come, that mankind may more perfectly subject themselves to God and be saved by him. God's glory is more manifested in the kingdom of Christ than in any other of his works; his wisdom, power, and goodness is more seen and acknowledged in Sion than in all the world besides: Ps. lxxvi. 1, 'In Judah is God known, his name is great in Israel.' All God's providences first tend to God's glory, next to the good of his church. In vain therefore do men think they seek the glory of God, except they seek the church's welfare; the lessening, troubling, disordering the kingdom of God is the crossing of his glory; therefore we must do all things, suffer all things for the elect's sake, and to promote the church's welfare. Paul conjoineth these two ends: 2 Cor. v. 13, 'If we be beside ourselves, it is for God; if we be sober, it is for your sakes.' In all postures he still aimed at the glory of God and the good of the church. So must we do anything, suffer anything, though we are accounted fools and madmen for our labours, to promote the kingdom of Christ, and own it with the greatest hazard and loss to ourselves.

(2.) By doing such things as may most suit with this end. Now this concerneth either the matter to be done, or the manner of doing.

(1*st*.) The matter to be done are such things as are most likely to represent God, and bring him into request in the world, and whereby his excellencies may most sensibly appear in us. Now this appeareth by such things as have the nearest affinity to God. For instance, we conceive of God as a holy being, who hath his residence in heaven; therefore that conversation which hath most holiness, godliness, and heavenliness shining forth in it, is most like to glorify God.

(1st.) Most holiness and purity, and that is at the greatest distance from anything that is vile and base; for God is holy, and we should be 'holy in all manner of conversation,' 1 Peter i. 15. God is holiness itself, but we conceive of it best in the things he showeth himself to be holy in; in his laws, which are all holy, just, and good, Ps. cxix. 146. There we have a copy and draught of his holiness; such excellent and pure precepts could come from none but a pure and holy God. He showeth it also by the work of grace on us: Eph. iv. 24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' God hath left an impression on the creature, a nature which delights in that which is good, and is very tender and shy of sin, cannot endure it in ourselves and others: 2 Peter ii. 7, 8, 'Righteous Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; and did vex his righteous soul from day to day, in seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds.' Now he that made the eye, shall not he see? And he that putteth such a holy, clean heart into men, is not he pure and holy? It is evident also by the dispensations of his providence, he loatheth sin and punisheth it: Hab. i. 13, 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil.' If his own people make bold with sin, they smart for it: Prov. xi. 31, 'Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth;' as David and Eli. Well, then, we must resemble God, and bring him into remembrance, when we are pure, holy, abstaining from all appearance of evil; this reviveth the memorial of God in the world.

(2dly.) Godliness, which hath a distinct notion from holiness, as appeareth by 2 Peter iii. 11, 'In all holy conversation and godliness.' The last expression is supposed to add to the former. There is godliness in our conversations as well as holiness, when something divine or godlike appeareth in them; that is, when all our actions have a plain respect to God, they are begun and ended in God; that all our business in the world is either with him or for him; that his divine grace is your principle, his law is the rule you live by, his glory is the end you aim at, and you look for all your reward from his promises, and you are inclined and moved in the whole tenor of your lives by these things, and all things else are made to give place to this, your loyalty to God and fidelity to Christ; you are careful for other things no further than you may please God, and approve yourselves to God: Dan. iii. 16-18, 'O king, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter; our God whom we serve can deliver us,' &c.

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(3dly.) Heavenliness; for God's throne is in heaven; thither Christ will bring us; we look for him to this end: Phil. iii. 20, 21, 'Our conversation is in heaven, whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies,' &c. You verily look to live with Christ. This doth most alarm the consciences of men, who are captivated and mastered by worldly and fleshly lusts, they have a spirit that draweth them downward.

(2*d*.) The manner. It must not be a thing done now and then, but entirely and universally; you must glorify God with all your faculties of mind and body: 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'Glorify God in your body and spirit, which are his.' In all your actions and businesses, civil and sacred: Zech. xiv. 20, 'In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord,' &c. In all estates, living and dying, in pain, and ease, health and sickness: Rom. xiv. 8, 'Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.' Therefore you must keep a constant reckoning, what honour God hath by your lives in every estate, strength, interests, abilities, capacities.

Secondly, We must show how the work of faith fulfilled with power doth thus glorify Christ. I must remember you that the work of faith is twofold—(1.) Either an undaunted and constant profession of his name in the midst of troubles; or (2.) All holy conversation and godliness. Christ is glorified by both.

1. By our patience and constancy under troubles and persecutions. That the meek and patient sufferings of christians do much honour Christ, the scripture everywhere manifesteth: John xxi. 19, 'This he spake, signifying by what death he should glorify God.' Mark, not by what death he should die, but by what death he should glorify God. So Phil. i. 21, 'So Christ be magnified in my body, whether by life or death;' that is, by preaching if I live, or sealing the truth with my blood if I die.

But how is the name of Christ glorified in us by sufferings, according to the former ways mentioned?

[1.] By estimation, which is the internal way of glorifying God. They give him the honour becoming the majesty of his person; they see such an excellency, worth, and all-sufficiency in him, that they count all things but dung and dross, vanity and loss, that they may please him, and be loyal and faithful to him, and may obtain his benefits. Yea, the cross is made valuable for his sake: Phil. iii. 8, 10, 'The fellow ship of his sufferings, and the conformity of his death.' Not only a communion with him in grace and glory, but submitting to the hardest things for his sake; these they prefer and value, and count all things dung and dross for these things.

[2.] They glorify him at the dearest rates, by open confession and praise, while they cannot hold their peace, but must confess and cry up Christ in the world: 2 Cor. iv. 13, 'We having the same spirit of faith, as it is written, I have believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.' As David would profess his hopes when sore afflicted, so they also confess Christ and their faith in him notwithstanding all the afflictions and terrors wherewith they are surrounded. When the spirit of faith cometh on a man, then he is freed from that bashful inconfidence which at other times maketh him shrink and wriggle, and distinguish himself out of his duty; he is rather encouraged and animated by dangers to make a bold and open profession, which is an honour to Christ: Acts iv. 13, 'When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they marvelled at them,' as being elevated beyond the strain of a natural spirit, or their ordinary education: ver. 20, 'We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard;' that is, they could not choose but testify of Christ. Other men may put on a boldness when it is safe, but they did it in the face of danger.

[3.] By deed they glorify Christ many ways. Partly as they set forth the glory of the truth of the gospel, when ready to seal it with their blood, and ready to own it to the death. Partly as they show forth the worth of Christ's promises, and the reality of eternal life held forth therein: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen,' &c. In the face of dangers and threatenings they can freely trust God for the promises of everlasting happiness, and venture their lives upon the hopes of it; they know he can make them happy, when men set themselves against them to make most miserable. They have great reward in heaven, whatever entertainment they find on earth, Mat. v. 12, and dare not accept deliverance on sinful terms. Partly as they discover the power and glory of that internal grace by which they are assisted, 1 Peter iv. 14, and so discover the force and verity of christianity. Lastly, as they advance Christ's kingdom: Rev. xii. 11, 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.' And so Phil. i. 12, 'Our afflictions have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.' The kingdom of Christ gaineth by their saddest sufferings.

Let us apply this before we go any further.

(1.) It showeth us the need of trials. It is needful sometimes it should be seen in the view of men and angels that Christ hath a people that love him better than their own lives, and who will rather endure any misery than deny any part of the truth committed to them. The world will not believe this, and think all is vanity and imposture; therefore it is needful that sometimes there should

be a trial for a testimony to the world. Of perdition if they repent not: Phil. i. 28, ‘Which is an evident token of perdition;’ or for their conviction and conversion.

(2.) The use of trials. Sore troubles are not sent on God’s children in wrath and hatred, to destroy them, nor to condemn their cause, but for the glory and honour of Christ, that he may be glorified in his people: ‘For a spectacle to the world, angels, and men,’ 1 Cor. iv. 9. Like combatants on a theatre.

(3.) The comfort of trials. This should put a lively face on the saddest troubles, even upon a violent death, because God is glorified thereby. It was Christ’s own consolation, John xii. 28, ‘Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name: and there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.’ His desires of his own safety were moderated, and submitted to the conscience of his duty; and he preferreth the honour of God, and seeks to advance it above his own ease; for Christ endeth all his debates with the Father thus, ‘Father, glorify thy name.’ Now certainly all that have the Spirit of Christ will be tender of God’s glory, and account that dearer than any worldly concernment whatsoever.

2. By all holy conversation and godliness. It was Christ’s design, by the doctrine of the gospel to carry on with a high hand the power and practice of godliness; therefore he soweth the field of the world thick with this kind of seed, with doctrines that tend to advance holiness and godliness in the world. The whole genius of the christian religion runneth in this strain, to make men good and holy, and to breed the most excellent and choicest spirits that ever the world was blest with, and that it may be known that the life of faith is the most noble and powerful principle in the world. God would convert the world, or else leave them without excuse; and this he would do, not only by the evidence of christian doctrine, but the holy conversation of his people. The world looketh to actions rather than words, and do not only respect doctrine, but the influence and efficacy of it, what fruits and effects it produceth. The best discourses do but harden men in sin, if not accompanied with a suitable conversation.

Now I will show you, that when these fruits break out, God in Christ is honoured: Mat. v. 16, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven;’ and 1 Peter ii. 12, ‘Having your conversations honest among the gentiles, that they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.’ Their holy walking would bring about the conversion of the unbelieving world, and so bring much glory to God, when he should visit them with his saving grace. So 1 Peter iii. 1, ‘If any obey not the word, they may be won by the conversation of the wise.’

I shall prove two things—(1.) That God is represented to the world, and reverenced in the world, by the lives of christians; (2.) That religion is recommended to the consciences, and made comely in the eyes of men by that means.

[1.] That God is represented, and his divine perfections, by the holy and godly conversations of christians: 1 Peter ii. 9, ‘To show forth the virtues of God, or the praises of God.’ His virtues and praises are his attributes, the chiefest of which are wisdom, power, goodness.

(1.) His wisdom, in the exactness and regularity of their conversations; thereby they show he is wise by whose counsel they are guided: Deut. iv. 6, ‘Keep my statutes, for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations.’ A regular christian is the beautifullest sight that a rational mind can look upon: Eph. v. 15, ‘Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.’ True wisdom consists in accurate walking, as to walk otherwise is extreme folly; they avoid the snares wherewith others are entangled; they have fixed the right end, use the proper means, and pursue it with all earnestness. God hath given them counsel, Ps. xvi., and abounded to them in all wisdom and prudence, Eph. i. 8.

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(2.) For power; for they are sustained by a mighty power: 2 Tim. i. 7, ‘God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.’ He sets forth God’s infinite power, not by a feigned experience, but the power that wrought in them, in converting, quickening, carrying on the work of grace, supporting them under trials, who have the impression of it on their hearts. Yea, their very fear to offend showeth what a terrible God they serve; they dare not run the hazard of his wrath, but choose the greatest evils rather than do the least sin: Deut. xxviii. 58, ‘If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord of hosts.’

(3.) His goodness, moral, beneficial. His moral goodness is his purity and holiness; and a renewed christian is the transcript of it: 1 John iii. 3, ‘Purifieth himself as Christ is pure.’ His beneficial goodness is represented many ways by a christian; by the joy of his faith, that he can delight in God under the greatest pressures: Rom. v. 3, ‘We glory in tribulation.’ The readiness of his obedience; he serves a good master. By his doing good to others: Eph. v. 9, ‘The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness;’ Gal. vi. 10, ‘Let us do good unto all men.’ Goodness is the frame of his heart, doing good is the business of his life; and so he is like God, who is good and doth good.

[2.] By the impression of God’s goodness upon our conversations, religion is made comely, and recommended to the consciences of men: Titus ii. 10, ‘Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.’ Religion is well spoken of for their sakes, whereas men are otherwise prejudiced against it: 1 Tim. vi. 1, ‘That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.’ As if men were the worse livers for being christians, while they neglect moral duties: Titus ii. 5, ‘That the name of God be not blasphemed.’ That christianity may not be thought to infuse anything into them contrary to moral honesty and righteousness.

Use. Since it is so much for the glory of Christ that those who believe in him should constantly adhere to him, and carefully keep his precepts, then it persuadeth them that have embraced this

holy faith and religion of Jesus Christ to glorify him by constancy and patience in their sufferings, and by godliness in their whole life.

1. You otherwise put a disgrace upon Christ's name. The licentious living of professing christians tendeth to the blemish and dishonour of the Lord. Let an ordinary man live in the grossest wickedness, little is spoken of it; but how the Hams will laugh to see a Noah drunk: Rom. ii. 24, 'Through you the name of God is blasphemed.' It openeth the mouth of the wicked to blaspheme God himself. *Sancti essent christiani, si Christus sancte docuisset*—Christians would be holy, if Christ taught what is holy: Ezek. xxxvi. 20, 'Ye have profaned my name among the heathen.' As the priest's daughter, committing fornication, profaned her father's honour, therefore she was to be burned with fire. Nearness of ministration before God aggravateth the sin.

2. Deeds speak louder than words; therefore glorify him not in word only, but deed also. It is the strict conversation that alarmeth the conscience, and summoneth our reverence: Mark vi. 20, 'Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy.' Not only because he was a bold reprover, but for his holy conversation.

3. You justify or condemn the world, either by the works of the flesh, or the work of faith. As Israel is said to justify Sodom, Ezek. xvi. 52, made their sins seem little and excusable; and Noah is said to condemn the world, Heb. xi. 7, not as a preacher of righteousness, but preparing an ark.

Doct. 2. That in promoting the glory of Christ, we do also promote the salvation of our own souls; he is glorified in us, and we shall be glorified in him.

1. Christ taketh special notice of those that glorify him in the world. If we be factors for his kingdom upon earth, he is our agent and advocate in heaven, and giveth a good report of us there: John xvii. 10, 'Father, I am glorified in them.' Oh! it is a blessed thing when our advocate can thus plead for us, and speak well of us behind our backs.

2. God hath promised this glory: 1 Sam. ii. 30, 'Those that honour me I will honour.' God may put marks of favour upon them in this world, but our glorious estate is reserved for hereafter.

3. We may expect it and look for it. Christ, who would mortify us to all other glory, doth allow us to seek the glory which cometh from God only, John v. 44; the first is our sin, but the other our duty. The heirs of promise are described, Rom. ii. 7, to be 'them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for honour, and glory, and immortality.'

Use. Let us carry it so that Christ may be glorified in us. You shall not need to seek another paymaster, nor ask with Peter, 'What shall we have therefore?' Mat. xix. 28; for our glory is secured by promise if we seek his glory. Make this your great care, to glorify Christ. It is not enough to take care negatively, that he be not dishonoured by you, but actually, that he be honoured and glorified, and that in all states and conditions, businesses and employments. Some live unprofitably

in the world, and do nothing else but eat, drink, play, and sleep; they wholly live to their carnal delights. What are these good for, and to what end have they reason and consciences? Surely these are more like brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, than reasonable creatures. Others are convinced that they should live to Christ, and do now and then look after him in some rare cases, but are not so subdued by grace that this should be the ruling principle in their hearts, so as to be able to say, 'To me to live is Christ,' Phil. i. 21. To rouse you up—

1. God will have his glory upon you, if not from you. He is resolved to be no loser by the creation of man, whom he hath created for himself. If he have not the glory due to his name, he will right himself in the course of his providence: Lev. x. 3, 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.' Now it is a miserable thing to be made objects of his vindictive justice; better serve him, and please him, and receive the fruits of his rewarding grace.

2. We shall be called to an account, what we have done with our time, and talents, and interests, and opportunities, Luke xix. 23. The Lord will come, and require his own with usury; what honour he hath by our gifts and graces, estate and esteem, power and interest in the world, by our service and relations; how we have glorified him as magistrates, ministers, parents, masters, husbands, wives, children, servants. Beasts are liable to no account, because they have no reason and conscience, they are ruled by a rod of iron, and directed to glorify God passively; but we have reason and choice. What will you answer when God rises up to the judgment? Job xxxi. 14. Will this be an answer?—I spent my time in serving my lusts. Oh, dreadful will the account of careless souls be at that day!

SERMON XV.

That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.—2 THES. i. 12.

DOCT. 2. That in promoting the glory of Christ, we do also promote our own salvation; for if he be glorified in us, we shall be glorified in him.

The point may be represented to you in these considerations—

1. God hath appointed this order, that we should first glorify him before he glorifieth us; and there is much wisdom and righteousness in the appointment, for otherwise two great inconveniences would follow—

[1.] It would greatly redound to God's dishonour if he should glorify those that do not glorify him, and make no difference between the godly and the wicked, those that break his laws, and those

that keep them. If both should fare alike, it would eclipse the glory of God's righteous government. Who would think well of that magistrate that would not only connive at evil-doers, but reward them? Wherefore is sin forbidden under so great a penalty, if God never meant to execute it, and would promiscuously make all happy, whether they regard their Creator's glory, yea or no. It is said, Prov. xvi. 4, 'God hath made all things for himself, and the wicked for the day of evil.' Some good interpreters suppose it should be rather translated, 'wrought' than 'made;' for it relateth not to the creation, but to his providential government. God hath wrought all for himself, that is, for his honour and glory; namely, that in all his works, his wisdom, power, goodness, justice, and holiness, might clearly appear. And so the wicked is made or wrought for the day of evil; that is, appointed to punishment; as Job xxi. 30, 'The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction.' They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

[2.] The other inconvenience which would follow is, if those that glorify God should not be rewarded by him, they should be losers by Christ, and their religion would make them miserable: 1 Cor. xv. 19, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' Now Christ would never proselyte us to the faith to our loss; if in this life we should hope in Christ, and endure all extremities for that hope, without any fruit and effect of it hereafter, it would follow that christians were the most unhappy persons in the world. Now this is absurd, to think that the best, the wisest, the most innocent of men, should be the most miserable and calamitous. Virtue is called good, because it shall be well with those that follow it; and sin evil, because it brings evil upon the sinful. You will say, They have spiritual good, the comfort of a good conscience for the present, though no other happiness should ensue. I answer—This comfort of a good conscience ariseth from a sense of God's approbation, or our acceptance with him, else they would never voluntarily restrain themselves from so many things pleasing to the flesh, which others freely hunt after, or endure such bitter sufferings, or at least run the hazard of them, from which other men are or may be free. And it is not the present approbation only, but our future acceptance to glory, which supports us under these tribulations: Rom. v. 2, 'We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.' Certainly a creature can never acquiesce or rest satisfied in a state of misery, but groaneth and looketh out for a better.

2. God hath not only appointed that we should glorify him before lie glorify us, but that we should glorify him on earth before he glorifieth us in heaven, because God expecteth glory from his creatures in what state soever they are. Our duty to the Creator ceaseth not. If he place us at the lower end of the world, we must glorify him there; if he translate us to the upper end, we must also glorify him there. And we have Christ for an example: John xvii. 4, 5, 'I have glorified thee upon earth; now Father, glorify me with thyself.' We would all be glorified in heaven, but few think of glorifying Christ upon earth; here is our work, there we receive our reward. Our work we do upon earth, but we must tarry for our reward till we come to heaven; and indeed this is the trial of our sincerity, to glorify him upon earth; in heaven we glorify Christ without opposition or interruption. *Esse bonum facile est, ubi quod vetat esse remotum est.* It is easy to be good where that which hindereth is removed; but our sincerity is tried by glorifying him now upon earth.

[1.] Where so few mind this work; and so it maketh a distinction between us and the rest of the world: Phil. ii. 21, 'All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's;' that is, their own interests, their own honour, their own profit, their own personal contentment. Now a christian should walk in counter-motion to the generality of the world, and be an exceptive to the common use and corrupt practice of mankind: 'To me to live is Christ,' Phil. i. 21. His time, his strength, his all is Christ's; his care and business is, that Christ may be glorified in him.

[2.] On earth, where we have so many difficulties and temptations to divert us. The saints in heaven glorify God, but without any difficulty, strife, and danger. It costs us no shame, no pain, no trouble, no loss of life and limb; but there where the danger is, there is the duty and trial: Mat. x. 3, 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father in heaven.' Christ will remember them and their labour of love, and how they exposed themselves to sorrows and sufferings for his sake; it is fond to think of glorifying God in heaven, and singing hallelujahs to his praise, when thou dost not stand to his truth upon earth. It is easy to be good when we have no let or impediment, or temptation to the contrary.

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3. Christ taketh special notice of those that glorify him in the world, and it is one of his pleas for his disciples, John xvii. 10, 'Father, I am glorified in them.' He is an advocate in heaven for those that are factors for his kingdom upon earth, which is a great comfort to all those that sincerely set themselves to promote the glory of God and the good of the church. The more our endeavours are to glorify God and Christ, the more confident we may be of Christ's mediation for us, that he is negotiating our cause in heaven, and giving a good report of us there, or speaking well of us behind our backs. To have Christ's good word is more than the commendation of all the world.

But of whom will Christ say, 'I am glorified in them'?

I answer—Christ is glorified either in his person, or office, or doctrine, or operations. In his person, when he is owned and depended upon as the Son of God: John xvii. 8, 'They have known surely that I came out from thee.' Then presently it is added, 'I am glorified in them.' So John xvi. 27, 'The Father loveth you, because you have loved me, and believed that I came out from God.' His office; many have a fond esteem of his name and memory, but neglect his office, do not come to God by him: John xiv. 13, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will give it you, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' When we seriously make use of his mediation, Christ saith, 'I am glorified in them.' His doctrine, when that is believed and practised, it is a glorifying of the word and a glorifying of Christ: Acts xiii. 48, 'When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord.' When pardon of sins and salvation by Christ is received with joy and ready submission to his terms, it is a glorifying Christ, or a blessing God for this glorious mercy revealed by him. The law is good, 1 Tim. i. 8, but the gospel glorious. Those that heartily receive the gospel have more glorious thoughts of God and Christ, his blood and Spirit. Lastly, his operations; these are accomplished by his Spirit: John xvi. 14, 'He shall receive of mine, and glorify me.' All that the Spirit doeth, he doeth it as the Spirit of Christ, and to this end, that Christ may be glorified;

that, as a spirit of illumination, or a spirit of sanctification, as a spirit of fortitude, light, life, or love, he still inclineth to glorify Christ.

4. This glory is promised. A full reward abideth for those that live unto God, and in all things regard his glory: 1 Sam. ii. 30, 'Those that honour me I will honour.' God may put marks of favour upon them in the world; that is likely, but not certain; but their glorious estate is certainly reserved for them in the other world: John xii. 26, 'If any man serve me, him will my Father honour;' that is, abundantly reward, for an ample reward is called an honour. So Rom. viii. 7, 'If so be that we suffer with him, we shall be glorified together.' Still we fare as Christ fared; so that in the issue, self-denial is the truest self-seeking. You need not look out for another paymaster, or say, with Peter, 'We have left all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?' Mat. xix. 28. We reckon much upon our petty losses or services, but you need not murmur; Christ will glorify you if you glorify him. And oh, how admirable is that glory which Christ bestoweth upon us! and how different from that glory which we allow and afford to him! what is our drop to his ocean? Christ giveth glory to us really and inwardly, but we give glory to Christ declaratively only, either by word or deed. His glorifying is creative and effective, ours is but declarative; he calleth the things that are not as though they were, we do no more than call things to be what they are, and far below what they are; we are but a kind of witnesses to God's glory, but he is an efficient to our glory; he bestoweth upon us what was not before, and the glory he bestoweth upon us answereth the greatness of his being; as an infinite and eternal power, he giveth us an infinite and far more exceeding weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17, and so his gift doth answer to his nature.

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5. The suitableness between our work and reward, his being glorified in us, and our being glorified in him; not only as there is a representative glory for glory, but as Christ is glorified in us when we are glorified in him. Partly objectively, because this impression of honour and glory upon us doth redound to his glory. Christ is glorified in doing so much for his people, and making them such perfect, blessed, and glorious creatures: 2 Thes. i. 10, 'When he shall come to be glorified in his saints/ Partly actively, because one great part of our happiness is, that we love, and laud, and praise him; so that we go to heaven to perform that triumphantly which here we perform self-denyingly. This is our glory, that we behold Christ's glory, John xvii. 24, that we do more reverence and delight in him, as glorious and excellent. We know him more, for we see his face; and we love him and praise him more, because he communicateth himself to us in a greater latitude than now we are capable of. Did we but seriously consider how much of heaven consists in admiring of, and delighting in, the person and love of the Redeemer, we should be more convinced of the near connection between his being glorified in us, and our being glorified in him, and how fitly the one follows upon the other.

6. We may expect this glory, certainly, lawfully.

[1.] With certainty and confidence: 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me,' &c. All the former arguments prove that; the first was taken from God's general justice, which requireth

that those that differ in their course should have a different reward, shame or glory; that they that honour God should be honoured, and they that despise him should be lightly esteemed, 1 Sam. ii. 23; for God will do nothing contrary to order or necessity. The second was taken from the order or necessary precedency of work before wages, and striving before crowning, or suffering before reigning: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' And if the one go before, the other will follow after. The third was taken from the inspection of Christ, who taketh exact notice of every man's work, whether they oppose or advance his kingdom: Rev. ii. 2, 'I know thy works, thy labour, and thy patience.' And Christ knoweth it to reward it. The fourth from the promise, which assureth it to us; and we may certainly depend on God's promise. 'Hath he spoken, and will he not fulfil it?' The last is taken from the suitableness. The instruments of God's glory are also objects of his grace, both in this world and the next; thus they are but translated to another place, to continue the same work. They are worthy, Rev. iii. 4, they were not defiled, therefore they shall walk in white, &c. All these are grounds of confidence.

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[2.] We may lawfully and without blame expect it.

(1.) Without danger of insincerity. Christ, who would mortify us to all other glory, doth allow us and require us to seek the glory that cometh of God only: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh of God only?' To hunt after glory with men is our sin; but to seek the glory which cometh of God is our duty. Ambitious affectation of worldly honour destroyeth faith, but the pursuit of glory and blessedness to come feedeth it; so that we are allowed to wait for the honour of eternal exaltation. The difference between the godly and the carnal is not that the one seek honour and glory, and the other not. No; they both seek honour and glory, but the one seek it in vain things which pervert and taint their souls, the other in solid and substantial blessedness, which ennobleth them, and possesseth them with a divine spirit. So the heirs of promise are described to be those that 'seek for glory, honour, and immortality, by patient continuance in well doing,' Rom. ii. 7. They seek it from God, and they seek it in the way of their duty. *Media movent bonitate finis*—The means move by the goodness of the end.

(2.) Without danger of presumption; for they do not seek it as the fruit of their own merit, but as the gift of God's grace and covenant. That your hearts may be kept right in this matter, I shall show you that though Christ be never so much glorified in us, yet we merit not that we should be glorified in him.

(1*st*.) Because Christ is the Lord of glory, James ii. 1, 1 Cor. ii. 8, the fountain of all glory and honour, and so needeth nothing from his creature, but only doth condescend to take glory from his people; and therefore, when we have done and suffered never so much for him, we are but unprofitable servants: Luke xvii. 10, 'We have done but our duty.' The fountain receiveth nothing, needeth nothing from the stream, but the stream oweth all to the fountain. The elders, Rev. iv. 10, did cast their crowns at the Lamb's feet,' to express their humility, as unworthy to wear a crown

in his presence, and to express their gratitude, for hereby they profess they have and hold all from him; he must alone have the glory.

(2*d*.) Because that grace whereby we glorify him is given us of Christ; and so he doth but crown his own gifts in us: John xvii. 22, 'And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them.' What glory is that? Not the essential glory of his person as God, for that glory he will not give to another, Isa. xlii. 8; nor the glory of his office as mediator, for we are not made redeemers and saviours; nor the glory of apostleship and ministry, for that is not given to all believers; but the sanctification of our nature by the grace of his Spirit; for as Christ was sanctified and anointed by the Holy Ghost, so are we. And this is called glory, because it is the glorious image of God; this is the glory we lost in Adam, Rom. iii. 23, and which is restored to us by Christ: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.' This is the grace which ennobleth and perfecteth our natures, and enableth us to act and suffer gloriously. Now this grace, being wholly given us by Christ, we merit not.

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(3*d*.) Because of the imperfection that cleaveth to our best services and actions. We show forth too much of Adam, and too little of Jesus; and in all our best duties there is much of man to be found, but little of Christ; therefore if he should reckon with us, and call us to an account for what is amiss, who could abide it? Ps. cxxx. 3. There is not a man to be found who hath not some fault and failing. I might add the disproportion between our glorifying of him and his glorifying us, but of that I spake before; therefore here is no room for pride and the presumption of merit.

Use 1. To inform us that we should not be troubled at the reproach and shame we meet with in glorifying Christ; besides that everything which relateth to Christ hath an honour put upon it for its relation to him. It is said of Moses, Heb. xi. 26, 'Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' The people of God were most reproachfully afflicted and oppressed in Egypt. Christ was ever the head of the church, and therefore he calleth it, 'the reproach of Christ,' though little of Christ were manifested then. Besides this, the final reward of eternal glory doth abundantly recompense all our sufferings for Christ, be they never so disgraceful. Certainly if we weigh these things in a true balance, the reproach of Christ and the recompense of reward, we should put a high price and value upon the reproach of Christ, rather than disdain at it. If the cross giveth us a title to the crown, self-denial is a good bargain.

Use 2. To press you to make this your great care, to glorify Christ. It is not enough, negatively, that he be not dishonoured by you; but, positively, that he be honoured and glorified. And here—(1.) Let me state your work; (2.) Prescribe means; (3.) Quicken you by a few motives.

1. Let me state your work—(1.) Fix your end and intention; (2.) Use fit means; (3.) By these means earnestly pursue it.

[1.] Fix your end and intention, which is, to glorify God in Christ. Till the end be fixed, we do but shoot at rovers, and live at peradventure and haphazard; it is our end must fix our minds, which otherwise will be tossed up and down in a perpetual uncertainty, and be distracted by a multiplicity of objects and desires, that it cannot continue in any composed and settled frame. David beggeth this grace of God: Ps. lxxxvi. 11, 'Unite my heart to fear thy name.' And the apostle telleth us, James i. 8, that 'a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.' A divided mind breedeth an uncertain life; not one part of our lives will agree with another, because the whole is not firmly knit by the power of some last end, running through all. Most men's lives are but a mere lottery, because they do not fix their scope, never minding in good earnest why they came into the world. The fancies they are governed by are jumbled together by chance; if right, it is but a good hit, a casual thing; 'they live by chance, therefore no wonder if they walk at random, since they have not proposed any certain scope and aim to themselves. Rouse up thyself then, and consider the end for which you were created and sent into the world. Our Lord saith, John xviii. 37, 'For this cause was I born, for this end was I sent into the world.' So should every one consider, For what end was I born and sent into the world? what is my errand and business here? Will you once sit down, and ask in good earnest, for what purpose you came into the world? Certainly God hath made nothing in vain, but hath assigned to every creature its own use and operation. If you were made for nothing, you have nothing to do in the world but to furnish and fill up the number of things, as stones and rubbish do; or is it merely to grow in stature, as life was given to the plants, to grow bulky and increase in length and breadth? To what end is it to eat and drink, to play and sleep, and melt away our time and strength in ease and sensual delights? This is to play the beasts, for it is their happiness to enjoy pleasures without remorse. God gave man those higher faculties of reason and conscience to some higher use than to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. It was well said of a heathen, *Si essem luscinia*, &c.—If I were a nightingale, I would sing as a nightingale; if I were a lark, I would peer as a lark; but since I am a man, I will glorify God as a man, and praise him without ceasing. But you are born a christian, within the pale of the visible covenant; and what is your end but to come to God by Christ, to glorify him, and to be glorified with him? Fix that steadily and sincerely, and this end will shine to you in all your way, and direct you what you should do, and how you should live; stick at nothing, though never so troublesome to the flesh: Phil. iii. 11, 'If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.'

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[2.] Choose apt means, or rather submit to what God hath chosen for you; for he hath given you his word to direct you, and his Spirit to assist you. His word is your rule, and his Spirit is your guide. His word is your rule: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk by this rule, peace be on them.' And his Spirit is your guide: Rom. viii. 14, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.' That the word may be plain to you, he giveth you prophets and apostles to write scripture, and pastors and teachers to explain and apply scripture, Eph. iv. 11. If you will often consult scripture with a mind to practise it, you will find it a plain rule to direct you in all cases, and upon all occasions: Ps. cxix. 105, 'Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path;' John vii. 17, 'If

any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine,' &c. In necessaries God will not be wanting to you; and if you despise not God's helps, but attend with good conscience on the ministry, truth will be kept lively upon your hearts; for preachers are appointed to 'warn every man, and teach every man, and present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,' Col. i. 28; to warn them of their snares and dangers, and teach them or instruct them in their duties, and to help them to perfection, that they may be fit to be presented unto God, as objects qualified and capable of his glory. More especially the matter, comprising all the means, are faith in Christ and new obedience; which is entered into by repentance, and continued in by perseverance. This is a short delineation of the means.

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[3.] For dexterous and earnest prosecution. You must be exactly true and faithful to your great end, which is to glorify God in Christ. The last end must be *principium universalissimum*; it should have a universal influence upon us, and be minded and regarded in all our desires, purposes, actions, and enjoyments; for God's glory must be at the utmost end of every business. If it be impertinent to our great end, it is frivolous, and of no use; and you wander if you fill up your lives with these things. If it be inconsistent with your great end, it is naught and wicked; then you quite turn your back upon your end. For instance—

(1.) In your desires. If you desire any benefit or blessing, increase of power or estate, it must be to honour God with it: James iv. 3, 'Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.' When they desired increase of estate, to satisfy their covetous minds, or pride, and sensuality. Agur measureth every estate of life by ends of religion: Prov. xxx. 8, 9, 'Remove far from me vanity and lies, give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.' Yea, spiritual things must be desired in order to God's glory: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.'

(2.) Our purposes, especially in weighty cases, as the disposing of ourselves, and the choosing our condition of life. As the apostle saith, 2 Cor. i. 17, 'The things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh?' that is, am I swayed by carnal motives? Many think and speak of living to God, because they now and then perform, some devout acts; they lightly and rashly resolve in weighty cases, and dispose of themselves without asking God's leave, counsel, or blessing, or considering whether it may conduce to his glory, or be an impediment and hindrance to it, whereby they get a wound to their consciences, and a snare from whence they cannot disentangle themselves all their lives long; but it proveth a grievous cross to them, if God should yet keep alive any seriousness in them.

(3.) Actions, civil, sacred: Zech. xiv. 20, 21, all the utensils and vessels must have God's impression, whether they belong to the temple or city. In a king's palace there are many officers, but all serve the king; so in a christian's life there are many duties of several kinds, but all must

have an aspect upon and tendency to the glory of God; we must mind it in the shop as well as in the closet, in the family, in the assembly, at home, abroad. So—

(4.) For enjoyments, comforts, recreations; we must value them more or less as they conduce to the glory of God. In everything I must ask, 'What doeth it?' Eccles. iii. 2. How doth it contribute to my great end, to fit me for God?

(5.) Relations. Every one is accountable to God for that state of life wherein God hath set him; as there is no member in the body but hath its function and use, whereby it becometh serviceable to the whole. All have not the same office, that would make confusion; but all have their use, either as an eye, or as a hand, or as a foot, vein, sinew, artery; so every one hath some relation which they are to improve to the glory of God and the good of others. The Mediator hath his work, and he giveth his account to God: John xvii. 4, 'I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' The minister hath his work, and he is to 'watch as one that is to give an account,' Heb. xiii. 17. The magistrate hath his work: Rom. xiii. 4, 'He is the minister of God for good.' The courtier hath his work: Neh. i. 11, 'Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man; for I was the king's cup-bearer.' The master and parent, the wife, the children, the servants, have all their work, and may glorify God in their place; so that from the highest to the meanest christian, all should be at work for God.

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(5.) You must observe and keep a constant reckoning how you glorify God in Christ. What have I done in pursuit of my great end? Com paring our way with our end and rule is the way to awaken us: Ps. cxix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies.' Alas! many rise, and eat, and drink, and sleep, and trade, and die, and there is all that can be said of them; little have they served God, and done any good in their generation. Consider frequently and seriously, what is it that my soul doth principally aim at in all that I do? For whom are you at work? For whom are you speaking and spending your time? To whose use do you employ your souls and bodies, your time, estate, labours, and cares? What is it sets you a-work, and doth most sway with you? What do I live for? What is thy end in all these things? Christ said, 'I seek not mine own glory, but the glory of him that sent me,' John viii. 50. To whom should we live but to him from whom and by whom we live?

(6.) Consider what cause we have to bless God for Jesus Christ and the great mercies of our redemption. Our love is but the reflex of God's love, the beating back of his beam upon himself, because he loved us in Christ. He showed love to us in creation, when we started out of nothing into the life and being of men; but more love in redemption, when his Son came to die for us, Rom. v. 8; 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is Jove, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' This astonishing instance of his love should mightily excite us to a zeal for his glory and a delight in his service, yea, to part with and leave all for his sake, and to give up ourselves wholly to him, Rom. x.

2. The means to help us.

[1.] The new nature is requisite, that we may in all things mind God's glory. The obligation is upon all men, the inclination only in the regenerate. It is more easy to convince us of our obligation to live to God than to get a heart and disposition to live to God; but the new creature, that is created after God, bendeth and tendeth towards him. While we are carnal, we live to ourselves and seek ourselves: Hosea x. 1, 'Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.' But when God giveth another heart, our end is changed; we are 'created again in Christ Jesus,' Eph. ii. 10. But to what purpose and end had we this being, but to be to the praise of the glory of his grace? Eph. i, 12. Why was so much mercy showed to us, our persons reconciled, our natures changed, but that we might glorify God, and admire his grace, and live answerably to his love, in a thankful obedience to his precepts, and promote his kingdom and interests in the world to the utmost of our power?

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[2.] Love to God is the immediate root and principle of this sincere aim at the glory of God in all that we do: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him who died for them, and rose again.' Self-love devoteth all to self, to our own honour, and profit, and pleasure; but love God sincerely, and then his honour will be dearer to you than your own interests. Now should we not love God, who hath made himself so amiable to us in Christ?

[3.] Think often of God's interest in you, and what a full right he hath to all that we have, are, and can do. Every one must have his own: 'Give to Caesar the things which are Caesar's,' &c. God hath a full right and power to possess, dispose, and use the creature at his own pleasure; therefore we that are the Lord's should live and act for the Lord. It is often pressed: 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's;' Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 'None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord.' It is meet God should be served with his own, and therefore we must resign up ourselves to the will, use, and service of our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier: Rom. xi. 36, 'Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' As we must deduce all things from God as their first cause, so we must reduce all things to him as their last end, and devote all our time and strength to his service, use, and honour.

3. Motives.

[1.] God will have his glory upon you, if not from you. If he have not the glory due to his name, he will right himself in the course of his providence: Lev. x. 3, 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified;' by them, or upon them. Now it is a

miserable thing to be made objects of the glory of his vindictive justice; better actively glorify him, that we may receive the fruits of his rewarding grace.

[2.] We shall be called to an account what we have done with our time, talents, interests, and opportunities, Luke xix. 23; what honour he hath by our gifts, graces, estates, esteem, power and interest in the world. I beseech you consider beforehand what will you answer him when he shall rise up to the judgment? Job xxxi. 14. Will this be an answer, that you spent your time in pleasing the flesh, in serving and gratifying your lusts, that you were drowned in worldly cares, and had no leisure to glorify God or mind his kingdom? As if an ambassador sent abroad to serve his king and country, should only return this account of his negotiation, that he was busied in courtships, or spent his time in plays; or a factor, that he hath wasted his money in entertainments, that was to be employed in traffic. Oh, what a dreadful account will poor souls make who have either done nothing, or nothing to purpose, or that which is worse than nothing!

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[3.] How comfortable it will be at death when you have minded your business, and made it your work to live to God! when you can say, as our Lord, John xvii. 4, 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;' or, as Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness;' or as Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 3, 4 Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' Usually when men lie a-dying, they bewail their loss of time, neglect of God, and omission of their great work. It is better to be prepared than surprised, gaming and sporting away that precious time which should have been spent to the glory of God.

SERMON XVI.

That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.—2 THES. i. 12.

DOCT. That our complete salvation, from the first step to the last period, doth merely flow from the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Let me first possess you of the full sense of the point.

First, Observe, the goodness of God to us is called grace. By grace is meant God's free favour. There are several names by which the Lord's goodness is expressed—love, benignity, mankindness, mercy, grace. Love showeth God's self-inclination to do good; benignity or bounty, his beneficial goodness, or actual doing good. Mankindness: Titus iii. 4, 'After that the kindness and love of God

our Saviour towards man appeared,' φιλανθρωπία. The restoration and recovery was prepared for man, and offered to man, not to fallen angels. But the usual expressions are mercy and grace. Mercy noteth his goodness to mankind, notwithstanding their misery; grace, is doing good freely and without desert. This grace of God is the first cause and fountain of all good. God's external motive is our misery; his internal is his own grace. Mercy respects us, as we are in ourselves worthy of condemnation; grace as compared with others, who have not received the like favour. If the question be, why we are accepted unto life and salvation, who are so sinful and miserable? I answer—Mercy. But if the question be, why we, and not they who perish in their sins? I answer—Grace. The good angels, that never sinned, are not saved out of mercy, for they were never miserable; but out of grace, which doth all things gratis freely. There is no merit on the creature's part, but we are saved out of mercy and grace too. That the world of the ungodly are damned is due desert; that any are saved, it is mere grace and favour. The notion of mercy is of great use to prevent despair, which may befall the sinning creature. So is also the notion of grace to prevent carnal confidence, or glorying in ourselves, which is very incident to us. Mercy it is called, that broken-hearted creatures, who are sensible of their great misery, may not be cut off from all hope; grace, that no flesh may glory in itself, Eph. ii. 9; for from first to last, in the whole business of our salvation, we hear of nothing but grace. Election is called the election of grace, Rom. xi. 5. Calling is of grace: 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace.' Then election breaketh out in time, and becometh actual grace. Sanctification is of grace: Eph. ii. 5, 'When we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ; by grace ye are saved.' Justification is by grace: Rom. iii. 24, 'Justified freely by his grace,' δωρεὰν, and τῇ αὐτοῦ χὰριτι. 'Freely,' to note the readiness of his inclination; and 'by his grace,' to exclude the merit of our works; that is, by the mere grace of God, not excited by any worth or deserving of ours, but working of its own accord. And finally, we are glorified by grace, 'for it is the grace of God which bringeth salvation to us,' Titus ii. 11.

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Secondly, Observe, grace is ascribed both to God and Christ. To God the Father, as the giver; and to Jesus Christ, as the meritorious procurer of it. Whatsoever God bestoweth upon us by his grace, he doeth it by Jesus Christ: 1 Cor. viii. 6, 'To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' All is from God, and by Christ, and for God, and through Christ. If you consider the goodness of God, as it is issued from him in a way of creation, nothing was made without him: John i. 3, 'Without him nothing was made that was made.' If it were thus in a way of nature, it is much more so in a way of grace. Whatever gift we have cometh to us by Jesus Christ. Sometimes these kind of blessings are said to come from him, and sometimes by him. From him, to show that he is not only a mediator to procure, but a God to act: John xiv. 13, 14, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it for you.' These expressions show him to be God, and the author of grace, as well as mediator. But most usually we are said to receive these blessings by him and through him; as Titus iii. 6, 'The

renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed on us abundantly through Christ Jesus our Lord.' the reason is, because fallen man cannot converse with God without a mediator. Two things hinder our commerce with him—distance, and difference; distance by reason of imparity, and difference by reason of enmity.

1. Distance. God is a god of glorious majesty, and we are poor despicable creatures, unworthy of immediate access to him, unless one that is more near and dear to him than we are intercede for us. God is out of the reach of our commerce, till he cometh nearer, and is made more accessible to us in Jesus Christ, who is God-man in one person: John i. 14, 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;' 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh.' Otherwise how could we address ourselves with any confidence to one so far above us?

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2. Difference. God is angry, and man is guilty; therefore our conscience representeth him as terrible to us. He is a consuming fire, and we are as stubble fully dry; and 'Who among us can dwell with devouring burnings?' Isa. xxxiii. 14. Of ourselves we cannot approach an offended majesty in any friendly manner, and expect mercy from him; therefore Christ interposeth as a propitiation for our sins, 1 John ii. 2, that he may satisfy God's provoked justice, and thereupon he may become propitious to us. Though God be merciful, and inclined to pardon and bless; yet he is just also, and some expiation must be made to demonstrate his purest holiness and hatred of sin, and that he may not suffer his just and holy laws to be trampled under foot. Therefore Christ must stand in the sinner's stead: 2 Cor. v. 21, 'Become sin for us,' &c.; that is, a sin-offering, or a sacrifice of propitiation, that his mercy may the more freely and abundantly flow forth to us.

Thirdly, Observe, that in the context there are causes, means, and ends mentioned.

1. The causes are the pleasure of God's goodness, and his divine power. Now one of the causes is the same with grace; the other, his power, is set a-work by grace, to effect and bring about our salvation. The one (grace) is *principium imperans*; power, *principium esequens*. So that the spring and rise of all is in the pleasure of his goodness, or of his grace, as will appear by this consideration. If you ask why so much wisdom and power was set a-work to effect so great a work for us, here is the reason or answer at hand—Because of his love, good will, or grace. But if you ask again why he loved us at such a rate, no reason can be given of that, but that he loved us, or such was his grace towards us; we can go no higher: Mat. xi. 26, 'Father, so it seemed good in thy sight.'

2. Come we to the means. They are of two sorts—(1.) Impetration; (2.) Application.

[1.] Impetration. Christ's death is not mentioned in the former verse indeed, but plainly implied in the text: 'The grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.' And therein his grace appeareth to us, partly because grace appointed the Son of God to die for us: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,' &c. God loved lost mankind so that he sent his Son to suffer, and do the office of a mediator, that through his mediation he might communicate his love

to us in a way agreeable, to his justice. His love was antecedent to his giving Christ, and the cause of it. Secondly, it was grace that Christ undertook it. His life was not forced from him by man, but voluntarily laid down by himself: John xvi. 18, 'No man taketh my life from me, but I have power to lay it down of myself, and take it up again.' And though he did it in obedience to his Father, yet that doth not diminish his love and grace, because he so freely offered himself to this work. Sometimes Christ's death is made an act of obedience: Rom. v. 19, 'By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;' Phil. ii. 7, 'He took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient to death.' Sometimes an act of love: Gal. ii. 20, 'The life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;' Rev. i. 5, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood.' So, thirdly, it was grace, in that what he did and suffered was accepted in our name: Rom. iii. 24, 25, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;' Job xxxiii. 24, 'Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.' When the ram was taken, Isaac was let go. We were in the hands of our judge, ready for our execution; but he accepted a ransom instead of us, and so we were dismissed from punishment.

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[2.] For the means of application. Three are mentioned—(1.) Calling; (2.) Faith; (3.) Work of faith.

(1.) For calling, it is a mere act of God's grace: 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began.' That is, not that we had deserved this mercy, but out of his free goodness designed to us in Christ, long before it took effect. His own grace only moved God, as is plain if we consider the estate wherein calling found us, sinful and wicked, sense less of our misery, and careless of our remedy; the estate in which he left us; from enemies, we became friends; from strangers, we became domestics and children of his family; from carnal and unholy, we became spiritual and sanctified. Or lastly, the estate into which he will bring us, to eternal happiness; and all this passing by thousands and ten thousands, who, for their deserts, were all as good as we, and for outward respects far better than ourselves.

(2.) For faith, it is the gift of God to us: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' It was the mere undeserved mercy of God that gave us this grace of believing. The very means of faith is a mere free gift, the matter of the gospel being no way to be known but by divine revelation. It was grace that he sent the gospel to us; his working faith in you being an act of God's free will, and merciful pleasure; for where the gospel is sent, all do not embrace it: Acts xvii. 3, 4, 'Some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas: but the Jews which believed not, moved with envy,' &c. For if you had heard of Christ never so much, could you ever have believed that the carpenter's son was the Son of God, and he that was persecuted to the death was the Lord of life and glory; that they that are dead shall live, the body dissolved

into dust, and that dust mingled with other dust? Could you believe this without faith? Could you ever have brought your own mind to quit all things you see and love, for a God and glory you never saw; and closed with these supernatural and spiritual truths with so much disadvantage and loss to yourselves, without God's powerful, internal illumination, and be willing to row against the stream of flesh and blood for a happiness that lieth in another world? Think of these things, and tell me who worketh faith.

(3.) The work of faith. It is accomplished in you by the grace of God, which hath enabled such unworthy wretches to perform that obedience which may be accepted with him: Heb. xiii. 21, 'The God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.' It is God that doth incline and prepare our hearts for all christian duties, and enable and excite us to do what is acceptable and pleasing to him; without the sanctifying grace of God none of this can be done. Look, what preservation and providence is to creation, so is this perfecting to regeneration. As we are created in Christ to good works, so we are perfected in Christ. Unless he work in us and with us, and that of his own good pleasure, we can do nothing, Phil. ii. 12, 13. Still we depend upon God, as for the power given and continued to us, so for the working itself; both will and deed are from him, and he causeth us actually to do whatever we do, and this mercy we obtain of God by Christ.

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3. The ends, that Christ may be glorified in us, and we in him.

[1.] All the glory Christ hath from his people, or communicateth to them, is from grace: Rom. viii. 36, 'Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.' And therefore we must not sacrilegiously rob him of the glory of his grace, in whole or in part. More particularly—

(1.) It is from grace that he is glorified in us by the work of faith. Take it either for constant and patient suffering; it is a special gift that merely cometh from the Lord's grace: Phil. i. 29, 'To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.' God of his goodness hath vouchsafed you this favour, not only to believe in Christ, but to suffer for him. It is beyond the power of natural strength to suffer christianly; all things necessary thereunto are given us by grace, they are purchased to our hand by Christ, and freely given us by God, which should encourage the most cowardly and dastardly. God will not be wanting to you, if you will own the truth which you believe.

(2.) For the work of christian obedience, whereby Christ is glorified, it still cometh from the influence of grace: Phil. i. 11, 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the praise and glory of God.' All those works of godliness, charity, and righteousness, which are commanded in the gospel, are done by God's grace, to his praise and glory. The work must be done by strength from Christ, as well as for the honour of God.

[2.] As we are glorified in him. Our glorious estate in heaven is the fruit of his grace: Rom. vi. 23, 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life,' χάρισμα θεοῦ. Sin deserveth hell by a proper merit, therefore death is called wages; but all that we suffer doth not deserve glory, therefore eternal life is not called ὀψωνία, wages; nay, it is called[8] μίσθος, the reward; not δῶρον, but χάρισμα, Vulgar, *gratia Dei*, the freest, richest gift. If in any sort it might be merited or deserved, the apostle questionless would have said it is ὀψωνία, wages, or at least μίσθος; but because reward includeth *rationem dati*, some thing given, not always a reward of mere bounty, he doth not say, the reward of God, &c., not δῶρον, a gift of kindness, for one kindness may deserve another; but it is χάρισμα, the most undeserved gift that can be given; a word incompatible with all conceit of merit. But not to insist on words only, what is the reason of the difference, that one should be merit, the other grace? Herein they agree, that the one as well as the other is the fruit of men's several ways; but herein they differ, God doth never punish men above or beyond their desert, but he rewardeth them, not only far above, but altogether with out any desert, merely of his grace, rewarding his gifts in them.

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II. To prove the point to you, I will do it by these two considerations—

1. That deserveth most to be taken notice of which is most eminent and conspicuous in any work. If an artificer showeth you any curious piece of workmanship, he expecteth to be praised, not for his riches, but his skill; a wrestler, not for his beauty, but his strength; a king in his royal gifts, not for his wisdom, but magnificence; and a judge, not for the comeliness of his person, but his justice. To commend a man that is sick for his abstinence is a ridiculous commendation; it is much more proper to commend him for his patience. A painter would take himself affronted if you should commend his work for the richness of the clothes, and not the art or good painting. Every one expecteth his proper praise, and such as belongeth to the work represented to your view. So God hath acquainted us with a glorious design for man's good, and a curious frame of counsels exactly laid together; and all over interwoven with grace, that you cannot consider it but presently grace occurreth to your view and observation. The apostle telleth us, Rom. v. 8, 'That he commendeth his love to us in our redemption by Christ.' When he sent his. Son to die for a sinful world, he laid a curious draught of love and grace before your eyes. So Eph. i. 6, 'He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, to the praise of his glorious grace.' His work towards his people is so carried on, that not only free grace begins it, but the further it goeth on, grace still is further manifested and magnified, and more to be seen at the very close of it than at the beginning; so that we may be still crying out, Grace, grace. This is the glory that he expecteth from you, for this is most eminent and conspicuous in the whole work of our salvation; and therefore what is our duty, but to praise, admire, and esteem this glorious grace, and to manifest our value of it in the whole course and tenor of our

[8] Qu. 'not called'?—ED.

lives? Men and angels cannot consider or look into it, but they see matter of praise and thanksgiving for his rich and free grace.

2. Because salvation is so contrived and stated that there could be no other cause but his grace, whether you consider God or the creature.

[1.] God. His glorious excellences show that nothing but his grace could incline him to do good to the creatures. I shall single out a few.

(1.) His self-sufficiency. He stood in no need of us, having an in finite contentment and happiness in himself, to which we cannot make any addition; for infiniteness cannot be increased, and if it could, how by us who are so far beneath God? Job xxxv. 6-8, 'Look unto the heavens, and see, and behold the clouds which are higher than thou. If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man;' but what is it to God, who is above our benefits and injuries? Our sins, like darts or arrows shot up into the air, fall upon our own heads; and our duties, like incense, may refresh the standers-by; but this sweet cloud vanisheth before it can reach heaven, or is gone out of our sight. Man cannot reach the most high God, either with his good or evil. Among men one hath need of another. The world is upheld, as the stones in an arch, by a combination of interests; the head cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee. The prince needeth the peasant, as the peasant needeth the prince; but God hath no need of us, who hath such infinite satisfaction in himself. He is ἀνενδεὴς, 'He is not worshipped with men's hands, as if he needed anything that man can do,' Acts xvii. 25. We need his blessing, but he doth not need our service to support his being and dignity. When Christ was in the state of humiliation, he was subject to wants as we are. When they loosed the foal, they were to answer, 'The Lord hath need of him,' Mat. xxi. 3. But surely God needeth not the being of man or angel, else why did he not make the world sooner, that he might be sooner happy? therefore nothing but love and grace could engage him to take this way to bring about our supreme and final happiness.

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(2.) His liberty, freedom, and power over his own actions, by reason of his sovereign and independent will; therefore, if he will show mercy to sinners, what inclineth him but the pleasure of his goodness and most free grace? If God did not what he did for us out of grace, it must be out of necessity of nature, or from some superior command and law; but neither of these can be supposed in God.

(1*st*.) Not by necessity of nature, as fire burneth or water floweth; it can do no otherwise. It was the error of Aristotle to say that the first cause acted out of servile necessity, and that he must needs do what he doth. This conceit is a blasphemy, and lessens our obligations to God. No; God is a free agent, who 'worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will,' Eph. i. 11; that is, according to his most wise and free purpose. Being sovereign lord of all his actions, he might have left us remediless in everlasting misery; but according to his own heart, he hath done us good. The salvation

of sinners is *opus liberi consilii*, the work of free choice; he might have done or not done it, but grace cast the scales.

(2*ly*.) Not any external law; for who can be above God, to prescribe him such a law? Man is a subordinate creature; his duty is measured out to him by a rule, and he must give an account; but God is supreme, his will is his rule; he loveth because he loveth, and doth all because it pleaseth him.

(3.) His supremacy and majesty, as he is the first cause of all things: Rom. xi. 35, 'Who hath first given to him? and it shall be given to him again.' The apostle challengeth all the world to come and enter their action against God. If they can plead any debt or obligation they have laid upon him, he undertaketh that man shall be satisfied. No; they can never prove it; therefore he cutteth off all pretence by an argument: 'All things are of him, and through him, and to him.' The cause oweth nothing to the effect, but the effect all to the cause. Now God is the supreme cause of all things, both in nature and grace. The sea hath nothing from the rivers, though they all return thither; but the rivers all from the sea, Or the fountain oweth nothing to the stream, but the stream all to the fountain. The sun oweth nothing to the beam, but the beam hath its whole being from the sun. God is not indebted to us for our holiness and righteousness, but we owe all to him, for we have all from him: Job xli. 11, 'Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him?' Men have a conceit upon their hearts, as if God were obliged to them some way or other, and bound to requite them. No, God was never prevented by a good turn, that might put him in debt to his creatures. Thus you see it is more for the honour of God that our salvation all along should be carried as a free gift. Acts of free grace are more for the honour of superiors than acts of debt and duty. He is aforehand with us, and beginneth with us, and not we with him; for that which is highest in order of being must be highest also in order of working. All cometh from his grace and bounty to us.

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[2.] The creature.

(1.) Their estate. There was no worth in us to move him, or good that he could foresee in us or expect from us, but what was the fruit of his own grace. In our natural condition we were the cursed off spring of sinful Adam, unworthy and polluted creatures, who had sold ourselves to Satan, and cast away the mercies of our creation; and when we were wallowing in our blood and filthiness, then he said to us, 'Live,' Ezek. xvi. 6. We had lost the image and favour of God, were banished out of his presence, sentenced to death, ready for execution. Then came Christ to work salvation for us, and restore our estate; and God called us with an holy calling when we were altogether senseless and careless, did not so much as sue to God for any mercy; then he sought us out, and effectually tendered his grace to us. After conversion, all we do is a due debt to God: Luke xvii. 10, 'When ye have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done but what was our duty to do.' There is a sinful defect in all we do: Isa. lxiv. 6, 'We are all an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' So that still it is grace. We deserve nothing, unless it be condemnation.

(2.) It is most for their benefit to recover their hearts from the flesh and the world to God. Nothing is more apt to gain upon us, and to beget love in us, than the wonders of grace: 1 John iv. 19, ‘We love him, because he first loved us.’ This is the most taking, congruous way, to prevail on the hearts of men. But of this more anon.

Use 1. Information.

1. That the merit of Christ is consistent enough with the grace of God; for the merit of Christ is a part of this grace, therefore they are conjoined in the text. And the merit of the Redeemer is the most convenient means and way to bring about the effects of it: Rom. iii. 24, ‘Ye are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.’ How freely, when not without so great a price and satisfaction? It is free to us, but dear to him. It is the greater ground of confidence to us when our salvation standeth on a bottom of merit as well as of grace. Our privileges were dear bought, and therefore more likely to stand. So that it doth not derogate from the grace of God, but much amplify and enlarge it. For Christ by his merit and intercession hath satisfied divine justice, which put in a bar against us, and doth acquire unto us all those things which love and mercy hath prepared for us: Isa. liii. 5, ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.’

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2. That grace doth not exclude faith, repentance, nor new obedience, or good works; for here is faith, and the work of faith, &c: Eph. ii. 8, ‘By grace ye are saved, through faith.’ Grace bringeth about our salvation in this way and order. Though neither faith, nor repentance, nor good works, have a causal influence in our salvation, much less are con-causes with the grace of God and Jesus Christ, yet God taketh this method and way. Principal causes do not exclude necessary means, but comprise them. Therefore do not set grace against grace, and say, God will save you by his grace, and therefore we need not take care to repent, or believe, or obey the gospel, and that, if we be predestinated, we shall be saved, whatever we do or howsoever we live. No; there is required of us first a serious entrance into the gospel covenant, and afterwards a strict obedience to Christ’s laws; otherwise we make Christ an encourager of sin, or, as the apostle phraseth it, a ‘Minister of sin,’ Gal. ii. 17; and you pretend grace for your carnal security and sloth.

3. That Christ is to be eyed so in the communications of grace that we forget not the Father; but we ought to see the fulness and rich good-will of the Father, in what Christ giveth: ‘The grace of our God,’ in the text. In the whole dispensation of grace the Father’s honour must be secured and reserved. God is still the fountain of grace. Christ came to evidence his Father’s love: John iii. 16, ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;’ 2 Cor. v. 19, ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;’ Rom. viii. 32, ‘He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?’ To represent the amiableness of the divine nature; and therefore we must not look upon him as harsh, inexorable, and severe. On the other side, we must not so look to the mercy of God as to overlook

the merit and intercession of Christ. The Father's love preventeth us, Christ's intercession maketh way for us.

Use 2. Direction, both for prayer and praise. From God, as supreme, we derive all our graces; to God, as supreme, we direct all our services, but still in and by the Mediator.

1. In prayer, we ground our hope of audience on the Father's love and Christ's intercession. We put up our suits in his name. There is no speaking to God, or hoping for anything from God, but by Christ: 'But through him we come boldly,' Heb. iv. 16. It is by this beloved hand that we present our petitions to God.

2. Praise. Every mercy we receive from God must be taken out of the hands of Christ; we must look upon it as procured by his death, and as swimming to us in his blood, as the fruit of his mediatory dispensation: Eph. i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' All blessings come perfumed with his hand. Paul giveth thanks to Christ: 1 Tim. i. 12, 'I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me.' It is the grace of our Lord that is exceeding abundant in me.

Use 3. Exhortation.

1. To admire grace. Let grace appear glorious, and be more magnified in our hearts, by every saving mercy which we receive. This was God's great end in saving the elect, that he might have the praise of his glorious grace. This is beneficial to us. You are strangers to God if you do not continually admire grace. This is the daily feast of a gracious soul; by this means we come to taste of the joy of the saints, and live like the redeemed of the Lord. Yea, this doth most powerfully draw in the hearts of sinners to God. Consider how this grace deserveth our most lively thoughts and affections.

[1.] It is an ancient grace: Eph. i. 4, 'He hath chosen us in Christ before the foundations of the world.' It prevented all actual and foreseen worth in those that were elected.

[2.] It is a free grace: Hosea xiv. 4, 'I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely.' In what a pitiful state were we by nature! Rom. v. 20, 'The law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,' ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν did over over-bound: 1 Tim. i. 13, 'Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecuter, and injurious; but I obtained mercy,' ἠλεήθην.

[3.] It is a powerful grace to pardon so many sins, and accept us to so great a blessedness: John xii. 32, 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.' What can stand before the face of this love?

[4.] It is a liberal grace: Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly;' Ps. xxxi. 19, 'Oh,

how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!'

[5.] It is a glorious grace: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace.' So glorious that no created understanding can conceive it: Eph. iii. 19, 'And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' No tongue can express it.

2. Let the grace of God lead you to repentance, Rom. ii. 4. God is gracious, but not to those that continue in their sins, without any change or conversion: Ps. lxviii. 21, 'He will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.' Grace giveth hope, justice giveth only what is due, and considereth not who needeth, but who deserveth; but we may use the church's plea, Hosea xiv. 2, 'Receive us graciously.' It is dangerous to stand out against grace: 2 Cor. vi. 4, 'We beseech you receive not this grace in vain;' to neglect God's offers. In point of gratitude, wonders of grace should melt our hearts, and be as coals of fire on our heads, Hosea iii. 5. Can we offend so good a God? Oh, be not so disingenuous! Cheerfully serve so good a master, where grace sup plieth all to you.

3. Do not wrong grace, to quiet and strengthen you in your sin, or to embolden you to disobey Christ. Vain people will say, We need not make so much ado about heaven; mercy and grace will save us: Jude 4, 'There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,' μετατιθέντες. You wrest it from its proper use. This is to make grace our enemy, when we make a dung-cart of it, only to carry away our filth; like riotous children, presuming on their father's estate and goodness; you debauch it to a vile use.

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4. Be thankful for grace. The whole design of salvation by Christ bespeaketh gratitude. That we by the grace of God should be put into a capacity of life eternal, what should be the whole business of our lives but a thankful obedience to God? 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.'

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SERMON UPON MATTHEW XXII. 14.

For many are called, but few are chosen.—MAT. xxii. 14.

THESE words contain the reason of the different manner of receiving the gospel-offer of Christ and his benefits. The reason is, because the election of grace is not commensurate or of equal extent

with the gospel-offer, as appeareth by the foregoing parable. Many were invited, but some refused to come to the marriage-supper, and slighted and contemned the invitation out of an affection to worldly things; others, for a pretence and cover, do not flatly deny, but make excuse; *non vacat*, no leisure, is their plea; *non placet*, no mind, is their meaning. At length some came, but not all with a wedding-garment; that is, they professed to receive the gospel, but did not walk worthy of it. Here is a plain difference, some refuse, some come, and among those that come, some disgrace the marriage rather than honour it, which is another difference. What is the reason of this variety of success? I answer—Nothing else but the secret and victorious power of God's grace maketh the difference; but whence cometh it that it overcometh some men's obstinacy, and the strength of their sensual inclination, but prevaileth not over others? Because all the invited are not chosen and predestinated to the fruit of God's elective love: 'For many are called, but few are chosen.'

In the words take notice—

1. Of two different sorts of persons; some are 'called 'and others 'elected.'

2. The proportion that each sort bears to others, 'many,' 'few.'

3. The particle that connects the observation with the foregoing parable, 'for.'

Now, for the first, it should seem they are of a like extent: Rom. viii. 30, 'Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified.' But we must distinguish of a two fold calling—

1. External and ineffectual. They are called with an outward and common calling; as the guests were invited to the feast, who either came not, or came not in a prepared manner; for calling is an invitation to Christ.

2. Calling is put for effectual calling, when God powerfully pursueth his eternal purpose; a calling, κατὰ προθέσιν, according to purpose: Rom. viii. 28, 'And we know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' And so it is of the same extent with election: 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' These are not only called outwardly by the preaching of the gospel, but inwardly by the effectual working of his Spirit, according as it pleased and seemed good to God from everlasting to decree within himself concerning us.

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Secondly, For the number and proportion, 'Few are chosen.' There seemeth to be a doubt about the word 'few,' since they are a multitude that none can number; few not in themselves, for when they are all gathered together, they make a great congregation of righteous ones: Ps. i. 5, 'Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.' But comparatively in regard of the multitude of those that perish in their sins; some are without the

pale, as whole droves of nations spilt upon the great common of the world, that do not own Christ, and are not gathered into his fold, and within the pale. There are few penitent and sincere believers, who are fit to partake of the gospel-feast; they indeed come, but not with a wedding-garment, do not adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour with a holy conversation, flowing from faith in Christ and love to God.

Thirdly, The causal particle is to be observed, '*For* many are called but few are chosen.' This is rendered as a reason of the foregoing difference; it is the Lord's mercy to call both, but his singular mercy to elect any. They that are only called and act not worthily, bear the just punishment of their neglect and contempt; they that obey the call must not ascribe it to themselves, but to the grace of God, who giveth them the Spirit, and faith; and the first rise of this grace that cometh to us is in election.

Doct. The reason why any miss of the grace of the gospel is long of themselves; and why others receive it in a more worthy manner, is the mere discriminating grace of God.

I shall handle this point in these considerations—

1. Since all men sinned in Adam, and are guilty of the curse and eternal death, God had done us no injury if he had left us to perish in this estate. That all the world are become guilty before God, both by reason of original and actual sin, is plain: Rom. iii. 19, 23, 'What thing soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.' They are ὑπόδικοι τῷ Θεῷ, 'guilty before God;' that is, in a damnable estate, and obnoxious to the righteous judgment of God; and ver. 23, 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God;' that is, his glorious image. Thus all men being found sinners, are justly punishable by God, and therefore God had done us no wrong if he had left us as he found us; as the angels that sinned were not redeemed: Heb. ii. 16, 'For he took not on him the nature of angels,' οὐκ ἐπιλαμβάνεται; he laid not hold of the angels; 2 Peter ii. 4, 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.' He might have rejected the one as well as the other, and thrown off the whole race of mankind presently upon their disobedience, as he did the evil angels; but the benefit that was denied to angels was given to man, for God would not wholly lose his creation of them.

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2. This was the great love of God, that he provided a redeemer and saviour for us, that whosoever would believe on him should be ever lastingly happy: John iii. 16, 'For God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' 1 John iv. 9, 10, 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.' Thus was God's unspeakable love expressed to mankind, that he provided so costly a remedy for us as his eternal Son to assume our nature, and die for our sins, that he might offer pardon and life to us upon

gracious and commodious terms; namely, the thankful acceptance of this blessed saviour to the ends for which God sent him. His sparing us showeth that we are not secluded from all possibility and hopes of recovery; that we are not *in termino*, put into our final estate presently upon our sin, as the fallen angels were; this is some comfortable intimation and probable hope to us; but his providing a remedy and ransom for us, the benefit of which shall redound to us as soon as we repent and believe the gospel, this is much more an eminent manifestation of his love. It greatly importeth our comfort and benefit to know God loveth us, and we are poring and prying here and there to find arguments and tokens of his love: oh, that I could know that God loveth me! But we overlook the signal demonstration and manifestation of it, and so, as it were, seek the sun with a candle, while we look to particular tokens and signs, and do not take notice of this great evidence of God's love, that Jesus Christ was sent of God to accomplish man's salvation, to work it into our thoughts.

[1.] Consider who sendeth, or gave him. God sent him and gave him. The law which condemneth us is the law of God; the wrath and punishment which we fear is the wrath of God; the glory and blessedness which we expect is the glory of God; the presence into which we come when we make prayers for any mercy and grace to help us is the presence of God. Whose favour is it that we seek, but the favour of God? Now God gave his Son, and sent his Son to recover us; he laid this office and burden upon Christ.

[2.] The person who was sent, Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son: Rom. viii. 32, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' He would not trust an angel with this charge, but sent his Son to bring about the everlasting purpose of his grace concerning our recovery. God sent his people several messengers, but at last sent his Son. This should awaken us: 'Surely they will reverence my Son.'

[3.] The end why he sent him. First, with respect to Christ, to be 'a propitiation for our sins,' 1 John iv. 10; that God might show himself placable and propitious to mankind, his justice, holiness, and hatred of sin being sufficiently demonstrated in the sufferings of Christ, and so hath found out such a way for our good as is fully consistent with his own honour and glory. Secondly, with respect to us, to what we are to enjoy: 1 John iv. 9, 'That we might live through him.' This life is opposite to the death incurred by sin, and by it is meant that whole estate of grace to which we are restored by Christ, and chiefly our blessed and eternal life in heaven. We were in an estate of death when the doors of mercy were first opened to us; we were dead as to the sentence of the law, dead as disabled for the service of the Creator, and from both excluded from the state of the blessed, and liable to eternal death. Now Christ came that we might not perish, but have everlasting life through him; now they are worthy to perish for ever who love death rather than life, as all do that for base lusts and paltry vanities hazard their own salvation.

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[4.] The way how all this is applied to us is by faith: 'That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,' John iii. 16; and John vi. 29, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' This is the great duty which God requireth of us, faith in

this Saviour that is given, that we should own and receive him to be what he is, and to do what God hath sent him to do, trusting ourselves entirely on the merit of his sacrifice and intercession, and taking the way that he prescribeth, that we may be ever lastingly happy.

3. To bring about this faith in Christ crucified, he sendeth messengers with these glad tidings where he will, and to whom he will; for God is a free benefactor, and may do with his own as he lists. The dispensation of means as to the event is governed by God's providence; the general grant is, 'Go, preach the gospel to every creature,' Mark xvi. 16. That joyful news is to be published to all nations, that believers shall be saved. No sorts of people are secluded out of our commission; how else can they believe? Rom. x. 14, 15, 'How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?' Believing is not possible without hearing, and hear they cannot except they be preached unto, and that cannot be till God find preachers for them, fitting them with gifts, and furnishing them with abilities, and opening in the course of his providence a way for them. This is that which is represented in this parable, by sending forth his servants to bid his guests to the marriage. Now it is a great mercy and favour vouchsafed to us that we have a call, or are allowed the means of salvation: Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is the word of this salvation sent;' not brought, but sent. The journeys of the apostles were guided and directed by the Spirit, as well as their doctrine. It is a message from God; and hereby they are left without excuse, who have the way to heaven laid open to them in the gospel, and will not walk therein.

4. The gospel, where it is sent, prevaileth not on all alike; some believe, and others are hardened: Acts xvii. 4, 5, 'And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. But the Jews who believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city in an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.' Some believe it with a lively, others with a dead faith, live not answerably thereunto. Certain it is all have not the faith of God's elect. They that believe not this gospel, the wrath of God abideth on them; but those that receive it with a true and lively faith are freed from the wrath to come and eternal destruction, and have pardon of sins and eternal life bestowed on them: John iii. 36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' He that giveth up himself to Christ to be saved and governed by him is in a course that will at length bring him to all felicity eternally; but, on the contrary, he that neglecteth or despiseth the offers of grace is inevitably under the wrath of God due to him for his former sins, and the more due for this additional great transgression, slighting the methods of God for his recovery. Well, then, there is a difference. Now the cause of this difference must be inquired into. Therefore I shall prove two things—

(1.) Those that believe not, or receive not the gospel in a more worthy manner, the reason of their unbelief is not in God, but in themselves.

(2.) Those that believe with a true and lively faith have it not from themselves, but from God, and that by virtue of his election. And so in both these instances is that of the prophet verified: Hosea xiii. 9, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.' That God vouchsafeth this benefit to any, it is grace; for all others who are passed by, there is a concomitant unworthiness, which is justly chargeable upon themselves, and leaveth no blemish on God's counsels and decrees.

First, That it is long of themselves that any miss of the grace of the gospel.

1. They have a like favour in the outward means and offers as the elect have; for both are called, as in the text. God offereth them mercy, not as elect, but as sinners and miserable. Now, when God hath set open the door to sinners, and tendered them mercy when they deserved misery, and so brings home life to their own doors, and leaves it merely to the acceptance or refusal of their wills, surely the call should prevail with them more than it doth. They have the same favour with the elect; it is the same God, the same heaven, the same Christ, and the same promise that is set before all. Is not Christ and life offered to you as well as them? Now the very offer should be a comfortable intimation to us. It was taken as a ground of hope to the blind man that Christ would heal him: 'Arise, be of good comfort, he calleth thee,' Mark x. 49. God by calling offereth a remedy, which, if we neglect and despise, who is in fault? It is our own blame, and will be our condemnation: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' God by his call bringeth salvation to our doors, leaving it at our choice, and we will not accept of it; what is this but obstinacy and rebellious contempt? If we had never heard of Christ, nor by such a lively dispensation as might awaken our thoughts, it were then another matter; but when light shineth round about us, and would fain break in, and we shut our hearts against it because of those poor inconsiderable pleasures we find in it sin, is obstinate infatuation.

2. God's call is earnestly and affectionately managed, by warning, teaching, and persuading: 2 Cor. v. 20, 'We pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God;' Col. i. 28, 'Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.' When God giveth such skill and will, such compassion and diligence to his messengers, should it not be noted? They warn of danger, teach, and mind of duty. God's call is so affectionate, that it is compared to the clucking of a hen, Mat. xxiii. 37. Now what would you have God to do? To force you by his absolute constraining power, and, whether you will or no, drive you out of your flesh-pleasing course? Consider how unbeseeming it is to the wisdom of God that men should be holy by necessity, and not by choice; then goodness would be a natural, not a moral perfection, as burning is to fire; and it were no more praiseworthy to mind heavenly things than it is for a spark to fly upwards, or to be humble and lowly in spirit than for a stone to move downward. Therefore when God doth entreat and importune you to accept of his grace, what would you more?

3. Besides the call, there are certain means appointed by God in order to their salvation, which certainly they are bound to use, otherwise their omission were not their sin. Now, if they will not apply their minds to meet with God in his appointed means, the fault is their own, and so their punishment just. Certainly it is the duty of carnal men diligently to hear the word; and God justly forsaketh them if they refuse this help: Acts xiii. 46, 'Since ye put away the word of God from you, ye judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life;' that is, become unworthy and incapable of receiving benefit by the gospel, and that in the conviction of their own consciences. God justly forsaketh them that part with him at the outer door, and shut out the light of the word, and will not hear what is for their eternal comfort and benefit. Certainly it is the duty of carnal men to desire, ask, seek God's regenerating grace. If it be not worth the asking, it is worth nothing: Mat. vii. 8, 'For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.' Surely this is the way of obtaining, viz., by prayer with constancy and importunity for what is necessary for us. Now, if men will not ask, why should God give? Certainly it is the duty of carnal men to avoid impediments; not to strengthen their chain, and make their clog more sore and heavy, and make their conversion more difficult; as it is, the more you are biased by a sinful inclination, and suffer it to grow upon you. Either vainglory: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' Or voluptuous living: Luke viii. 14, 'And that which fell among thorns are they, who, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and the pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.' Or by worldly cares and desires: 1 John ii. 15, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Now if they gratify what they should crucify, and indulge these corruptions, and feed them rather than mortify them, where must or where will the blame of them lie, on God or men? On themselves, who will not 'frame their doings to turn to the Lord,' Hosea v. 4. They do not put themselves in a way to bridle and retrench their lusts. Further, they are to consider their ways: Ps. cxix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies;' Lam. iii. 40, 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord;' that is, say, What am I? what have I been doing all this time? what shall become of me to alt eternity? Now if men will not ask themselves, What have I done? how can they fret and murmur against the Lord, when they are plainly careless creatures, and will not mind the great business of man kind.

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4. Besides outward means, there is much common grace to help them nearer to the state of salvation; for we are told there are some that are 'not far from the kingdom of God,' Mark xii. 34; that have a good degree of the knowledge of religion, and some kind of liking and affection towards it; that, besides the outward means, have much common grace given them to do much better than they do. To most that live within the hearing of the gospel, there are vouchsafed the strivings of the Spirit, as appeareth by these texts: Gen. vi. 3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man;' Acts vii. 51, 'Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye.' They have this common grace to prepare them for further good; but this gracious benefit they turn to their own destruction,

for often it doth but kindle their rage, while they are convinced of a way which they have no mind to. Others have a further degree of common grace; they are not cut at heart, as Stephen's hearers, but pricked at heart, Acts ii. 37; they have knowledge of God's will, the sense of sin, fear of punishment, thoughts of deliverance, some hope of pardon. Now, did you improve the grace of this help and common work as far as you can, it were another mat ter; when men do not that which common grace enableth them to do, nor take the advantage when the waters are stirred, and therefore their condemnation is the more just, it is long of themselves.

5. Their pleas against God are altogether vain. Solomon telleth us Prov. xix. 3, 'The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.' Man draweth on his own destruction, and then murmureth as if the fault and blame were in God; therefore the plea and false conceit by which man impeacheth God may be reduced to these two heads—(1.) Want of power; (2.) Hope of success or acceptance.

[1.] They cannot plead want of power; for man as man hath great advantages, much more as assisted by common grace. For—

(1.) Man as man hath reason to understand much of good and evil: Rom. ii. 14, 'For when the gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not a law, are a law to themselves.' And one that liketh not to leave his lusts for Christ may know so much of the wisdom and happiness of those that consent to do it, as to wish that he had a better heart, that he might not be damned: Rom. ii. 18, 'And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent; being instructed out of the law;' Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.'

(2.) Man hath a conscience to accuse or excuse: Rom. ii. 15, 'Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.' Conscience is applicative reason, and so such a one is self-condemned.

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(3.) Man hath self-love, and a desire of felicity, and an unwillingness of misery, and a fear of wrath: Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death; 'Ps. iv. 6, 'Who will show us any good?' Man hath misery and necessity to move him: God worketh on it: Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?' So the apostle worketh on a common principle: 1 Peter iii. 10 'For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.' Now, if you will not act as a creature in misery, or a creature that desireth happiness, you do that which is unmanly.

(4.) Death is at hand, which will convince us of our foolish choice, the feet of our judge are even at the door. Therefore, though the unbeliever may secure his conscience while he liveth, yet when he hath had all the pleasure that sin can afford, he must lie down in the dust, and then what becometh of his carnal happiness?

(5.) By common grace he is convinced that there is a happiness, and that our happiness lieth not in those things wherein men ordinarily seek it, but in God alone; that there is no coming to God but by Christ; that all men have some means and duty appointed them to seek that grace that may convert them, and many convictions of sin and motions to excite them thereunto: Prov. i. 23, 'Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you.' Now if men be unwilling to use the means as they are able, to hear, read, pray, and meditate, or what should affect them, unwilling to receive the inward motions of the Spirit, which should convince and turn them from their sins, if they do not only smother and oppose reason and conscience, but resist and quench the Spirit, and, on the contrary, eagerly turn their thoughts and affections after vanity, now see if their plea be just against God.

[2.] Want of success and acceptance. If they do all that they can, will God give them grace? I answer—

(1.) It is a stated rule that God forsaketh none but those that forsake him first: 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, 'If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever;' 2 Chron. xv. 2, 'The Lord is with you while you be with him; and if you seek him, he will be found of you; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.' Those whom he deserteth he forsaketh not, and ceaseth not to promote them in the true way of conversion, till he is forsaken by them, or they become guilty of the voluntary neglect and refusal of his initial grace.

(2.) They have many hopeful encouragements, though no certain infallible promise: Luke xi. 13, 'Yqur heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him;' Lam. iii. 25, 'The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.' Christ allegeth proverbs: Mark iv. 24, 'Take heed what you hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again; and unto you that hear shall more be given.' Certainly the serious use of means is not in vain, nor is the performer like to lose his labour. These scriptures, if they contain not a promise, yet they show the usual practice of the Lord's grace; there is sufficient encouragement to use the means.

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6. The plain next causes are conspicuous and evident, and they are three—

[1.] Depraved habits of soul: John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' There are nothing but base lusts which detain them from a hearty acceptance of pardon and life by Christ; so man is the more condemnable, that for paltry vanities he turneth the back upon this grace.

[2.] Voluntary neglect and sloth; they are idle and carnally secure: Mat. xxv. 28, He was a naughty servant that hid his talent in a napkin. Negligence in a matter of such importance is contempt or despising God and his grace.

[3.] Enmity and averseness from heavenly and holy things: John iii. 20, 'For every one that doeth evil hateth the light.' We have an instance: 1 Kings xxii. 8, 'The king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is one Micaiah, the son of Imlah, by whom ye may inquire of the Lord; but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.'

Secondly, If any receive it, it is the mere discriminating grace of God: 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'Who maketh thee to differ?' The discriminating or differencing of men equally guilty is wholly to be ascribed to the Lord's grace. The elect were not better nor more worthy than others, but equally involved in the common guilt and misery, but the Lord made the difference. This will appear if we consider—

1. That none of themselves can repent, believe, and obey the gospel. The understanding is dark, and must be illuminated; the will is carnal and unholy, and must be turned from the world and the flesh to God, 1 Cor. ii. 14, Rom. viii. 7. A man that is disposed to a fleshly, worldly mind and life, hath no disposition to love God above all, and to believe in Christ, and repent of sin, and live a life of holiness. An enemy of God cannot love him above all, nor he whose heart is set[9] upon him live a holy life; but such is man in his natural estate: Col. i. 21, 'And you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.' A sensual man cannot seek eternal happiness, but such are we: 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off.' Therefore there is no way to cure our enmity and pravity without grace, nor to heal them without the Spirit of God, who were so corrupt as that they could neither understand nor receive the gospel.

2. The elect do not so behave themselves but that for their negligence and resistance they might justly be forsaken of God; but God dealeth not equally with all that are of equal merit: 'We ourselves were sometimes disobedient,' Titus iii. 3; Eph. ii. 3, 'Among whom we had our conversation in times past, fulfilling the wills of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as others.'

3. That faith in Christ Jesus, and salvation by him, is the mere gift of God: Eph. ii. 8, 'For by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.' The Lord might have justly left us without calling or changing us, and we could not change nor turn ourselves: Phil. i. 29, 'For unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.' So that God's grace is the chief cause why we differ from ourselves and others.

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9 Qu. 'not set'?—ED.

4. That this grace is given to some and not to others, floweth from God's eternal decree: 'Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.' Acts xv. 18; Eph. i. 11, 'Who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.'

5. This eternal decree is a free election, or the mere good pleasure of God, giving faith to some and not to others: Acts xiii. 48, 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' Christ traced it no higher: Mat. xi. 26, 'Even so, Father, because it pleased thee;' Rom. ix. 11, 4 For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.' The children had not done good or evil, whereby they might be differenced from one another, that the purpose of God, or his gracious decree of choosing some in Christ might stand; so that his electing grace is the chief cause why we differ from others in faith and godliness; he gave us that good whereby we differ from them. The purpose of God goeth before his calling, and freely layeth the foundation of it; it is not an approbation following, but a foregoing operative election. Men may give an approbation following, that know not what may come hereafter, but God calleth us to the grace he hath provided for us.

Use 1. To press us to make our calling and election sure: 2 Peter i. 10. We are all called, but are we effectually called with a calling that floweth from election? Now we cannot see the certainty of our election till we believe with a true, firm, and lively faith in Christ Jesus: 1 Thes. i. 4, 5, 'Knowing, brethren, your election of God; for our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.'

2. Love God fervently: 1 Cor. viii. 3, 'If any man love God, the same is known of him.' The ardency of our love is a sure sign of our election: 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.'

3. Filial fear of God: Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.'

4. Till we obey him carefully: Eph. i. 4, 'According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.'

5. Mourning for sin after a godly sort: Zech. xii. 10, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son.'

6. A hungering and thirsting after righteousness: Mat. v. 6, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.'

7. Purifying ourselves yet more and more: 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as Christ is pure.' Many think the doctrine of election destroyeth these things. No; it begetteth them. Did you ever know what love, and thankfulness, and delight in God and holiness is? What doth feed them but God's free love in Christ?

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Use. Get your hearts affected with this free love and grace of God.

1. Here we see all God's blessings in their first rise, fountain, and bosom-cause, which is the eternal elective love and grace of God.

This was that set all the wheels a-going. The efficient cause of all this difference between us and others is God, the meritorious cause is Christ, the powerful agent is the Spirit, that softeneth the hard hearts of the elect, and inclineth them to believe in Christ and love God. But what moved all? His purpose of grace, which is brought to pass for us, imparted to us immediately for Christ, in Christ, and by Christ: 2 Tim. i. 9, 'According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' And Christ hath procured the Spirit to cause them effectually and infallibly to believe, repent, and obey: 1 Peter i. 2, 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.'

2. Here we see the rich preparations of grace, and the disposal of all those means which conduce to our good, both natural and spiritual, both of education, acquaintance, relation, and everything else that might work for us; to order all these circumstances of our lives, when we knew not, nor thought of any such matter. Then for spiritual helps: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14, 'We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the Lord Jesus Christ.' It was for a while shut up in the will of God, but then it exerted itself to bring about the good intended to us; there we see the distinguishing love of God. Election is not a taking of all, but some, passing by others; all are not called: John xiv. 22, 'Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world?' Surely not effectually called: 1 Cor. i. 29, 'Not many mighty, not many noble are called.' Not those of highest abilities and esteem with men: Mat. xi. 25, 'Father, I thank thee that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent.'

3. Here we see his preventing love, which excludes all boasting or glorying in ourselves: Eph. ii. 9, 'Not of works, lest any man should boast.' It is not in the men themselves, but in the free grace and love of God, who hath given his first elective love, without all actual or foreseen worthiness in us.

4. We see his personal love to us in particular: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me;' Eph. i. 13, 'In whom after ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.'

5. This is that love which is the ground of our solid comfort in all conditions: Luke x. 20, 'Rejoice that your names are written in heaven;' and whereby all things are sanctified to us, and we to God: Rom. viii. 28, 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, and are called according to purpose.' And it is an ever lasting love: Ps. ciii. 17, 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him.'

SERMON UPON MARK VII. 37.

He hath done all things well.—MARK vii. 37.

THIS is the attestation of the people to Christ's miracles. He forbad the publication of them, because he would not too openly discover himself till the resurrection; but they were surprised with such wonder and astonishment, that they could not hold their peace. If they admire and praise, Christ forbidding them, surely we should admire and praise, Christ commanding us. That which is spoken of the miracles of Christ is true of all his actions, 'He hath done all things well.' It is a good account of all the dispensations which pass through his hands.

Doct. That the works of the Lord are all good, exceeding good.

We will consider Christ's works—

1. More limitedly and restrainedly to the matter in hand; his works in the days of his flesh, especially his miracles.

2. More largely, extending the words to all his works, of creation, redemption, and daily providence.

I. In the limited restriction, this speech may be interpreted to imply either the matter or the manner of his actions, *bonum* or *bene*. He did nothing but what was good and well.

1. *Bonum*, good. It was Christ's work to do good, and only good, for the life, preservation, and welfare of man: Acts x. 38, 'How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.' The whole story of his life was nothing else but a catalogue of good works. You find him everywhere going up and down upon this errand, that he might give sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, health to the sick, liberty to the possessed, life to the dead. You will find him either feeding the hungry or healing the diseased, and having compassion on them that are faint, and raising the dead.

2. *Bene*, well. This may be represented negatively and affirmatively.

[1.] Negatively; and so—

(1.) Not vindictively. His miracles were not such as tended to destruction, but acts of succour and relief, except blasting the barren fig-tree, and permitting the devils to enter into the herd of swine; the one a notable emblem, and so the instruction countervailed the loss; the other showed the devil's rage, but Christ's lenity, and his power over Satan. Of all his miracles that ever he

wrought, he never wrought any in malice and revenge. He used not his divine power to make men blind, or lame, or to kill any; no, not his worst enemies, when he could easily have done it, and might justly have done it. He rebuked his disciples when they called for fire from heaven against those that rejected his person, and showed that this furious zealotic spirit did not suit with the meekness and persuasiveness of the gospel dispensation: Luke ix. 54, 55, 'When his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, as Elias did? But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.' They considered not that this spirit was unsuitable to his design and business in the world, who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

(2.) Not out of pomp and vainglory; which appeareth because none of his miracles were fitted for the stage, but done only upon weighty occasions, in case of great necessity, when humbly asked and believingly expected. If a miracle were asked in wantonness, he refused to do it; as Herod, to satisfy his vain curiosity, was desirous to have seen some miracles done by him: Luke xxiii. 8, 9, 'And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad, for he was desirous to see him of a long season; because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to have seen some miracles done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words, but he answered him nothing.' Christ would not satisfy him in that point, nor let his divine power lackey upon men's idle humours. They that desire to show juggling tricks are not shy of doing their feats at any time. Besides, that ostentation had no influence upon him appeareth by his frequent injunctions of silence: 'He charged them to tell no man;' so often repeated in the Gospel, and in the verse before the text. When his own mother asked a miracle for the credit of her kinsfolk rather than the glory of God, he rebuked her: John ii. 1-4, 'And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. And both Jesus and his disciples were called to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.'

(3.) Not by conspiracy with the devil, or to befriend his design. This speech of the people is supposed to be a vindication or answer to the calumny of the pharisees, who, to divert the people from owning him as the son of David or true Messiah, said, Mat. xii. 24, 'This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils;' which was the last refuge of their infidelity; for when they could not deny the evidence of the fact, they calumniate the power, as if it were done by co-operation with the devil, or magical imposture; which Christ refuteth by sundry arguments, but especially by this, that every kingdom, city, or family set against itself is ruined: ver. 25, 26, 'And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?' Therefore if Christ, who was a declared enemy to Satan, and came to draw off men from sin to God, should work by Satan,

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he would make Satan an enemy to himself, and lend his power to destroy that kingdom of sin which by all means he seeketh to uphold, and so consent to his own ruin; for what was the great design of the Son of God but to dispossess Satan, and cast him out of his empire over the bodies and souls of men? and so Satan must cast out Satan, which is an unreasonable conceit.

[2.] Positively, he did all things well.

(1.) Suitably to the dignity of his person, or the nature and power of God, which was in him. God's nature is to do good: Acts xiv. 17, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' This was Paul's witness of God, that he was ἀγαθοποιῶν, 'doing good,' not taking vengeance of their idolatries, but inviting them by many temporal mercies. So it is said of Jesus of Nazareth, that he was ἐυεργετῶν, 'doing well: 'Acts x. 38, 'He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.' Mark that clause, 'God was with him.' How was God with him? It was a plain proof of his divine power and authority: 'No man can do such miracles that thou doest, except God be with him,' saith Nicodemus, John iii. 2. *Object*. But God is with all his people: Rom. viii. 31, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer—God was with Christ in another manner than he is with us. He is with us by his love and gracious assistance, as he doth own us, and defend us; but God was with Christ by personal union and inhabitation: 'The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him, bodily,' Col. ii. 9. Not only with him, but in him, as he was true God, as well as man; and so he did all things becoming his divine power.

(2.) He did all things suitably to the nature of his office, which was that of a mediator; and so he did all things well. The Mediator came not to destroy, but to save: John iii. 17, 'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.' This mission was all in mercy and charity, not to punish and condemn man, but to save him from punishment. So John xii. 47, 'And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.' His first coming was as a meek saviour and mediator, to purchase mercy, and to make an offer of life to lost man. So Luke ix. 56, 'For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them;' not to kill any, but to preserve and rescue them from death and all that is evil. Therefore the people give him such a testimony as implied the true characters of a mediator; one that was God, and came from God, to succour and relieve men from all their miseries and necessities.

II. More largely; for these words, καλῶς τάντα πεποίηκε, 'he has done all things well,' are a full and proper account of all the works of God, not only of what the Mediator did in the days of his flesh, but of whatever he did or doth as God.

I shall instance—(1.) In the work of creation; (2.) The work of redemption; (3.) The works of daily providence.

1. In the work of creation; for by Christ God made the world: John i. 3, ‘All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.’ All the creatures owe their beings to Christ the Son of God; now all things were made well, and did show forth the wisdom, goodness, and power of him that made them; for they were fit for the ends to which they were appointed: Gen. i. 31, ‘God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.’ Every day’s work apart was good, and altogether very good; good for their kind, and good for the use and benefit of the whole in their proportion and correspondency.

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2. In the work of redemption, all that Christ did was good or well done—(1.) As to the ends; (2.) As to the way that he took to accomplish these ends.

[1.] His end was to deliver us from all evil, and to bring us into the possession of all good.

(1.) To deliver us from all evil. There is the evil of sin and the evil after sin; now Christ came to cure us of the evil of sin: ‘Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins,’ Mat. i. 21. To deliver us from the flames of hell: 2 Thes. i. 10, ‘And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.’ And surely they that are sensible of their own misery and condemned estate cannot but give him this acknowledgment, ‘He hath done all things well.’

(2.) To bring us into the possession of all good. We are often inquiring, ‘Who will show us any good?’ Ps. iv. 6. Who will find out a full and proper happiness for mankind? Now Christ hath not only showed what is the true good, but procured it for us, and offered it to us, if we will not take up with lower things, but prefer the greatest good before the lesser. The chiefest and greatest is God, for beyond God there is nothing, God reconciled, and God finally and fully enjoyed. Our happiness by the way consists in our reconciliation with God, and our happiness at the end of the journey consists in the vision and fruition of God. This is happiness indeed, to know God, and to love him, and to be beloved by him. This was Christ’s undertaking, to reduce man from his wanderings to God, that he might live in the knowledge and love of God now, and be brought into his immediate presence, that he might live in perfect vision and fruition of him hereafter. Our reconciliation with God through Christ is a great happiness: Rom. v. 1, ‘Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ But the great good is when our nature is perfected, and by its most perfect acts is employed about the most perfect object; and is most capable of his most perfect communications of grace to us, and shall for ever remain in the presence, sight, and love of God. Now what is sweeter than this blessed presence? Ps. xvi. 11, ‘In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.’

[2.] The way he taketh to accomplish these ends. There is his work without us and his work within us.

(1.) His work without us is either on earth or in heaven; on earth by his death, in heaven by his intercession. On earth by his death, and so he delivered us from all evil: Isa. liii. 5, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' And bringeth us to the enjoyment of all good: 1 Peter iii. 18, 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.' Christ's great end is to teach us to know and love God, and bring us to him. In heaven he is mindful of his office; it is his work in heaven to do mankind the greatest good: Heb. vii. 25, 'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' After he had vindicated the justice and holiness of God, and repaired the breaches made by sin, he is gone to heaven to finish the work of man's salvation by his constant intercession.

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(2.) His work within us; he doth by his Spirit renew and sanctify us, and make us more like God; and so we are fitted for the vision and fruition of him. This sanctifying Spirit is said to be 'shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Titus iii. 6; and Christ is said to be 'ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things,' Eph. iv. 10. Our sun in his glory doth continually send down his beams and influences on earth, even the Spirit of the Father, to be the constant agent in the hearts of his people, to renew and heal their natures. Now by this short view you see he hath done all things well in the business of our redemption.

3. In the works of providence. His goodness is exemplified in the acts of daily providence: Ps. xxxiii. 5, 'He loveth righteousness and judgment, the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.' There is no part of the world we can come into, but it is filled with the bountiful effects of his goodness to men. If he correct us, it is in a fatherly manner; if he suffer us to be tempted, it is not beyond what we are able to bear; if he afflicteth us with evil, it is for our good; if he deprive us of any comforts, yet he will not wholly leave us comfortless: John xiv. 18, ὀρφάνους, 'I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.' If he cut us off by death, it is to free us from all other calamities, and bring us the sooner to our final happiness in heaven. In short, he is not severe upon all our failings, heareth those that seek to him in their troubles, delivereth the afflicted, succoureth the tempted, bindeth up the broken-hearted; and the short issue of all is, 'He doth all things well.'

Use 1. Let us give God this glory: Hitherto thou hast done all things well which thou hast done; others have found it so: Ps. xxii. 4, 5, 'Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them; they cried, and were delivered; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.' Never did any of his people address themselves to God in vain; all his people have had long experience of his mercy and fidelity; after humble, constant, importunate addresses, they received what they sought for. Now you must come in also with your attestation: Lord, thou hast done all things well. So the saints often do: Ps. xxii. 10, 'I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly.' So Moses: Deut. xxxii. 4, 'He is the rock; his work is perfect.' So David: Ps. cxi. 3, 'His work is honourable and glorious.' We were made and redeemed to declare the goodness

of the Lord and his mighty works. Man is the mouth of the creation, by whom all the creatures praise God for his wise ordering of all things; it is the business of our lives: 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord,' Ps. cxviii. 17. In heaven we shall give him this praise, Lord, thou hast done all things well; there we shall know as we are known.

It is necessary for us—

1. That we may entertain a good opinion of God when he seemeth to deal hardly with his people, and may check temptations of doubting of his providence: Ps. lxxiii. 1, 'Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.' We must hold fast this conclusion, that it be not wrested out of our hands.

2. It is very necessary to breed patience and humble submission tinder our personal afflictions: Ps. cxix. 71, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' There was a certain Jew called Gamzu, because, whatever beset him, he was wont to say, 'Gamzu, this also shall be for good.' So let us say, This is good and that too; nothing is bad that cometh from a good God.

3. That we may hope and depend on God that it will be so for the future. Our heavenly Father doeth all things well, therefore he will give light in darkness, comfort in trouble, and life in death; nothing raiseth our trust so much as to be persuaded that God loveth us and careth for us, and will do all things for the best. Christ urgeth no more but this to suppress our distrustful cares: Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth you have need of all these things.' You have a father that is not ignorant and unmindful of you. What he will do Christ saith not, but that must be left to his fatherly love.

4. God expecteth from you the glory of his works. Not that God is affected with praise, but it doeth you good, and increaseth your love and esteem of him, to observe how he guideth all things for good: Rom. viii. 28, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God.'

Use 2. Let us imitate our Lord, and learn of him to do all things well; for Christ's excellencies must leave an impression upon us. In our religion all is good. There is a good God: Ps. cxix. 68, 'Thou art good and doest good.' From him cometh every good and perfect gift: James i. 17, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.' A good Christ; you have heard how he went about doing good to the bodies and souls of men. There is a good Spirit: Neh. ix. 20, 'Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them.' And what is the operation of the Spirit of Christ? First, to make us to be good: 'We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works,' Eph. ii. 10; and then to quicken us to do good: Eph. v. 9, 'For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.' There is a good word: Heb. vi. 5, 'And have tasted the good word of God.' Now what remaineth but that we be a good people? Goodness should be the constitution of our hearts, and doing good the business of our lives. Certainly that is a good religion which only

employeth men to do good. Now we must not do good coldly and carelessly, but with a zeal: Titus ii. 14, ‘Zealous of good works.’ And to whom must we do good? Gal. vi. 10, ‘As ye have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, but especially unto them who are of the household of faith.’ Nay, your enemies are not excepted: Mat. v. 44, ‘But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.’ And this doing good God expecteth from us in every relation and capacity. 370 Magistrates, because of their eminent and public influence: Rom. xiii. 4, ‘For he is the minister of God to thee for good.’ So also ministers: ‘Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost,’ Acts xi. 24, and therefore ‘much people were added unto the Lord.’ A man of a selfish, froward spirit hath no true zeal for God, nor compassion over souls, and is likely to do little good. And we must do good to one another: Rom. xv. 14, ‘I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that you are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.’ Husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants, all are to do good in their several relations: Eph. vi. 8, ‘Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.’ They that are not good in their relations are nowhere else good; and therefore every one should make conscience of being good, and doing good in his relation, calling, and place; and so if there be any good thing done, though it be by a poor bond-servant, God will take notice of it.

Now the motives to this are these—

1. God’s great goodness to you in Christ. God will be served not as an imperious sovereign, but as the God of love; and we must serve him not as slaves, but as children; therefore his love should be instead of all motives to us: 2 Cor. v. 14, ‘The love of Christ constraineth us.’ With all readiness of mind we should set ourselves to do good, out of a deep sense of his goodness to us in Christ.

2. The great reward which is appointed for us: Gal. vi. 9, ‘And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not/ His free grace hath provided a rich reward for those that imitate Christ’s example; they shall enter into the glory he is possessed of, and then they shall enjoy the full comfort of their laborious and expensive obedience.

3. This will honour our profession in the eyes of the world. Goodness and usefulness gaineth esteem much more than a rigid innocency: Rom. v. 7, ‘Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.’

4. You will mollify the hearts even of your most froward adversaries: Rom. xii. 21, ‘Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.’ Goodness will reconcile their minds to the truth; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on their heads, melt them into kindness and gentleness.

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SERMON UPON 2 CORINTHIANS IV. 17.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—2 COR. iv. 17.

THESE words give us a reason why we should not faint under trouble, or when we are exercised with things unpleasing and distasteful to the flesh. He had urged one reason before, ver. 16, the increase of spiritual blessings. The inward man, ἀνακαινοῦται, is invigorated by afflictions, they tend to promote the spiritual life; but because we are more affected with outward comforts than inward benefits, though never so choice and necessary, therefore he addeth another reason, that afflictions do not only promote the spiritual life, but also life eternal, which, if it were more thought of by us, would very much mitigate and allay the bitterness of our grief. The afflictions and troubles of the godly have not such bitterness in them if compared with the infinite good of eternal glory. We are altogether filled with the sense of short evils, and do not lift up our minds to that blessed eternity which is at the back of them. If this were well looked to, we should find that light which we thought heavy, that short which seemed long and tedious, 'For our light affliction,' &c.

In the words there is an elegant antithesis, or opposing of our future estate to our present. Here is 'affliction,' there 'glory;' here a 'light affliction,' there a 'weight of glory;' here 'momentary affliction,' there 'eternal glory.' In our affliction there is both brevity and levity; it is a light affliction, and it is but for a moment; in our future glory there is solidity and eternity.

1. Solidity and excellency, 'a far more exceeding weight of glory,' καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν βάρος δόξης, a weight of glory according to excellency unto excellency. Glory is called a weight, because the same word, *chabod*, which signifieth a weight, signifieth also glory; and weight addeth to the value of gold and precious things; as the more massy and weighty a crown is, the more it is worth. And it is said to be 'a far more exceeding,' &c. All words are too weak to express heaven's happiness, and therefore he heapeth expression upon expression. The expression single is used, Rom. vii. 13, καθ' ὑπερβολὴν, 'That sin might become out of measure or 'exceeding sinful;' but here it is doubled, 'a far more exceeding.'

2. Eternity, ἀιώνιον βάρος δόξης; this is opposed to the momentariness of our affliction. Both properties suit with God's infiniteness and eternity. In the other world God will give like himself, becoming an infinite and eternal power.

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Doct. That the hope of eternal life, which shall follow upon our present afflictions, should make them seem as nothing to us, or as matters not much to be accounted of.

For see here how the apostle doth—(1.) Lessen the afflictions of our present condition; (2.) Greaten heavenly things; (3.) Showeth how the one is the fruit of the other, in the word ‘worketh;’ (4.) Who are the persons.

I. He taketh off the tediousness of our present afflictions, that we may not faint under them: ‘Our light affliction, which is but for a moment.’ There is the evil expressed, ‘our affliction;’ the evil lessened, it is ‘light’ and ‘but for a moment.’

1. The evil expressed, ‘our affliction.’ Mine and my brethren’s in the ministry, and all christians’, for there is a like reason of all. God will have all tried and exercised one way or another; and the most eminent most tried: Rev. vii. 14, ‘These are they who are come out of great tribulation.’ Tribulations, and great tribulations, are the way to glory to them whom God loveth most. Jesus Christ himself ‘drank of the brook in the way,’ Ps. cx. 7, and was made low before he was exalted. And the members follow the head by a conformity of suffering: ‘And we must all through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of heaven,’ Acts xiv. 22. We are all obnoxious to the hatred of the world, which will vent itself in reproaches, calumnies, and persecutions; this is the will of God. His only-begotten Son, whom he so dearly loved, was not free. By this hard and rough way will he lead us to glory and immortality. Our business is not to alter God’s decrees by seeking an exemption from crosses, but to consider how we may be supported under them. Neither let any think the worse of glory, or that the happiness of God’s people is less worth, because tribulation is the way to it. Surely the way to heaven, with all the tribulations which accompany it, is far better than an easy life in this world with God’s curse.

2. The evil is lessened. Our afflictions are *leves et breves*, light and short. The highest way of comforting the afflicted which philosophy could aspire unto was this, that if afflictions were great, they were short; if long, light; meaning thereby, that if their afflictions were grievous, they would shorten their lives; if of long continuance, by bearing they learned the better to bear. But here both light and short too in respect of our glorious reward, which being infinite, maketh them light, and being eternal, makes them short.

[1.] Our affliction is light. There are degrees in our troubles; some are more grievous, others more light and easy; some escape and get to heaven at a cheaper rate than others; but the afflictions of all are light. The Holy Ghost doth here assure us of it; for at first view they seem hard and burdensome, but if you consider them more intimately, they are soft and easy. The afflictions of the godly are not light in themselves, but either—

(1.) Comparatively, in respect of the excellency and infiniteness of the heavenly glory. So Rom. viii. 18, ‘I reckon that the sufferings of the present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.’ The trouble is nothing to the recompense, nor the cross to the crown; no more than a feather to a talent of lead. The good and evil of the other world are truly great, but the good and evil of the present world are slight and inconsiderable. This is evident,

because we are ignorant and incredulous of falling by the beginnings of either. A wounded spirit or the comfort of a good conscience, these are things we have experience of; we know not exactly what our future condition will be, but the hopes and fears of that estate are very affective. The fears of eternal torment which are found in a guilty conscience show that all the sufferings of the world are but a flea-biting to that woe and anguish which abideth for the impenitent: Prov. xviii. 14, 'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?' The salve for this sore must come from heaven; so the joys of a good conscience, which are 'unspeakable and glorious,' 1 Peter i. 8, show the happiness of the other world to be exceeding great; for if the foretaste be so sweet, the hope and expectation so ravishing, what will the enjoyment be? All the pleasures of sense are but a May-game to it. Now turn the tables, and compare the troubles of obedience with the pleasure and glory of our reward, or, on the other side, the pleasures of sin with the pains of hell, and then you will conclude that all the evil that can seize upon us here for our faithfulness to God is light and easy.

(2.) Copulatively. Though affliction be not light in itself, yet by the strong support and comfort of the Spirit, God maketh it light and easy to us. To a strong back a burden is light which crusheth the weak and faint, and causeth them to sink under it; a man well clad may without great annoyance bear the cold of winter, which pincheth the naked; so by the support of the comforting Spirit, that which is grievous is made light and easy; because, 'as our afflictions abound, so do our consolations by Christ,' 2 Cor. i. 5; and so we do not only prevail above the evil, but are 'more than conquerors through him that loveth us,' Rom. viii. 37. Now there is a more liberal allowance of these comforts and supports to God's suffering servants than to those who live at ease, and are not exposed to such difficulties and hardships: 1 Peter iv. 14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil-spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.' The gift of the Holy Ghost is in a peculiar manner dispensed to them, and by this oil his wrestlers are anointed.

Well, then, it is some support to consider that it is the will of God that for well-doing we should be hated of evil men. But it is a greater help that we can, by the hope of heavenly glory and immortality, counterbalance present infelicities. But the greatest help is, that by the gift of the Holy Ghost we are fortified against all impressions of sense. And holy sufferers are encouraged in the ways of obedience. All which things considered, suffering cannot look so grim and terrible to a mortified soul, who hath learned to contemn earthly things, and to make heavenly things his great end and scope.

[2.] They are short, as well as light. He saith, 'This light affliction, which is but for a moment.' No question but the afflictions of God's children, as they are some more easy, some more grievous, so they are some shorter, some of a longer continuance; yet they are all but for a moment. If they should last for our whole lives, they are but momentary if compared with eternity that shall ensue. But it is not credible that our lives should be altogether calamitous; there is no instance of that,

either in scripture or the records of time. There are intervals of rest; and our enemies cannot trouble us but when it is permitted of God. But if there were no intermission, this life itself is but a moment. If you consider that which in those afflictions we most dread, and beyond which the power of the most cruel adversary cannot reach, death itself, it is but for a moment. In the twinkling of an eye we are in eternity. Death cometh in a moment, and it is gone in a moment; after that, we enjoy eternal rest and peace. Therefore though in our way to heaven we should endure most grievous calamities, yet, since they are but momentary, they are to be endured, that we may enjoy so great a good as the vision and fruition of God.

To make this more evident to you, let us a little consider how the afflictions of God's people are long and short.

(1.) Concerning their length.

(1*st*.) They seem long to those that reckon by time, and not by eternity. If we look to present time, 'Summer and winter is past, and we are not saved,' Jer. viii. 20. They had a long time looked for deliverance; the year was gone, but none appeared; yea, not one year, but many. So Zech. i. 12, 'How long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation for many years?' So long may be the measure and continuance of the church's trouble, not only for days and months, but many years; yet these afflictions are but momentary if we go by a right count. We must not compute things by time, but by eternity. The longest time to eternity is nothing: Ps. xc. 4, 'A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past.' Compared with God's infinite and eternal duration, a thousand years are but as a drop lost and spilt in the ocean.

(2*d*.) They seem long because of the impatiency of the flesh. We love our own ease, and therefore affliction soon groweth irksome and tedious. Men in a fever reckon minutes and quarters and hours, and an hour seemeth a day, and a day a week, and a week a month, and a month a year. Winter nights seem long in the passing. Our times are always present with us, when God's time is not come. A hungry stomach cannot stay till the meat be roasted, and impatient longings must be satisfied with green fruit.

(2.) For their shortness; they seem short, partly because they are not so long as they might be in regard of the enemies' rage: Zech. i. 15, 'I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.' God intendeth to correct and reform his children, but they intend to destroy and root them out. Satan and wicked men know no bounds. Partly they are not so long as we deserve. The evil of one sin cannot be expiated in a thousand years; but God stoppeth, and 'in the midst of judgment remembereth mercy,' Hab. iii. 2. Partly they are not so long as they might be in regard of second causes and probabilities: Hab. iii. 2, 'Revive thy work in the midst of the years.' Partly

because faith will not count it long; for to the eye of faith things future and afar off are as present: Heb. xi. 1, ‘Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.’ Partly because love will not count it long: Gen. xxix. 20, ‘Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her.’ If we had any love to Christ, we would be willing to suffer a little while for his sake. But chiefly in regard of our eternal reward and blessedness; so it is a light affliction, that is but for a moment, like a rainy day to an everlasting sunshine. God will not always chide, but his mercy is for ever and ever.

II. Come we now to the other part of the comparison, our reward, and let us see how he greateneth heavenly things. They are set forth by unwonted forms of speech, but such as argue the super-excellency of what is propounded; and there you may observe an exact opposition of our happiness to our misery; there ‘affliction,’ here ‘glory;’ there ‘light affliction,’ here a ‘far more exceeding weight of glory;’ there ‘momentary affliction,’ here ‘eternal glory.’ Let us illustrate all these circumstances.

1. There affliction, here glory; very fitly. In our calamities we are depressed and put to shame, but whatever honour we lose in this mortal life shall be abundantly supplied and recompensed to us in heaven. Indeed, we do but prattle when we presume to describe the other world, for ‘it doth not appear what we shall be,’ 1 John iii. 2; and again, 1 Cor. ii. 9, ‘It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive the great things which he hath prepared for them that love him.’ Only our ear has received a little thereof, and somewhat I shall speak by and by; only, in the general, there shall be great honour done to us, both by the Father and the Son. By the Father: John xii. 26, ‘If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be: if any man serve me, him shall my Father honour.’ He that will suffer as Christ hath done shall fare as Christ hath done; for he came, as to teach an afflicted persecuted people that it is no new and strange thing to be misrepresented and slandered in the world, and suffer for the hopes of a better life, so to assure and give them a visible demonstration that there is a life of glory prepared for us; and he is in heaven, in possession of this glory, to convey it to us, and his Father will put all marks of honour upon us. And he himself, Luke xii. 37, ‘He will gird himself, and make them to sit down, and come forth and serve them at the heavenly feast.’ These general expressions intimate great glory which shall be put upon us; there is enough discovered to counterbalance all the afflictions of the present world, of what nature soever they be. Are you pained with sickness, and roll to and fro in your bed like a door on the hinges, through the restless weariness of the flesh? In heaven we shall have everlasting ease, for that is a state of rest, Heb. iv. 9. Are you cast out by man as unworthy to live in any civil society? There you are received by the Lord into an everlasting abode with him: 1 Thes. iv. 17, ‘Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.’ Have you lost the love of all men for your sincerity and faithfulness? You shall everlastingly enjoy the love of God: Rom. viii. 39, ‘Nor

height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Are you reproached, calumniated in the world? Then your faith shall be 'found to praise, glory, and honour,' 1 Peter i. 7. Are you cast into prison? You will shortly be in your Father's house, 'where there are many mansions,' John xiv. 2. Are you reduced to sordid poverty? There you read of the 'riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints in light,' Eph. ii. 18. Have you lost children for Christ? They shall not come to you, but you shall go to them. Your temptations will be over, and your enemies will all have done; you go from hard taskmasters to your gracious and righteous Lord; your fears and sorrows will be at an end, your desires accomplished, and your expectations satisfied. Must you die, and the guest be turned out of the old house? You have 'a building of God eternal in the heavens.' You do but leave a shed to live in a palace: 2 Cor. v. 1, 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens/ If you are forced out by the violence of man, the sword is but the key to open heaven's doors for you.

2. Here is 'a far more exceeding weight of glory' opposed to 'light affliction.' Things excellent we count weighty; small, light. What is better than that heavenly good which is offered to the faithful followers of Christ? It is good to consider a little what it is.

[1.] All evil will be then removed. There is no sighing, no sorrowing there: Rev. vii. 17, 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' Three things do trouble the saints, and none of them will be in heaven. One is sin, and the frequent interruption of God's service; but there will neither be sin nor temptation, neither devils nor corrupt nature. We are all pure and holy there, the glorious church is without spot and wrinkle, Eph. v. 27. A second is the frequent interruption of a sense of God's favour. We have both clouds and sunshine here, now God lifts up the light of his countenance, and we are cheered; but then he hides his face from us, and we are troubled. But there the communion is constant, the day is without night, and an ever lasting sunshine without clouds: Rev. vii. 15, 'They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.' There is perpetual service and perpetual enjoyment; neither is our work interrupted, nor our blessedness. The third thing which troubleth the saints is outward persecutions, wants and straits. None of these do follow the saints into heaven. Oh what a happy time will this be, when there will be no crying out of the body of death, no complaint of violence and oppression, no mourning after a withdrawn God!

[2.] All good will be then enjoyed. The great object of our eternal blessedness is God. We enjoy him fully, familiarly, and constantly. Our nearness to God is greater, our communion more full. To our felicity three things are necessary, a prepared faculty, a suitable object, the conjunction of both these. In the state of glory all these concur. The faculty is more prepared as we are purified and clarified from the dregs of carnal sense; the object is manifested and dispensed in the greatest latitude, for there God is all in all; the conjunction is more intimate between this object and faculty.

Our conjunction here is by faith and imperfect love, there by clear vision and perfect love: ‘He that is joined to the Lord ‘by faith and love ‘is made one spirit,’ 1 Cor. vi. 17. Oh, but what a conjunction will this be, when we shall be joined to the Lord by sight and perfect love! Our sight clear, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, vision shall then succeed to faith, and possession to hope. Surely then our fruition must needs be greater, and the soul be filled with all the fulness of God. It is hard to speak of the state of heaven till the great voice call upon us to come up and see what God has provided for us. But in short, vision makes way for assimilation: 1 John iii. 2, ‘We shall see him as he is, and be like him;’ as iron, by lying in fire, becomes as it were all fire. Assimilation makes way for satisfaction: Ps. xvii. 15, ‘I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.’ The soul is then at rest; it hath enough in having God, and seeing, and loving, and being made like to him.

3. This glory is eternal, in opposition to our momentary affliction. If we desire to prolong this life, which is obnoxious to divers calamities, how much more should that life affect us, which shall be fully happy, and never have end? Surely an immortal spirit must look after an eternal happiness. All the honours of the world, which dazzle men’s eyes, are vain and slippery. The riches which captivate their hearts are uncertain and perishing; and the pleasures which enchant them pass away as a wind, or, if they should continue, the relish of them will be gone. Death will put an end to them, though they often fail most men before. But this happiness will be extended throughout millions of ages. Alas! if wicked men did consider the shortness of their pleasures and the length of their sorrows, they would not be so besotted as they are. So, on the other side, if godly men did but consider the shortness of their afflictions and the length of their glory and joy, it would animate and encourage them to go on cheerfully in all their tribulations. Our glory must needs be eternal, because it depends upon the will of an immutable God, and the everlasting merit of a glorious redeemer. When either of these foundations fail, your blessedness will be at an end; but these can never fail, and therefore our glory will be everlasting.

III. That the one is the fruit of the other; for the apostle saith κατεργάζεται—(1.) Negatively; certainly not by way of merit, but by God’s mere grace for Christ’s sake. Our title is by adoption: Rom. viii. 17, ‘If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.’ (2.) Positively; so two ways—(1*st*.) By giving a right; (2*d*.) Preparing us for it.

1. Though our patience doth not merit, yet it giveth us a right, so as we may certainly expect it from the mercy of God: Mat. v. 12, ‘Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.’ Our transitory light sufferings are so accepted by God that they are sure to be rewarded by him with an eternal weighty crown of bliss and glory. If we have done and suffered never so much for God, yet eternal life is a gift to be taken out of the hands of grace: Rev. ii. 10, ‘I will give thee the crown of life.’ It is the mercy of our Redeemer, which encourageth us to hope: Jude 21, ‘Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.’

2. It prepareth us for it. Afflictions are a means of mortification and holiness, as they deaden the gust of the flesh in us, draw us off from the love and esteem of this world, and awaken in us desires after heavenly things, and conduce to the reviving of the inward man day by day. So that by patient enduring these light afflictions, your title is more assured, your hearts are more prepared.

IV. Who are the parties interested? Ἡμῶν in the text; and they are described, ver. 18, 'Those that look not to things seen,' &c. It doth not so in all, but those that mind heavenly things, who make them the scope and end of their lives, and acquiesce in them as their supreme happiness, do not look for great things in a vain world, but are set upon getting home to God. If this be your scope, and you be true to it, you will not miss of what you do in the first place seek after. Alas! many would fain go to heaven, but give no diligence to clear up their right and interest in it, nor back their longings with those endeavours which the weight of the business requireth.

Use 1. To inform us how little cause believers have to murmur under their afflictions. (1.) They are supported in this life by the comforts of the Spirit; (2.) Rewarded with unspeakable glory in the world to come; (3.) Sufferings are necessary.

1. In this life their trials are not insupportable, but light and momentary: 1 Cor. x. 13, 'There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape.' All things considered, here you have more cause of joy than sorrow. A few only are called to suffer for Christ, and those in our days suffer but a little, a few mocks and scorns of foolish men, and will you begrudge this? The experience occasioned by patience should recompense it: Rom. v. 3, 4, 'We glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.' But then—

2. In the world to come you shall have recompense enough; it is a great reward, and a sure reward. Though you have it not in possession, you have it in promise; and will you grudge to pass through suffering into glory, and to sow in tears that you may reap in joy?

3. And these sufferings are so far from infringing, that they promote this glory. Christ seeth this is most for his glory and your good. It is necessary: 1 Peter i. 6, 'Ye are in tribulation if need be.' Oh, how many have miscarried by living in wealth, honour, and power! If God will take away the fuel of our lusts, and opportunities of sinning, shall we grudge at that necessary moderate affliction which saves us from hell, and promotes our eternal happiness?

Use 2. To persuade us—

1. To be in a condition to make use of this cordial. We must endeavour to be 'heirs of promise, that have fled for refuge, to take hold of the hope set before us/ Heb. vi. 18. You must be such that give all diligence to clear up your title by a fruitful self-denying obedience.

2. To be often meditating upon it; for a double end—

[1.] To wean yourselves from the vanities of the world, 1 Peter i. 13. What petty trifles are all things when laid in the balance against this happiness! Alas! that our minds should be so apt to surfeit upon the luscious happiness of this vain world, when there are so many sweetening circumstances to endear heaven to us!

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[2.] That you may be comforting and confirming your souls in the hopes of this happiness in all your troubles and afflictions: 1 Thes. iv. 18, 'Comfort one another with these words.' In heaven none are poor, destitute, afflicted, but all supplied. It is a great matter when we fetch our solace hence.

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SERMONS UPON 1 JOHN II. 12-14.

SERMON I.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.—1 JOHN ii. 12.

IN these words we have—(1.) A friendly compellation, 'Little children.' (2.) A serious exhortation, 'I write unto you.' (3.) The reason of his writing to that end and purpose, 'Because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.' Or, if you will take notice—(1.) Of a privilege, 'Your sins are forgiven.' (2.) The persons interested 'Little children.' (3.) The exhortation to duty built thereupon, 'I write unto you.'

1. We must state the persons; such as are 'little children.' Some times the word is taken in a peculiar and restrained sense for babes in grace, as ver. 13, 'I have written unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.' Only the word is different in the original; here it is, 'little children;' there it is, 'young men.' This verse is spoken in common of all believers; whether they be fathers, or young men, or babes, they are all in the sense of the text 'little children.' He speaketh to all christians in common under this title: ver. 1, 'My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not.' So ver. 18, 'Little children, it is the last time.' By this title he speaketh to all christians, of what age or growth soever. The matter also concerneth all in common, and according to this interpretation the order of setting down the several ages is regular. Beginning with fathers, proceeding with young men, ending with infants or babes in grace. Our Lord Jesus useth the same language, John xiii. 33, 'Little children, yet a little while I am with you.'

2. The privilege, ‘Pardon of sins for his name’s sake;’ that is, upon the account of Christ made known in the gospel, and apprehended by faith; for he is the ‘advocate ‘spoken of ver. 1, 2; and ver. 6, ‘He that abideth in him, ought himself also to walk as he walked.’ So that in the whole context Christ is the antecedent. His name’s sake implieth his merit and satisfaction, as also our faith in him: Acts x. 43, ‘To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.’

3. The exhortation grounded thereon, ‘I write unto you.’ What to do?’ Not to sin,’ ver. 1;’ To keep his commandments,’ ver. 3-5;’ To walk as he walked,’ ver. 6;’ To love the brethren,’ ver. 7-11;’ Not to love the world,’ ver. 15. So that the sum of all is, we may gather that the faithful of all ages and sizes have their sins pardoned, and are thereby bound to holiness, which is here represented under several notions, some of which are more general, others concern particular duties.

The points of doctrine are three—

1. That christians of all ages and ranks are and should be as little children.

2. Such who are in the gospel-sense as little children have obtained remission of sins for Christ’s name’s sake.

3. Those who have obtained remission of sins are bound to express their gratitude and thankfulness to God by new obedience.

The first point, being but a metaphorical description of the faithful, will be soon despatched. The term implieth—

1. Their new birth. As little children are newly entered into the world, and beginning their lives, all things are new to them, so whosoever will be saved entereth into a new state, becometh as a little child, by being renewed by the Holy Ghost, and participating of the divine nature. In this sense it is said, Mat. xviii. 3, ‘Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God;’ where by conversion they become as little children, that is, enter into a new state, and carry on a new life and trade, with which they were never acquainted before. The same is pressed in other scriptures: Rom. vi. 6, ‘Knowing that our old man is crucified with him;’ Eph. iv. 22, ‘That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man;’ ver. 24, ‘And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.’ When converted, they are not the same men they were before. So 2 Cor. v. 17, ‘If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.’ All things are become new, he hath new thoughts, new desires, new delights, new discourses, new designs, new employments. If you have your old thoughts still, your old passions, and old affections still, it is a sign you are not converted.

2. Having a new life, they look after that which will maintain and keep it up in good plight and vigour; for all creatures that have life have something put into them which attracteth and draweth

the nourishment proper to that life. The plants have an attractive power to draw from the earth that moisture which feedeth them. The beasts have an appetite; and man, who hath this faculty in common with the beasts, hath also an attractive appetite given with his life. So christians: 1 Peter ii. 2, ‘As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.’ They long after spiritual food, puke at that which is not their natural milk. They have a spiritual taste, which distinguisheth doctrines, as the mouth doth meat.

3. In regard of humility, and designs, and contrivances after greatness in the world. They that become as little children seek not after dominions, and dignities, and honours. For, Mat. xviii. 1-3, when the disciples were striving who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Christ calleth a little child, and setteth him in the midst of them, and saith, ‘Except ye be converted, and become as a little child, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ As if he had said, You strive for pre-eminence and worldly greatness in my kingdom; I tell you, my kingdom is a kingdom of babes, and containeth none but the humble, and such as are little in their own eyes, and are contented to be small and despised in the eyes of others, and so do not look after great matters in the world. A young child knoweth not what striving for state meaneth. Thus by an emblem and visible representation would Christ take them off from the vain ambitious expectation and pursuit of a carnal kingdom. One part of the work of grace is to take down our pride, and to humble us, and make us little in our own eyes. David, when he would free himself from the crime of aspiring, and seeking great matters in the world, expresseth himself thus, Ps. cxxxii. 1, 2, ‘Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, nor in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child.’ He was not covetous nor ambitious. David proveth himself to be a child of God by the lowliness of his heart, the sobriety of his carriage, and submission to all God’s dispensations, and desired no higher condition than God would, by the fair invitation of his providence, call him unto. He was as a feeble, impotent child, looking wholly to be directed, supported, and enabled by God, with the greatest obedience, dependence, self-denial, and resignation that can be. A weanling, though he begin to go and speak, and live without the teat, yet wholly dependeth on the mother’s aid, teaching, and provision for each of these: such a weanling was David, casting his affairs on the Lord as a child doth on the mother.

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4. Innocent and harmless as a child, who, though infected with sin, and must be saved by Christ as others of grown age, yet cannot act sin. So saith the apostle, 1 Cor. xiv. 20, ‘Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.’ A man is a child in understanding when he hath no more use of spiritual knowledge than a child hath of natural reason; so we must not be children, but we must be harmless as children. It is a happy ignorance to be ignorant of sin, to be babes in mischief and evil; not merely because we cannot act it, but because we would not: Rom. xvi. 19, ‘I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil,’ Better be a bungler in sin than that our souls should enter into that secret.

I will press the similitude no further, only see from thence who are not God's faithful ones. All such as are not born again, and brought into a new state; all such as have no spiritual relish and gust; all such as please themselves with a vain confidence, and cannot submit to be handled and dealt with as the Lord pleaseth; all such as are more crafty to do evil than wise to do good.

Doct. 2. That such who are as little children have obtained remission of sins for Christ's name's sake.

Here I shall inquire—(1.) What is forgiveness of sins; (2.) How it is obtained, and for whom.

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First, What is forgiveness of sins? It is the judicial action of God, by which he doth fully release the penitent believer from the guilt of all the things committed against his law, without requiring satisfaction or punishment at his hands.

1. It is a judicial action of God. One man forgiveth another; for our heavenly Father requireth that 'every one should forgive his brother their trespasses,' Mat. xviii. 35. But our forgiveness is an act of charity or duty imposed upon us. God's forgiveness is an act of authority, as he is the governor and judge of the world. We may forgive the wrong done to us, when God doth not forgive the sin; for an act of our charity doth not evacuate God's authority. Stephen forgave his enemies their wrongs done to him; but he could not forgive their sin against God; only prayed, Acts vii. 60, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' So for us; the wrong to be forgiven is an offence against God. We have not power to forgive it, nor meddle with it any further than, by prayer to God. In all sin God is the wronged party, and God is the highest judge, whose act is authoritative, and can only give satisfaction to the conscience. God's solemn judgment is at the last day, but he is a judge now: 'Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth,' Ps. lviii. 11; his private judgment passeth upon every one. Now every one is forgiven or not forgiven; the last day's action is but a promulgation and execution of this sentence. Now God justifieth or condemneth men by his word, and doth either remit or retain their sins. But there is a threefold difference—

[1.] Now within time the sentence may be repealed, but then it is definitive and peremptory. A man that is condemned by the law may be pardoned and absolved afterwards. Every one of us 'is condemned already,' John iii. 18; and we bind this condemnation upon us if we die in our infidelity and impenitency, and contempt of the Lord's grace, ver. 19. But our estate is capable of alteration: John v. 24, 'He that believeth on me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but hath passed from death to life;' hath changed his copy, and is translated from the sentence and state of death to a sentence of life passed in his favour.

[2.] The sentence is now private, but then public. It is passed in the believer's conscience according to the word of God; but then it is pronounced by the judge's own mouth *pro tribunali*, when he sitteth on the throne: Acts iii. 19, 'That your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord.' It is now stated; we have the grant of it in

the word upon the terms of the new covenant, but then it shall be confirmed and ratified in court by an open and visible sentence, our judge publicly absolving us.

[3.] Then there shall be an execution, both of justification and condemnation. Now in time there is *sententia lata*, but not *dilata*; it is past, but not executed: Eccles. viii. 11, 'Because sentence against an evil-doer is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.' When a sinner dieth, it is executed in part upon his soul, but not upon his whole person. So the godly have their sentence passed, but they have not the full effect of it till then. It is said, John v. 27, 'God hath given him authority to execute judgment.' The punishment which belongeth to sinners is all kind of misery in this world and the next. God now judgeth the world in patience, then in righteousness. Then the pardoned shall have their consummate happiness, but the wicked be cast body and soul into hell-fire.

2. By which he doth freely and fully release from the guilt of all our transgressions.

[1.] Freely. God doeth it, and that without any cost to us: Isa. lii. 3, 'Ye have sold yourselves for nought, and ye shall be redeemed without money.' As the sale was without any gain and benefit to us, so the redemption and recovery was neither any cost to us; it cost Christ dear. The debtor did not provide the ransom, but the creditor; and the price was paid out of God's own treasury. And freely also; for though we penitently and humbly sue out our pardon, and it is not forgiven without our desiring, yet without our deserving. The Lord saith, Isa. xliii. 25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will remember thy sins no more.' What ever God doth in our salvation, he doth it for his name's sake, pitying our misery, and for the glory of his own mercy, pardoning our sins; thus in the text, 'Because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.' We must ask it, and seek; but God giveth it for Christ's sake. We cannot merit it, and we must seek it in such a way as may be most honourable to God and Christ, judging ourselves, condemning ourselves, giving him the glory of his justice by humble and broken-hearted confession, admiring his grace, acknowledging our great debt to our Redeemer, forsaking our way and our thoughts. Yet these things do not satisfy for the wrong done to God, only render our condition compassionable. David saith, Ps. xxv. 11, 'For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.' The penitent believer hath no other plea but the honour of God's grace engaged in the covenant. God's free pardon is the saint's encouragement.

[2.] It is full; as God pardoneth freely, so also fully, and not by halves; irrevocably, and not for a time only; universally, and not a few sins only; and therefore he is said to 'remove our sins from us as far as the east is from the west,' Ps. ciii. 12; 'To cast our sins into the depths of the sea,' Micah vii. 18. The sin forgiven shall not be remembered or laid to our charge any more.

3. It is a release from the guilt of our transgressions. There is in sin *reatus culpae*, the fault; and *reatus poenae*, the guilt. God doth not make the sin to be no sin, or the fault to be no fault, but he will not charge it to our condemnation and confusion. Properly, it is the obligation to punishment

which God releaseth us from. Sin is compared to a chain, as hell to a prison: Lam. i. 14, ‘The yoke of my transgression is bound by his hand; they are wreathed and come upon my neck.’ Now God, when he pardons sin, looseth this chain. So to a debt: Mat. vi. 12, ‘Forgive us our debts.’ The sinner is discharged from his obligation to punishment. It is a forgiveness of the debt, or an exemption from payment. When God pardoneth, he doth not only respite or withhold the execution, but withdraweth the obligation to punishment. It is one thing for the creditor to give a further day of payment, another to cancel the bond; one thing to loosen the chain, and another to break it. God doth not only forbear, but forgive; not only spare us for a while, but save us for ever. A reprieve only suspendeth and deferreth execution, but a pardon wholly preventeth it.

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4. The object of this pardon is the penitent believer; and that faith is required, see Acts x. 43, ‘To him gave all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins;’ Acts x. 38, 39, ‘By this man we preach unto you forgiveness of sin; and whosoever believeth in him is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses.’ It is necessary that those who have benefit by Christ should own the author of their deliverance, and give up themselves to him, both in a way of dependence and obedience. In a way of dependence, putting their cause into his hands, that he may reconcile them to God. And also obedience is needful, that they may for the future devote themselves to God by Christ. And repentance is required: Acts iii. 19, ‘Repent, that your sins may be blotted out;’ and Luke xxiv. 47, ‘That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.’ And it is also required that we may acknowledge the obligation in his law, bemoaning our former misery, and consecrating ourselves anew to God, to do his will, and walk in his ways. Repentance is our return to God, from whom we have departed by sin: Acts xx. 21, ‘Testifying both to the Jews and Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.’

5. This sin is forgiven without requiring satisfaction or punishment of the sinner.

[1.] Satisfaction to divine justice is not given by us for the wrongs we have done, but by Christ. God will have satisfaction, but not from us. Christ hath given it by his own blood. Therefore pardon of sins is made a special part of our redemption: Col. i. 14, ‘In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;’ Eph. i. 7, ‘In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.’ We are freely forgiven, yet the Lord required that provoked justice should have satisfaction, which is not exacted of us, but of Christ, who was made sin for us.

[2.] Punishment is not required of us; for where he forgiveth the sin, he forgiveth[10] the punishment. It will not stand with God’s mercy to forgive the debt, and yet require the payment; as it is a mockage among men to forgive the debt, and yet to cast the debtor into prison, or to pardon a malefactor, and yet leave him liable to execution. God forgiveth us, as we are bound to forgive

[10] Qu. ‘foregoeth’?—ED.

our brother, Mat. vi. 12. Now that is not in part, but in whole; not to forgive the wrong, and yet take our full revenge of him. Surely as to eternal wrath the case is clear; as to the afflictions of believers, there is some difficulty; but our afflictions in this life are not for the satisfaction of offended justice, that is so fully done by Christ, that it needeth not be pieced up by our sufferings; and therefore our afflictions are not needful to the completing of our justification and pardon, but as helps to the furtherance of our sanctification; so they are of great use to make us hate sin more. If we only knew the sweetness of sin, and not the bitterness, we would not be so shy and cautious as we ought to be. Afflictions remain as monuments of God's displeasure against that which we are too apt to love and indulge: Jer. ii. 19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee; know therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.' They help us also to prize our deliverance by Christ. If afflictions be so grievous, what would hell be?' When chastened, not condemned,' 1 Cor. xi. 32. Those whose garments were singed knew in part what it was to be cast into the fiery furnace. We are scorched a little, singed a little; it is a fair warning or gentle remembrance to stand further off.

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Secondly, How it is obtained. Take it in these propositions—

1. Sin is ἀνομία, a transgression of the law, a debt, as being a wrong done against God, obliging the sinner either to repair God in point of honour, or to lie under the wrath of God for evermore; for 'the wages of sin is death,' Rom. vi. 23.

2. There is no deliverance from this debt of sin, or obligation to wrath because of sin, but by pardon and forgiveness. The plea of innocency is lost, and there are but two pleas, guilty or innocent. Now to plead guilty without hope of pardon is but to condemn ourselves. What will stead us? On God's part no other thing will serve the turn. Not his patience, or forbearing mercy; forbearance is no discharge; the sentence is in force still, though execution be delayed. Not the bounty of his providence seen in outward blessings; these things may be given in wrath. Not deliverance from eminent dangers; that looks like a pardon, but is not. God seems to put the bond in suit, yet spareth for the time: Ps. lxxviii. 38, 'But he being full of compassion, forgave their iniquities, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath;' Mat. xviii. 27, 'The lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave the debt.' Compared with ver. 34, 'And the lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due to him.' This is a reprieve, not a pardon. Nothing will stead us on our part. Not forgetting sin; for what are we the better if God remember it? Many sleep whose damnation sleepeth not, 2 Peter ii. 3, and turn off grief rather than put it away. It is no profit though forgotten, if not forgiven. Not denying sin. There are books of record, Rev. xx. 12, which will be opened at the last day, and then all our sins are set in order before us. Not excusing sin, or extenuating it; that is to aggravate our case, to hold neither by law nor gospel; for the law cannot save the sinner or the half innocent; and the gospel requireth that we should accuse ourselves, and judge and condemn ourselves: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our

sins;' 1 Cor. xi. 31, 'For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.' Nothing but forgiveness will do us good.

3. There is some hope of forgiveness, because God forbeareth the worst, and doth not stir up all his wrath against them. They have food, and raiment, and ease, and liberty, and friends, and wealth, and honour: Rom. ii. 4, 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads thee to repentance?' All these forfeited mercies are continued to us. Therefore God deals not with them in utmost rigour; and while he waiteth to be gracious, he is willing to be appeased, ready to forgive upon terms consistent with his honour and the common good. Yea, his commanding us to forgive one another is an argument that mercy and forgiveness are agreeable and pleasing unto God. We are yet *in via*, in the way, and under an obligation to use means for our selves, and therefore our condition is not desperate, and past all hope. Everything about us proclaimeth the goodness of this God with whom we have to do: Acts xiv. 17, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.'

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4. Though forgiveness may be probably hoped for from God's goodness and mercy as represented in common providence, yet till there be a satisfaction for the offence, and we may have our pardon granted with the good leave of provoked justice, the soul can have no satisfaction. The grand scruple that haunts the guilty creature is, how God shall be appeased? Micah vi. 7. If God will pardon sinners, there must be fit means to keep up the honour of his justice and authority of his law, or. else the engrafted notions concerning God would be violated, and the government of the world could not be kept up. Some way there must be to declare his holiness and righteousness: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.' To leave a brand upon sin, Rom. iv. 27, and to check those thoughts of impunity, which indulgence to carnalities breedeth in the hearts of men, Deut. xxi. 19; and that God's law and government may not be brought into contempt, and that sinners may not take liberty to sin without fear. The devil at first endeavoured to persuade men that God meant not as he spake in the threatening of death to them: Gen. iii. 4, 5, 'Hath God said, Ye shall not surely die?' Now this evil suggestion would seem to be confirmed by God's providence, unless there were a course and way found out to save the honour of God's justice, the authority of his law and government. Now to all these ends Christ came, and purchased forgiveness at a dear rate; and so God appeareth fully just, as well as merciful, in that course of pardoning and forgiving which he hath instituted and set up.

5. It was agreeable to the honour and wisdom of God that those who would have benefit by this remedy should be sensible of the weight which is upon them, and humbly confess their sins, and with brokenness of heart sue out their pardon: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins;' Neh. ix. 33, 'Howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly;' Dan. ix. 7, 'O Lord, righteousness belongeth

unto thee, but unto us confusion of face.' Acknowledge his justice, and implore his mercy in a submissive way. Self-condemning sinners are pardoned; for it was not meet that sin should be pardoned till the creature doth relent.

6. It is fit also that those who would sue out their pardon in this humble and submissive way should acknowledge their Redeemer, and thankfully accept of the benefit procured by him, and offered to them in his name; and heartily consent to his covenant to be brought home to God again, that they may be fully recovered out of their lapsed condition: Acts xx. 21, the sum of the gospel is, 'Repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;' 1 Peter iii. 18, 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' Christ's business is to bring us back again to God, from whom we have strayed and fallen, to put us into a capacity of pleasing and enjoying God. Repentance is our consent of returning to God, as faith is our thankful owning of our Redeemer to this good end in pardoning, that we should put ourselves in a posture and capacity to please God and enjoy God, and this should be our end in accepting the Redeemer.

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Doct. 3. Such as have obtained remission of sins are bound to express their gratitude and thankfulness to God by new obedience.

1. That they may not undo what is done, and so build again the things they have destroyed: Gal. ii. 17, 18, 'But if while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners; is Christ therefore the minister of sin? God forbid; for if I build again the things I have destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.' The objection against the grace of the gospel is, that it casteth off all care of holiness and new obedience, and so Christ is made a minister of sin. No; this thought is to be rejected with horror: this is the objection of atheistical, loose, erring spirits, who are little acquainted with the heart of a pardoned and justified man. No, no; pardon of sin doth not foster a man in sin. This is to make Christ a minister of sin, which all christians should abominate. But how doth he refute it? Even by this argument, that we shall build again the things we have destroyed. A man that seeketh after pardon, seeks with it the ruin and destruction of sin. Sin was his greatest trouble, the burden that lay upon his conscience from whence he sought ease, the wound which pained him at heart, the disease that his soul was sick of; and can a man delight in his sorest trouble, take up his burden that he groaned under, and prefer it before ease, tear open the wound which was in a fair way of healing, willingly relapse into the sickness he is recovered of with so much ado? This is to undo all, and to desire our bonds and chains again after we are freed of them. What is it we complained of but the debt and burden of sin? Now when Christ hath paid our debts, and set us free, and entrusted us with a new stock of grace to begin the world anew, shall we unfix all, as if we were deceived, when, in the anguish of our hearts, we groaned under sin as the heaviest and most intolerable evil that could lie upon our souls?

2. That we may make good our qualification. Certain it is that none are pardoned but those that are renewed and born again; for the application of the merit of Christ and the gift of the Spirit are inseparable: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'And such were some of you, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified,

in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' By the fall we were both unholy and guilty, under the power of sin, and obnoxious to the wrath of God; so that the plaster might be as broad as the sore, we must be sanctified and justified; and as we were first unholy before we were guilty, so doth Christ regenerate us that he may pardon us, and pardon us that he may further sanctify us and make us fit for the Lord's use. First we are changed by repentance towards God and faith in the Redeemer, and then receive remission of sins: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith.' The one must be done that we may obtain the other. Certainly a man must be united to Christ, and engrafted into him, before he can have benefit from him. Christ is the common storehouse, in whom are treasured up all spiritual blessings. Therefore before we are united to him, and take our spiritual being from him, we cannot get these spiritual blessings to be applied to us; as Adam's posterity, before they take their natural being from him, receive not their original guiltiness, from whence all actual transgressions flow: Rom. v. 12, 'As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all, for that all have sinned.' Till we be in Christ, united to him by faith, the wrath of God abideth on us, John iii. 18. Well, then, those that are new creatures are strictly tied to new obedience, unless they will forfeit their claim.

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3. To express their gratitude and thankfulness: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then are all dead;' Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service,' Luke vii. 47, She wept much, because she loved much; and she loved much, because much was forgiven her. Our gratitude and thankfulness to God is expressed not only in word but in deed; not only if we bless him and praise him the more, but if we love him the more, and fear him the more, and honour him the more in our lives and conversations. This is the true way of expressing our thankfulness to God, if we walk fruitfully, and be the more abundant in his service.

4. Because they have great encouragements: Ps. cxxx. 4, 'There is forgiveness, wherefore thou shouldst be feared/ Mercy maketh God amiable to us; a condemning God is not so easily loved as a gracious and reconciled God. None are so encouraged to serve him as those that have found him gracious.

Use. Let me now exhort you to seek after the pardon of sins. To this end—

1. Consider your necessity. If you were only as you were by nature, 'Children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3, yet you must be converted, and become as little children, that you may be capable of the pardoning mercy o God. There is enough in little children of that which is hateful to God. Surely it is through the blood of Christ, which washeth them from their uncleanness, that they are accepted with him, and the covenant of God that forgiveth them. There is no way of saving any that belong to mankind but by a redeemer and a recoverer, the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore they need a pardon.

But this is not your case; but you have for a long time neglected God, and wronged him by the continual excesses and breakings out of your sin and folly. What have you to stead you but a pardon?

2. Consider the grounds and hopes of pardon; God's merciful nature and self-inclination to pity us. God hath made a way for it by the blood of Jesus, in the gospel-law or new covenant, if we will submit to the terms of it. There he hath bound his justice and faith fulness: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess and forsake our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Nothing sets forth his glory so much as this. It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence; surely then it is a perfection to forgive sin; for whatever is excellent in man is much more in God.

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3. Consider what a blessed comfort it is to have sin forgiven: Ps. xxxii. 1, 2, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered: blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile.' Sin is a burden to a troubled conscience, too heavy to be borne. Oh, how great a blessing is it to be eased of this burden, and to have our filthiness covered, and not to have iniquity imputed to us, not to have our sins charged upon us to our condemnation!

Use 2. To stir us up not to offend God any more, or provoke him to anger by our sins. God's mercy in remission of sin should make us more cautious in committing it. Because the old score is wiped off, let us not run on upon a new one; being washed, let us not defile ourselves again, and wallow in that mire again out of which we were so lately drawn. If God forgets and remembereth our sins no more, let us not act them over again, as if we would strive to make work for pardoning mercy, and shame and sorrow to ourselves, and set our teeth on edge with the forbidden fruit of sin, whereof we are now ashamed.

SERMON II.

I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have over come the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.—1 JOHN ii. 13, 14.

OBSERVE in these words—

1. That there are three sorts of christians, 'fathers,' 'young men,' and 'little children.'

2. Several things are ascribed to them, correspondent and proper to every age—

[1.] To fathers, that ‘they have known him that was from the beginning.’ The knowledge of ancient things which are past is best befitting old men.

[2.] That which he ascribeth to young men is, that they ‘are strong,’ that ‘the word of God abideth in them,’ that they ‘have over come the wicked one.’ Strength for war is fit for young men.

[3.] To babes and little children, ‘because you have known the Father.’ Little children acknowledge their parents are dear to them, hang about them, and cannot live without them.

I shall now insist upon the first observation, the distinction of three sort of christians, ‘fathers,’ ‘young men,’ and ‘little children.’ The question is, whether this distinction respects the diversity of their natural age, or their different measures of growth in grace? Some apply it only to their natural age, others more properly understand it of their spiritual growth.

I shall give you the sense of these words in several propositions.

1. Though spiritual growth be most considerable here, yet natural age is not altogether to be excluded. God hath people of all sorts and sizes, some old, some in the prime and freshness of youth, others that are but newly got out of infancy and childhood. As it is hard to find out a calling wherein there are not some one or other that belong to God, so not an age wherein God hath not showed some remarkable instances of his grace. For fathers or old men, we read of Paul the aged, Philem. 9, and of Mnason an old disciple, Acts xxi. 16. Among young men we read of Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3, ‘That in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and carved images, and molten images.’ He began to reign at eight years old, as soon as out of his minority. So of good Obadiah: 1 Kings xviii. 12, ‘But I thy servant fear God from my youth.’ In the rank of children we read of Samuel: 1 Sam. ii. 18, ‘And Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child;’ and of Timothy, ‘that from a child he had known the holy scriptures,’ 2 Tim iii. 15. Hosanna was not displeasing to Christ in little children, yea, it was defended by him: Mat. xxi. 15, 16, ‘And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus said unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?’ God instils a measure of grace into the hearts of little ones, and is delighted in their praise according to their measure of understanding suitable to their age. He that punished little children for crying Baldpate to his prophet, defendeth little children, and accepts it as an honour when they cried Hosanna to himself. Well, then, people of all ages should apply themselves to religion. Old men excuse themselves, they are too old to interest themselves in Christ; and children are not ripe, and young men are otherwise occupied; but fathers for age should be also fathers for knowledge and godliness. It is a great blessing and a crown of honour when the hoary head is ‘found in a way of righteousness,’ Prov. xvi. 31; when a man is grown old and greyheaded in Christ’s service, as Enoch

lived three hundred and sixty-five years, and ‘walked with God,’ Gen. v. 22; a long age and well spent. On the contrary, how sad is it when men have spent many years unfruitfully, and are acquainted with all other things but God and their own souls, and have not as yet begun to live spiritually; when they have one foot in the grave, and are as good as dead already! As it is said of Abraham, Heb. xi. 12, ‘Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead.’ You never begin to live till you live in Christ. You have but told over so many summers and winters; all that time is lost that is spent in your unregeneracy. A man may be long at sea, and yet make but a short voyage, get but a little ground, though long tossed upon the waves. Oh, bethink yourselves before your hoary head go down to the grave in sorrow I Say not, as Nicodemus, ‘Shall a man re-enter into his mother’s womb, being old?’ This is a spiritual work that must pass upon you. God promiseth to pour out his Spirit upon old ones: Acts ii. 17, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.’ Out of a ruinous heap of stones that is ready to drop in pieces, he can raise up to himself a temple for the holy Ghost to dwell in. Submit to this work before it be too late. Chimneys long foul, if they be not swept, are fired at length: ‘The sinner of a hundred years old shall be accursed;’ Isa. lvi. 20, ‘There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die a hundred years old, but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed.’ It is a difficult place; but the meaning is, that God promiseth his people long life; and if they did attain to it, and employed it merely to fill up the measure of their sins, it should not be to them a blessing, but a curse; that is, he that lives unreclaimed and unreformed shall at length prove an accursed wretch.

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2. For young men, it concerneth them to apply their hearts to godliness. There is an ignorant and profane conceit which possesseth many men’s minds, that it is not so necessary for young men to study the scriptures, or to trouble themselves much with thinking of heaven or the life to come, because they are young and lusty, and likely to live many years, and therefore think it more fit for them to follow the world, and mind the things of this life, and let old men alone to think of heaven and holiness. Our apostle was not of this mind: ‘I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you.’ And the scripture biddeth us to ‘remember our Creator in the days of our youth,’ Eccles. xii. 1. Our best and flowery years should be consecrated to God. And David would have the ‘young man cleanse his way,’ Ps. cxix. 9. The world thinketh, What have young folk to do with so serious a work? When old age hath snowed upon their heads, and the smart experience of more years in the world hath ripened them for so severe a discipline, then it is time to think of repentance, and cleansing the heart from sin, and providing for our last end and great account. No; God demandeth his right of the young man, that he should be seasoned betimes with grace. It is but reason that God, that gave all, should have our first and best; they glorify God most who begin with him soonest. The lusts of youth being boiling hot, need the correction of a more severe discipline. Youth are apt to be inclined to liberty and carnal pleasures, are led by the motions of the flesh, are headstrong in their passions; the devil layeth most snares for them, as

those who are most prone to sin, who are like to serve him longest; and therefore, that they may not be caught in Satan's snares, they should begin with God betimes. It prevents many sins which afterward will be a trouble to us. We think tricks of youth are long since forgotten and forgiven. Oh, but the guilt of them may flash in our faces, even after they are pardoned: Ps. xxv. 7, 'Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord;' Job xiii. 26, 'For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me possess the iniquities of my youth.' It will save us a great deal of trouble in age. A good man may remember old sins with new fears, that they are not pardoned. While it is easy to sin, it is not easy to believe the pardon of sin; but as a man groweth up into a greater sense and esteem of God's holiness, he will find it more difficult to believe a pardon. Now afflictions may awaken the sense of old sins, as old bruises trouble us a long time after upon every change of weather.

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3. For babes or little children; they being born in sin, must also be born again. Little children are baptized and washed, for they have filthiness to be cleansed away in the laver of regeneration, as heretofore they were circumcised: Deut. xxx. 6, 'And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live;' because there is filthiness to be pared away. And many times God shameth old men when little ones get the start of them. Christ inviteth little children to come to him that he might bless them, Mark x. 16. They cannot be brought to him before they are welcome. The great God, whom heaven and earth cannot contain, deigneth to dwell in the hearts of little ones. Surely they that have the education of children belonging to them should season them betimes with good principles; they find the benefit of it ever afterward. Timothy proved the better instrument because of his good education; the apostle telleth us, that his 'faith dwelt first in his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice,' 2 Tim i. 5. Certainly it is much to have children brought up in knowledge, and an owning of the power of godliness. Families are societies to be sanctified to God, as well as churches. Governors of them have a charge of souls, as well as pastors. Many offer their children to God in baptism, but educate and bring them up for the world and the flesh; as the Jews: Ezek. xvi. 20, 'Moreover, thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, which thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them.' The scripture often inviteth us to a careful education of them; and there be many promises of good success: Prov. xxii. 6, 'Train up a child in the way in which he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' Dye the cloth in the wool, and not in the web, and the colour is the more durable. God worketh strangely in children, and many times rare things are found in them beyond expectation.

But now in regard of spiritual growth—

1. There is a great difference among christians; all are not of one stature, strength, and growth in godliness; as here, there are fathers, young men, and babes. He supposeth the more elderly will be fathers in Christ, and that every one hath profited according to his time and standing. So in the parable of the sower, Mat. xiii., some brought forth 'fruit thirty, some sixty, and some an

hundred-fold,' Mat. xiii. 23. There is not only a difference between the good soil and the bad ground, but the bad[11] soil is not in all places alike fruitful. Every true christian that is fruitful doth not bring forth fruit in a like measure. So in the parable of the talents, there is five, two, and one, Mat. xxv. 21-23. He is owned as a good servant that brought an account of his gain proportionable to his receipt. So Christ, when he giveth Peter charge of his flock, John xxi. 15, 16, 'Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.' There are varieties of tempers and degrees of strength among christians. Some are weak, or lambs; some stronger, or sheep: Isa. xl. 11, 'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom; and shall gently lead those that are with young.' They all need a ministry to teach, whether lambs or sheep, whether fathers or children. So again, some are weak and some are strong: Rom. xiv. 1, 'Him that is weak in the faith, receive you.' Some need milk, and some stronger meat: Heb. v. 13, 14, 'For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe; but strong meat belongeth unto them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.' Well, then, you see there is great variety of christians, who differ, not only from the carnal and wicked, but among themselves, in several degrees of excellencies. God created Adam and Eve in their full perfection, but doth not regenerate us into our full stature in Christ.

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2. It may fall out that the elder christians may be babes in Christ, and the younger christians rather fathers for their longer experience in the things of God, and for the better government of their passions. A young man may be an old disciple; as Josiah, Samuel, and King Edward the Sixth. The Spirit of God doth wonderfully discover itself in some betimes; as in Samuel, Jeremiah, and Timothy. Ignatius in his epistle to the Magnesians saith, There are some οἱ τὴν πολιὰν μάτην φέροντες, that they hang out the bush of grey hairs in vain, as inviting others to take notice of their folly: these are children of days, of grey heads but green wits; ancient of age, but of childish behaviour and disposition, Whereas David when young was wiser than his enemies, than his teachers, than the ancients: Ps. cxix. 100, 'I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.' Gracious abilities come not from age, but from the Spirit. He was 'wiser than his enemies,' because he consulted not with flesh and blood, but with the word of God, or his duty: as plain honesty will be found at length to be the best wisdom. He was 'wiser than his teachers,' because he contented not himself with naked doctrinal truths, but laboured with his conscience to make them profitable to himself, and so saw further by these truths into his own cause than they intended. Wiser than the ancients, or men of long study and experience, because of his diligent practice. Those who are slow and dull of conceit, by long use may grow wise; and having smarted often, learn by their own harms to be more circumspect. But now the Spirit of God can teach us in an instant, and a man well studied in God's law may excel the ancients in true zeal, knowledge, and piety. Mortified young ones may have more of this wisdom than the ancients. Ancient men try several conclusions to their own loss;

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[11] Qu. 'good'?—ED.

but God is more ancient than they, and at one view and prospect seeth all things; if he will direct me, I am safe. Joseph young, at seventeen years old, was wiser than his brethren. Naaman's 'servant came near, and spake to him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much more then when he saith, Wash and be clean?' 2 Kings v. 13. Christ at twelve years of age puzzled the doctors. Young Elihu brings milder words and better arguments in the dispute with Job than his aged friends, chap. xxxii. Solomon was very wise when young. Daniel and his fellows ten times more than all the astrologers and magicians, though children, Dan. i. 17-20. Joseph taught the senators of Egypt wisdom. It is God's free grace and sovereignty, who giveth to every one as he pleaseth: Job xxxii. 7-9 'I said, Days should speak, and the multitude of years teach wisdom: but there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgment.' God will not be tied to age. Some drink in religion with their milk. Jeremiah was sanctified in the womb, Jer. i. 5. And many times youth goeth before the aged in ripeness of wisdom, and in solid and settled manners, though they are so much behind them in number of years. So there are old children.

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3. As to spiritual growth, some may be weak and strong, young and old at the same time, in different respects, as we see by experience. Some are weak in knowledge, rude and unsettled in the faith, who yet have a good zeal toward God, and are temperate, just, and holy, and have a great command over their affections and passions. On the other side, some are of a good understanding, and they come behind in no gift, yet are subject to carnal passions and affections, and so are babes in that respect: 1 Cor. iii. 1-3, 'And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able: for ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you strife and division, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?' Our first parents, the upper part of their souls were well furnished, yet miscarried by appetite. Solomon, who had so great wisdom, had also his foolish lusts. Therefore, the apostle biddeth us add to knowledge temperance, 2 Peter i. 5. A great measure of grace is seen in governing our own hearts. Now a christian should labour for both, for a good heart well-headed, and a head well-hearted. Of the two it is better to excel in graces than in parts. In the primitive times there was a distinction of the ψυχικὸι and πνευματικὸι; the ψυχικὸι, such as had rare perfections of learning and parts, and πνευματικὸι, spiritual. Sometimes these terms were applied to those who had attained to a higher degree of knowledge and sanctification: Gal. vi. 1, 'If a man be overtaken with a fault, ye that are spiritual restore him.' 'Spiritual' is put for a higher sort of christians. A spiritual people is not a people of parts, knowledge, and abilities, but of grace and sanctification.

4. There is a wonderful difference between christians and themselves at sundry times; so that these three degrees may be coincident. The gravest father may be as weak as the youngest child, as violently tempted as the young man. The state of a godly man is not always one and the same; sometimes they are carried into the mount to behold Christ in his glory, at another time tossed with

waves and tempests, as a ship ready to sink; now rapt up with Paul into the paradise of God, to see things which cannot be uttered, and anon they are afflicted with a messenger of Satan. Alterations and changes, calms and storms, peace and troubles, combats and conquests, weaknesses and strength, are there found in God's children; therefore the best are to walk humbly, and in a holy fear and trembling. Satan's design is against the spiritual christian, and those who are more eminent than others, to throw them into the mire, that religion may have the greater wound and dishonour. Thus did Satan desire to winnow Christ's own disciples: Luke xxii. 31, 'And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.' And the apostle biddeth the spiritual, which sometimes signifies a higher sort of christians, to 'take heed lest they also be tempted,' Gal. vi. 1; and those that stand, to 'take heed lest they fall,' 1 Cor. x. 12. It is woful when a christian of great parts and grace begins to have any confidence in himself, and falls, as Peter did. In violent gusts of wind, even cedars may fall to the ground. Therefore, as we grow in grace, we should increase in humility and godly fear.

5. All this doth not hinder but that some from their settled constant frame may be called 'fathers,' 'young men,' and 'babes.'

[1.] Fathers are such who, through long experience and much acquaintance with a godly life, do walk more evenly, and constantly, and cheerfully, and fruitfully in the ways of God than others do. la old men more constancy may be expected, or a more even and an uninterrupted course of godliness, because they are more acquainted with the snares of Satan to prevent them, more weaned from the baits of sense, and so sin hath not such a power over them; walk more cheerfully in their service to God: 1 John i. 3, 4, 'That which we have heard and seen, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. These things I write unto you, that your joy may be full;' Mat. xi. 30, 'For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light;' as knowing not only the toil, but the pleasure of obedience. Being inured to a course of godliness, it is as another nature to them; the difficulty is worn off. It is said, Ps. xcii. 14, 'They shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.' Their last works are their best works, because their salvation is nearer than when they first believed. In short, they have brought their hearts to a heavenly temper, and accustomed themselves to a heavenly course, and do delight in obedience as their perfect liberty. These, though not grown up into a perfect man in Christ Jesus, or come to their complete growth, yet have made a great advance in heaven's way.

[2.] Young men in Christ are such as have most courage, resolution, and earnestness, yet not that experience which Christ's old servants have gotten; a middle sort of christians, not so settled as the aged, nor yet altogether so weak and infirm as babes. They are more exercised with temptations, and a life of conflicts, as having many rebellious passions and inordinate desires to subdue, which being irritated by the suggestions of Satan and the baits of sense, do put them to no

small trouble; that they may not dishonour religion, and put a damp upon their hopes, and obstruct their own progress to heavenly glory.

[3.] There are babes or little children, and they are of two sorts—

(1.) Some are as it were in the birth, *inter regenerandum*; it is a doubtful question whether they are regenerated, yea or no; have the grace of the third or fourth ground. Of such the apostle speaketh, Gal. iv. 19, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.' They are such whose evidences of regeneration lie under ground, and much in the dark; so that as to outward appearance there is little of the life of God to be seen in them. Their apprehensions of the love of God are very uncertain; the beauty of the image of Christ is hardly discernible in them. They have good inclinations, will not turn off from the holy ways of God, but keep waiting upon them until grace be impressed upon them in a fairer character. They prize the favour of God, and nothing can satisfy them without it, though as yet they have no persuasions of it. They have a sense of religion, though it cannot stand up in such considerable strength against temptations.

(2.) There are others who hang upon the breast, as infants that are new-born, can hardly live between one ordinance and another: 1 Peter ii. 2, 'As now-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.' They cry after their Father, though with a lisping and stammering tongue. They take pleasure in the tenders of grace, and cannot live without renewed applications of the sensible comforts of God's presence; must be dandled on the knees, cannot digest the frowns of a father, and are not yet hardened for conflicts and the stricter severities of religion.

Use 1. If there be 'fathers,' 'young men,' and 'children,' then—

1. Let us 'not despise the day of small things,' Zech. iv. 10; not in ourselves, nor others. Not in ourselves; let us not conclude a nullity of grace, though we be in the lowest form of christians. There is the highest measure, and that is heroical grace; and there are some in the middle rank, some that are yet conflicting with great temptations; some in the lowest, weak, and unsettled rank, and yet would not quite turn from God for all the world. It is ground that bringeth forth thirty or sixty, but not a hundred-fold. Lambs belong to Christ as well as elder sheep; babes as well as young men and fathers. The ear of corn that hath thirty grains is carried into the barn as well as that which hath sixty; and in the family of God there are little children as well as grown persons. He is a good servant that had but two talents, and gained but two. Christ rebuketh those who kept little children from him; much more will he receive spiritual babes. Strait necked vessels are long in filling, yet if we be but filled, it is our comfort. Christ would not have us break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, Mat. xii. 20.

2. Let us not despise the meanest degree of grace in others. Time was when every one was a babe in Christ, and time may be when those who are but babes may grow old men: Mat. xx. 16,

‘So the last shall be first, and the first last.’ If we be higher, let us bless God: 1 Cor. iv. 7, ‘Who maketh thee to differ?’ not only from the carnal, but from those who begin to have a sense of religion, and have some sincerity, though not that perfection as others have. The apostles often persuade the strong to be charitable and indulgent to those who are weak, and not to despise and contemn them: Rom. xiv. 1, ‘Him that is weak in the faith, receive you.’ He biddeth them to take the weak into his bosom with much pity and compassion. So his rule of peace: Phil. iii. 15, 16, ‘Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall even reveal this unto you. Nevertheless whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.’ Though strings in tune must not be brought down to those out of tune, and the weak must not guide the strong, yet we must bear with their weaknesses, even with their affectation of pre-eminence, and not crush them and suppress them. How patient and condescending was Christ to the disciples, notwithstanding their dulness and corruptions!

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Use 2. Let us consider in what rank we are, that we may wisely apply ourselves to the duties proper to our condition. Usually that which old men want is fervour; that which young men want, if they know their hearts, is sincerity: the one must beg quickening grace, as David doth often in Ps. cxix. That which the other should most labour after is a sincere love to God and holy things. There may be a strong love where there is not a sincere love; a moral sincerity not to dissemble, but not a supernatural sincerity, when their love is a pure flame, not enkindled nor fed with anything but fire from heaven. Many have zeal, but they know not what spirit they are of. Old professors are more heavenly, young men more active in present duties. Now it is good that one age should borrow of another; that young men should consider their end, and old men be doing for God while they have any opportunity. The old are more prudent, the young more zealous. Our zeal should be seasoned with prudence, and our prudence quickened by zeal.

Use 3. To awaken us to labour after the highest rank of grace; it is the aim and purpose of every believer to be in the highest form. Luke speaketh only of a hundred-fold, Luke xviii. 31, to show that we should not content ourselves with less. God is the more honoured the more fruitful we are: Phil. i. 9, ‘And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in all knowledge, and in all judgment or sense;’ John xv. 8, ‘Herein is my Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. The more perfect, the more like God: for we are required to be holy as he is holy, and to be perfect as he is perfect, Mat. v. 48. Therefore, as we must not always be babes, so not always young men. When men have lived long, and have time and other means to improve themselves both in knowledge and grace, they are very culpable before God: Heb. v. 13, ‘For every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.’ They had teaching enough, and yet are babes in grace: John xiv. 9, ‘Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip?’ Oh, do not keep in low things! To be always weak and always carnal doth highly provoke God.

Again, look after growth and strength according to your means: Mat. viii. 10, ‘Christ marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel;’ Mark vi. 6, ‘And he marvelled at their unbelief.’ God proportioneth our trials, not according to what we have *de facto*, but *de jure*, according to what we might have been. They that have great means, and long experience, and much acquaintance with God, have great temptations.

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Lastly, How sad will it be for aged christians to be infants in grace! 2 Chron. xvii. 3, ‘And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David.’ That there should be spots and blemishes in those who are stars of the first magnitude, how sad is this!

SERMON III.

I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that was from the beginning, &c.—1 JOHN ii. 13, 14.

THE apostle beginneth with the fathers, or grown christians; he describeth them from their long acquaintance with God in Christ, ‘You have known him that was from the beginning.’ So that they are fathers with our apostle who are not only experienced in worldly things, but that which is a much greater honour to them, have attained to the saving knowledge of Christ.

Doct. In the distinction of christians, they are fathers who best know him that was from the beginning.

1. Here is the object to be explained, ‘Him that was from the beginning.’

2. The act, what kind of knowledge it is that constituted ‘fathers.’

3. What is herein proper to fathers, or how this can be any ground of a distinction between them and others; since all christians are to know Christ, it is indispensably required. And, secondly, babes are also said to know the Father.

I. For the object, ‘By him that was from the beginning,’ is meant Christ, who is also thus elsewhere described: John i. 1, 2, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God: the same was in the beginning with God;’ 1 John i. 1, ‘That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes.’ This title is given to Christ to note two things (as Zanchy noteth well), that he is from the beginning, *quoad virtutem salvificam et quoad personam*.

1. As to his office and saving efficacy, so he was the ‘Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,’ as to God’s eternal purpose and decree, Rev. xiii. 8.

2. As to his personal subsistence, so ‘his goings forth were from everlasting,’ Micah v. 2; John xvii. 5, ‘And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory that I had with thee before the world was.’ These two are great points, both his eternal generation and his eternal designation to the office of mediator; and both these are often pressed in scripture, but the first principally by our apostle.

[1.] His eternal designation to the office of mediator is often pressed: Titus i. 2, ‘In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began;’ 2 Tim. i. 9, ‘According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.’ This is pressed upon a double account—partly to show the immutability and unchangeableness of his grace; it is eternal like himself. The terms of it are fixed long before the world was. And partly to obviate both heathenish and Jewish cavils. To them Jesus Christ seemed a new god of a few years standing, whereas both the heathenish and Jewish religion boasted of their antiquity; whereas indeed all other religions were but novelties, and Christ and his gospel the only true ancient religion, as being the result of God’s eternal thoughts.

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[2.] The other point, Christ’s eternal subsistence; that our apostle doth much insist upon both in the gospel and this epistle, because of some ancient heretics, Ebion and Cerinthus, with their followers, who denied it in his time, as in our times many now do. Well, then, Christ being from the beginning, signifieth the eternity of the Son of God, which is the great lesson which maketh impression upon fathers.’ To be from the beginning beareth divers senses; sometimes it noteth the time of the delivery of the law: 1 John ii. 7, ‘I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning.’ Sometimes for the first principles, or erecting or setting up of the gospel-state: Luke i. 2, ‘Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.’ Sometimes for the first institution of a thing: Mat. xix. 8, ‘But from the beginning it was not so.’ The fall is so called, John viii. 44, ‘He is a liar from the beginning.’ The creation is so called, Gen. i. 1, ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.’ But none of these are meant here. It is sometimes put for all eternity; for it is said, Prov. viii. 23, ‘I was set up from everlasting, or ever the earth was.’ Christ had not only his proper and perfect subsistence before the incarnation, but also before the first point of time, wherein God began to create all things.

Now because this is a weighty point, and the joy of our faith, and the strength of our confidence, and the readiness of our obedience, and our thankfulness to God for the mystery of our redemption, and our victory over the world, and our eternal happiness and felicity doth much depend upon Christ’s being the eternal Son of God, I shall do two things—(1.) I shall show you what the scripture saith concerning his being from the beginning; (2.) The benefit of such a meditation.

(1.) What the scripture saith concerning Christ’s existence, or personal subsistence, before he was conceived in the virgin’s womb.

(1*st*.) Some places express that existence without any notation of time, but only that he had a being before his incarnation: John vi. 33, ‘The bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world;’ ver. 38, ‘For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me;’ ver. 62, ‘What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?’ These and many other places prove that Christ was in heaven before he was upon earth. How long, it is not said; but there he was in a state of glory, which he enjoyed before he came down and was made flesh. The Jews, that understood the meaning of these expressions, took them in this sense; for it is said, John vi. 41, 42, ‘The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I come down from heaven?’ They knew his meaning, but his words were a riddle to them, because they looked only to his human nature; but they suffice to prove to christians that he had a being before he was incarnate.

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(2*d*.) There are other scriptures which assign a time, but do not go so high as the creation: John viii. 58, ‘Before Abraham was, I am.’ To say nothing of that form of speech, ‘I am,’ which is God-like, Exod. iii. 14, that which I now plead for is, that Christ was before Abraham was. So 1 Cor. x. 9, ‘They tempted Christ in the wilderness;’ called ‘the angel of God’s presence;’ and Moses ‘esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt,’ Heb. XL 26. These places prove that he was long before he was incarnate.

(3*d*.) Some scriptures show that Christ was as soon as the world was, as the text; and Prov. viii. 22, ‘The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.’ So from the 22d to the end of the 31st verse, wisdom is brought in describing her antiquity in many words; that she was present in creating of the world; that wisdom was Christ, who is often called ‘the Wisdom of the Father;’ and here all along speaketh as a person, and as a person distinct from the Father. So John i. 1, 2, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.’ Christ is called ‘the Word,’ as being the interpreter of his Father’s mind; and he is said to be ‘with God,’ as a person distinct from God; and he is said to be ‘in the beginning,’ when all created things got a being and beginning; as Gen. i. 1, ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;’ and in many other places. God made the world by him, Heb. i. 2; and therefore he had a being when the world was made. Because our shallow conceptions can follow eternity no further, but only over the border of time, therefore it is said, ‘in the beginning,’ and ‘from the beginning.’

(4*th*.) That Christ was before the world was: John xvii. 5, ‘And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;’ Heb. i. 10, ‘And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands.’ And the apostle proveth that this is spoken of the Son, ver. 8, ‘But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.’

(5*th*.) That Christ was from all eternity: Micah v. 2, ‘But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.’ That this is spoken of Christ cannot be denied by the citation, Mat. ii. 6, ‘And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel.’

(2.) The benefit of this meditation.

(1*st*.) To further the joy of our faith, in that we see the infinite worth that is in his sufferings to satisfy justice and to expiate sin. He that is from the beginning, who is the eternal Son of God, he offereth to pay a ransom for us. Mere man would not have been of sufficient dignity to interpose between God and man, and to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Man was grown hateful to God by reason of sin, but Christ reconciled him by offering up himself: Heb. ix. 14, ‘How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?’ Acts xx. 28, ‘To feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.’

(2*d*.) To increase the strength of our confidence against all assaults of the enemies of our salvation: 1 John v. 5, ‘Who is he that over cometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?’ What cannot the Son of God do? He is able to maintain the elect against all the temptations of Satan, frowns of the world, and all the opposition we undergo from the rebellions of the flesh. The mighty God will be a prince of peace, Isa. ix. 6. So John xiv. 1, ‘Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.’ Faith gets sure footing in his essence and attributes; no creature can stand out against God.

(3*d*.) That we may be more apprehensive of the greatness of his love, which we shall never be till we consider the dignity of his person. He that was ‘God over all, blessed for ever,’ Rom. ix. 5, that had little need of the sons of men, for what can God want? yet he came to seek and to save them for their own good; not to receive from them, but to give to them. He was happy and glorious from all eternity: ‘Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God,’ Phil. ii. 6. He was not thrust down, but came down. The angels that exalted themselves were degraded: 2 Peter ii. 4, ‘For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.’ We can never understand the depth of Christ’s condescension, nor the merit of his sacrifice, but by reflection upon the height wherein he stood when he undertook our cause and business. That he that was in the form of God should appear in the form of a servant; that the great God should come as an infant into the world, wrapped up in swaddling clothes, laid in a cratch, walking up and down, partaking of all the miseries incident to mankind, and at length hang and die upon a cross; are these small matters to you? That the Almighty God should be debased to the weakness of a child and feeble infant, and the fountain of life should die!

(4*th*.) To show the readiness of our obedience, that we may receive his doctrine, and obey his laws; that we may not be ashamed of his truth, and the profession of his name. He was from the beginning, while yet the world and all the glory of it lay in the womb of nothing; and shall not we give up ourselves to love, and serve, and obey him? Shall things in time frighten or entice us from the duty which we owe to him who was before all time? He can crush his enemies and protect his friends, supply your wants, relieve you in distress; for in him the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily, Col. ii. 9; Heb. ii. 1-3, 'Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;' Heb. xii. 25, 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.' Let us be willing to do anything and suffer anything for so excellent a Lord.

(5*th*.) To increase our reverence, and that the ignominy of his cross may not obscure his glory, nor lessen his respect in our hearts, but that we may have high and honourable thoughts of our humbled Lord in his lowest estate. When we are meditating only upon his humiliation, the natural atheism which is in our hearts is apt to turn those thoughts into a snare, and our respects to the majesty of Christ are abated. Therefore we ought again and again to consider his divine nature, and that glorious estate wherein he was from the beginning, so to balance our thoughts of his humiliation. These are compounded: Isa. ix. 6, 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' Mary's child, yet God's son; a counsellor, yet the mighty God; the prince of peace, but the everlasting father. If we despise him as the carpenter's son, let us remember he is the great architect who hath built the whole world: Heb. xi. 10, 'For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' If we stumble at his being a child, let us remember also that he is the everlasting Father. If we are offended at his being on the cross, let us think of him as sitting on the throne, and coming to judge the world.

(6*th*.) To draw our hearts from all created things, and to lessen our respect to worldly vanities, that so our minds and hearts may more look after those things which are eternal and glorious. He that was before the world was will be when the world shall be no more. Christ as God is 'from everlasting to everlasting,' Ps. xc. 2. To him should we look, after him should we seek: Rev. i. 8, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty;' ver. 11, 'Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last;' Rev. ii. 8, 'These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;' Rev. xxii. 13, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.' The first cause and the last end. It is for everlasting blessedness, for the enjoyment of an eternal God, for which our souls were made. He that was from the beginning, and will be when all things end, he should take

up our minds and thoughts. How can we have room for so many thoughts on fading things when we have an eternal God and Christ to think of? What light can we see in a candle when the sun shineth in his full strength? All things in the world, like flowers, serve only for their season, and then wither; and that season is a short one. Thou gloriest in thy riches and preeminence now; but how long wilt thou do so? To-day that house and land is thine, but thou canst not say it will be thine to-morrow. But a believer can say, My God, my Christ, is mine to-day, and will be mine to all eternity. Death taketh all from us, honours and riches, strength and life; but it cannot take God and Christ from us. They are ours to all eternity.

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II. What kind of knowledge it is that is here spoken of. There is a twofold knowledge—(1.) Speculative and historical; (2.) Practical and saving.

1. Speculative and historical, which is but an airy speculation of divine things: with this most content themselves. The Jews had μόρφωσιν τὴς γνώσεως ἐν τῷ νόμω, Rom. ii. 20, ‘a form of knowledge;’ and so hath the formal christian: 2 Tim. iii. 5, ‘Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;’ a map or model of gospel truths. There are different degrees of this,—a memorative knowledge, such as children have, when the field of memory is planted with the seeds of knowledge; as children that are taught to speak of divine mysteries, God, Christ, heaven and hell, sin and righteousness, by rote. As the philosopher observed of young men, that they learned the mathematics with all their hearts and minds, but moral things only to talk of them, τὰ μὲν οὐ πιστεύουσιν οἱ νέοι ἀλλά λέγουσι, rather to rehearse them, and say after others, than believe them. As some rather hear the sound of music than mind the melody and harmony, so they learn divine things, but they do not mind or believe the certainty of those things of which they are instructed; this is the lowest form of speculative knowledge, such as is in children, and those that are childlike affected. Another degree above this is an opinionative knowledge, when they do not only charge their memories, but have a kind of conscience and judgment about these things, so as to be orthodox and right in opinion, and so bustle and contend about that way of religion in which they have been educated, or suiteth best with their fancies and interests. But yet wisdom entereth not upon the heart, Prov. ii. 10. They make men disputers of this world, but not serious practisers of godliness. They have a religion to talk of, but not to live by. They may know much of religion in the notion, and it may be more accurately than a serious christian; as a vintner’s cellar may be better stored with wine than a nobleman’s, but they have it for sale, not for use; so these may dispute for their religion to better effect and purpose than a serious godly man, who yet hath a more intimate perceiving of the truth, though he cannot so accurately form his notions. These are useful in the church, as a rotten post may support a living tree, or as negroes and slaves dig in the mines to bring up gold for others. But for an intimate, deep, heart-affecting knowledge, that is proper to the christian that receives the truth, not only in the light of it, but in the love of it: 2 Thes. ii. 10, ‘They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.’ A blunt iron that is red hot will pierce further into an inch board than a sharp tool that is cold. There is yet beyond these a higher degree of

speculative and historical knowledge, and that is when men have some kind of touch upon their hearts; but it is too slender and insufficient to stand out against all temptations when they rise up in any considerable strength. So we read of some that may be ‘enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,’ Heb. vi. 4, 5. They may ‘escape the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ,’ 2 Peter ii. 20. It is hard to conceive how such practical and important truths should be understood and considered without some touch upon the heart. Thus it may affect men in part, and produce some partial reformation, and some profession and confession of the truth, and they may have some experience of it in some measure, but do afterwards reject it, and prefer sin before it.

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2. Practical and saving. The truth and soundness of our knowledge is mainly known by the effects. We are to ‘know him that was from the beginning,’ so as—

[1.] To believe in him, and to venture our eternal interests in his hands: Ps. ix. 10, ‘For they that know thy name will put their trust in thee;’ 2 Tim. i. 12, ‘For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day;’ depending upon the sufficiency of his merit, and righteousness, and power to secure us against all the enemies of our salvation.

[2.] To know him so as to esteem and prize him: Phil. iii. 8, 9, ‘Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency o the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith.’ Saving knowledge is always joined with a high esteem of Jesus Christ; when we prefer him above all other things: Mat. xiii. 45, 46, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; and when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.’ It must be such a knowledge as weaneth the heart from the world and worldly vanities.

[3.] To know him so as to embrace him with love and desire: John iv. 10, ‘If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.’ Christ is then more savingly and rightly known when he is desired and embraced with our dearest affections. No knowledge is allowed for knowledge in scripture but the affectionate knowledge: 1 Cor. viii. 1-3, ‘Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.’ If our knowledge of God be joined with a sincere love to God and Christ in all temptations, then it is a right knowledge.

[4.] To know him so as to obey him: Jer. xxii. 16, ‘He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the Lord.’ This was to declare their

knowledge by the effects; as many men's actions are an implied blasphemy, if you run them up into their principle: Ps. xxxvi. 1, 'The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes;' Titus i. 16, 'They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.' So many men's conversations speak out their faith and knowledge, and those holy principles which are rooted in their hearts, 1 John ii. 3, 4. Our evangelist will best explain himself: 'Now,' saith he, 'hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' Thus in scripture dialect we are said to know no more than we practise, and our actions to give a better image of our thoughts and imaginations than our words, and the latent principles in our minds are discovered by the course that we take rather than by bare profession. A lie is *falsum cum intentione fallendi*—a falsehood spoken with an intent to deceive. To live a falsehood is more than to speak a falsehood; they deceive the world and deceive their own souls. Certainly that man hath no religion that hath no God, and he hath no God that preferreth his base lusts before obedience to his precepts. It is but a perjured profession that our carnalists make of the knowledge of God and of Christ, the greatest lie that ever was told, and such a lie as reflecteth upon the honour of God, for they profess a religion which they abhor. All their worship is a lie, and their profession a plain perjury, whilst they live as if they were baptized in the devil's name to be his bondmen, and had sworn to cherish worldly and fleshly lusts, and not to mortify them; as if in their baptism they had entered a protestation against God and Christ.

III. What is herein proper to fathers, or how can this be a ground of distinction between them and others, since all christians are indispensably bound to know Christ? John xvii. 3, 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' And babes are said to 'know the Father.'

Answer first, to the first particle.

1. Whatever is said of either age, fathers, young men, or babes, doth certainly belong to all; as to overcome the wicked one, so to know him that was from the beginning. To know the Father is common to all the ranks, only most eminently in one more than in the other. As all sorts of ages have reason, only wisdom is eminent in the aged, strength in the young, affection to parents in the babes.

2. There is some peculiar fitness in these characters, and in the several ages mentioned; as—

[1.] Plenitude of knowledge belongeth to the ancient: Job xii. 12, 'With the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding.' Old men have had a great opportunity to gather wisdom; and where should we go for wisdom but to them? Wisdom and knowledge are among the fathers.

[2.] Old men are versed in the knowledge of ancient things, and love to discourse of things done long ago. So the apostle commendeth his fathers, or old men, for that they have known the Ancient of days, or the eternal Son of God, which maketh them more happy than all that knowledge which they have gotten by many years or long experience in the world.

[3.] Their knowledge is different from the knowledge of others, as begetting—

(1.) A more rooted affection. Young christians have greater qualms and sick fits of love, but these are 'rooted and grounded in love;' Eph. iii. 18, 19, 'That they may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' At first our affection to God and heavenly things may more quickly and fervently put forth itself, as the early blossoms in the spring, which are soon withered. The strongest qualms and fits of affection are upon our first acquaintance, and while religion is a novel thing, and our love wholly showeth itself in sensitive expressions. The tide and current of our love may run strong while it is not dispersed into the several channels of obedience. They have at first strange transports of soul, but afterward it cometh to be rooted into a solid affection and fixed bent of heart toward God, and is that disposition of soul which is called godliness, and is distinguished from holiness: 2 Peter iii. 11, 'What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' An addictedness and devotedness to God as our chief happiness and last end.

(2.) Their knowledge begets experience. Knowledge is put for the experimental feeling of the work of grace upon our hearts: Phil. iii. 10: 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death;' Phil. i. 9, 'And I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment,' or in all sense. Now this kind of knowledge is in the fathers; more in old christians than in others; God and they are of long acquaintance: Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint thy self with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee.' They have had long trial and experience of him in removing their doubts, answering their prayers, and fulfilling his promises, and so experimentally know him more than others.

The other part of the objection I shall discuss when I come to the last branch; only the object is diversified, though the act be the same. Old men in the gospel find the Ancient of days; and children find a father, and know him more distinctly: 2 Peter i. 5, 'Add to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge.'

SERMON IV.

I write unto you fathers, &c.—1 JOHN ii. 13, 14.

USE 1. To teach us who are fathers, or ‘in the highest rank of christianity.

1. They are such as are more delightfully employed in the exercises of godliness. I ascribe this to fathers, partly because they are acquainted with the pleasures of obedience: 1 John v. 3, ‘For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.’ And they have tasted that the Lord is gracious, 1 Peter ii. 3; and *optima demonstratio a sensibus*—the surest proof is taken from sense: they ‘know the grace of God in truth,’ Col. i. 6. And partly because by long custom they have inured themselves thereto, so that it is become another nature to them. They are alive unto God; and what a man doth with naturalness, he doth it frequently, constantly, and easily. We see in all other things this giveth readiness and promptness. Man is naturally averse from God, and custom addeth a stiffness to this bent: Jer. xiii. 23, ‘Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.’ By custom and continuance men are habituated in evil, that it becometh a second nature to them. Now when men are settled in a good course, there is somewhat answerable. They are in their element when they are speaking of God and heavenly, things; they do a thing kindly when they are acting for God. The carnal nature will return, and violent temptations will much unsettle us; but surely it is an advantage to have walked in a godly course for some long space of time, to be an old disciple. The apostle speaketh of Timothy that he did naturally care for their estate, Phil. ii. 20.

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2. They do more wisely manage the affairs of the spiritual life. The scripture speaketh of being ‘wise to salvation,’ wise in that which is good: Rom. xvi. 19, ‘But yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.’ And the children of God should be ‘wise in their generation,’ Luke xvi. 8. Without this practical wisdom there is no escaping the snares of the deceiver, and getting safe to heaven. Now this wisdom is more in the old than the young believer. As to the young, see 1 Tim. iii. 6, ‘Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil;’ νεόφυτον, a late convert, or young christian, or one newly come to the faith; such an one is more various and uncertain in his motions, hath not that spiritual prudence, and that measure of circumspection, which old exercised christians have, and so is far more likely to fall into the condemnation of the devil than the experienced. On the other side, consider what advantages they have, as knowing their helps and hindrances: Heb. v. 14, ‘But strong meat belongeth unto them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.’ They know the craft of Satan: 2 Cor. ii. 11, ‘Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.’ They have felt the bitterness of sin: Ps. li. 6, ‘In the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom.’ They know what hindrances they shall have from the devil, world, and flesh, and how they may resist occasions of evil, defeat the policies of the devil, and grow wise to salvation, and the world may not divert and distract them from the love of God and the exercise of godliness. Experience hath made them wise to decline the rocks upon which they dashed heretofore. In all arts and trades men attain greater niceness and skill by pains and observation. And shall a christian gain nothing by long practice and continual watchfulness?

Surely the blows and foils received have made them skilful, and wary to disappoint the assaults of the enemy.

3. They are more fixed in the truth against the seduction of error This is in the text. The seducers of that age denied the godhead of Christ; and it always holdeth good: Eph. iv. 14, 'That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.' There is an estate of childish ignorance and infirmities, and there is above this a kind of growth and growing age, whilst we are making progress towards perfection; and above this there is our manly age. In our younger time there is a simplicity and easiness to credit all that is presented to us. Babes in Christ are weak in all the parts of the new man, in knowledge, prudence, faith, love, patience. But now we must not be always children, not always weak and unsettled. Surely as we grow in years we should grow in knowledge and prudence; the aged have more a spirit of discerning, more solidity in judgment, and stability in truth, and are not so easily transported with the vain and giddy notions of an unsettled head. Errors are as palpable deviations from the way to glory as profaneness and gross sins. Therefore it is a part of the perfection of a christian to be settled against them, which advantage the aged have above others, as the testimony of Christ is more confirmed in them, 1 Cor. i. 6; 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.' They have arguments at hand in their own bosoms. What was before in their books is transcribed upon their hearts; thither they can repair, and find reasons enough to confirm them in the truth. This testimony in ourselves doth most befriend the main and great articles of christianity, though it also confirmeth the several parts of it. They that have felt benefit by the truth are most likely to know the mind of God in lesser things: John vii. 17, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.' He that hath felt sin bitter can never be tempted to think it is no great evil; so he that hath felt Christ sweet cannot but prize him and cleave to him above all. The long experience of the fruit of duties confirms them against those delusions which would draw us from them.

4. Their hearts are brought into a more settled, heavenly temper. In christians of a lower rank there is a greater inconstancy in their choice; though they are not as the half-convert, double-hearted and unstable, James i. 8, yet very uncertain in their motions; but after wards they bring their hearts into a more even, holy frame, and a more fixed bent towards heavenly things: Col. i. 23, 'If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.' A man at first hath not disentangled his heart from the snare of worldly felicity, and therefore his mind and heart is scattered to so many vain impertinent objects, and they are busied more about transitory pleasures, and therefore are shifting off and on, and so darken the spiritual life by the eruption of the carnal nature; and therefore David beggeth, Ps. lxxxvi. 4, 'Rejoice the soul of thy servant, for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul;' and the apostle, 2 Thes. iii. 5, 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.' Their hearts are straight

set towards God and heavenly things. The apostle presseth christians, that looked in a short time to appear before God and receive their wages, ‘to be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord,’ 1 Cor. xv. 58. A man may be steadfast in the main, though somewhat moved and shaken, but the apostle would have us not only be steadfast but immovable. A tree that hath long stood out against many stormy winds is the more firmly rooted; so a seasoned christian that hath gone through all weathers. But men that have not solid rooting wave hither and thither. There is initial grace, and a radicated state of grace.

5. They oftener meditate of God, his word, and works, and providence. The reasons why I think the more aged sort of christians are known by their meditation, are partly because, being past learning, they improve their knowledge by meditation. They have had a long time to make provision, and hoard up spiritual treasure; and now they bring it forth: Mat. xii. 31, ‘A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things.’ And partly because meditation is a difficult work for young beginners, who have not so good a stock to spend upon, and so are more empty and barren; they are not as yet cleansed from vain and idle thoughts, nor have inured themselves to self-government. But now long experience hath taught the aged christian what a hindrance it is to have their hearts pestered and disordered with vanities, how it deadeneth their prayers; and therefore they throng themselves with holy thoughts of God in Christ, who is the beloved of their souls. They feast themselves upon him with the dearest and most delightful apprehensions: Ps. civ. 34, ‘My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord;’ Cant. i. 13, ‘A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me; he shall lie all night between my breasts.’ They often meditate of God, his infinite majesty, his everlasting being, his power, wisdom, goodness, and mercy. His word: Ps. cxix. 97, ‘Oh, how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day;’ ver. 103, ‘How sweet are thy words to my taste 1 yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!’ His works: Ps. viii. 3, 4, ‘When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained: what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?’ His judgments on the wicked: Ps. lviii. 10, ‘The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked;’ Ps. xxxvii. 34-36, ‘Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree; yet he passed away, and lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.’ In every age some of the wicked are made spectacles of God’s threatened judgments before the eyes of his people. Every man in his own time maketh his remarks and observations, as the prophet had his observations in his time. These the believer layeth up in his heart, which feedeth his faith, and calmeth his passions, and awakeneth his zeal, preventeth rash judging by present appearances. His provision for his people: Ps. xxxvii. 25, ‘I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed

begging bread.' His providence to themselves. They have been long students in providence. Making good his promises: Josh. xxiii. 1, with the 14th, 'And it came to pass, a long time after the Lord had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old. And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all has come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof;' Gen. xlviii. 15, 'And he said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day.' He provided for all our wants, delivered us in all our dangers. How lovely is it for old men to talk of the promises of God, and his mercies that have been of old! As David: Ps. xxv. 6, 'Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses; for they have been ever of old.'

6. They can more feelingly than others speak of the shortness, misery, and sinfulness of the present life: Gen. xlvii. 8, 9, 'And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and I have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.' Jacob had many removings from place to place, and knew by experience that here is no abiding city. Young men are ἐυέλπιστοι, full of worldly hopes. Though others have tried the world before them, yet they think it will succeed better with them: Ps. xlix. 13, 'This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings.' Though others found themselves fondly deceived and frustrated, yet they that succeed them go in the same track; 1 Chron. xxix. 15, old David confesseth so much: 'For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding.' They know the disappointments of a naughty world.

7. They are more weaned from the delights of sense, and have long used to moderate themselves within the bounds of sobriety: Titus ii. 2, 'That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.' Old age being cold and dry, is desirous to warm and moisten itself; and therefore need this caution, they must take heed that they be not mocked with wine and strong drink. Noah and Lot, who lived so long, yet had not got a command over their appetite. They should be examples of sobriety; a tippling old man, what a disgrace is he to his grey hairs! But with the children of God it is otherwise, they know how to spend every day and winter's night in another fashion than in eating, drinking, sporting, and playing. Anna went not out of the temple, and old Simeon waited to see God's salvation.

8. They think and speak of the world to come, and the blessed state of the faithful in the most lively manner, as apprehending it sure and near: 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'For this cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day;' 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up

for me a, crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing;' Rom. xiii. 11, 'And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.' By the course of nature it will not be long ere they are with God; therefore their hearts work the more strongly after it. Natural motion is swifter toward the latter end, when it comes nearer the centre.

9. They attain unto greater soundness and integrity in the essentials of religion: Titus ii. 2, 'That the aged be sober, temperate, sound in faith, charity, patience.' In that verse somewhat is said to the aged, as they are old men, and somewhat as old christians. They that have the most effectual apprehensions of the greatness, goodness, and wisdom of God, and of their own sin, the need of Christ and grace, the truth and excellency of the life to come, and the vanity of this life, are the best christians. They who are most conformed to Christ in humility, meekness, and lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than themselves, that have most hatred of sin, and care to subdue it, and victory over it, and can most deny the flesh, its irregular desires, and bear the inconveniences of it, and whose greatest delight is in God himself, these are the grown christians.

Use 2. To show how much it concerneth fathers in years to be fathers in grace, and to be more eminently religious than others, that they may be a pattern and example to them. First, it conduceth to God's honour. If young men and children should only profess religion, you would take it for indiscretion and hotness of spirit; young punies, they know not what they do. Moses 'when he was grown in years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,' Heb. xi. 24. Fathers, when they served God in their ripest age, and for many years, and yet are not weary of his service, this is an honour to him. Secondly, for your own comfort, what a support and staff is godliness to old age, when decays of nature are recompensed with the increase of grace, the weakness of body with soundness of mind! 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'For which cause we faint not; but though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' The mind is fresh and vigorous when the body is weak. When the eye is dim, as in old Israel, it can see God the invisible one. If with Barzillai we lose our taste, yet we find sweetness in the bread of life. If we die, Christ is our life. Alas! many old men are like vessels long abroach, nothing left in them but the lees and dregs of ignorance and sin. How miserable are such old men, when ignorant of God, and mindless of heavenly things, in part or in whole, when they do not seek after God I In part, when yet weak, very babes in knowledge or grace; weak, unwise, feeble in things of God, and so may easily be foiled by temptations, and miscarry foully. Their example swayeth much; if they are only dead sticks, they do but cumber the ground. But how good is it to leave a sweet scent of religious conversation behind them!

Use 3. That the aged in years and grace must be written unto—

1. That they may persevere in godliness. They are not yet out of the reach of temptations. Men that have made some long profession of the name of Christ may suffer a great abatement of their

former integrity in their latter days. It is not with them as it was at first. We read of some that 'left their first love,' Rev. ii. 4; there was a great decay, though not an utter extinction. It is said, 2 Chron. xvii. 3, 'The Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David;' who in his latter time fell into scandalous crimes, as his adultery with Uriah's wife, the murdering of Uriah himself, and the numbering of the people. And it is the opinion of some divines that he never recovered a like measure and proportion of grace as he had before. The like may fall out to others, partly from the continual presence of temptations. The devil continually suggesteth evil, and as an importunate suitor, and by perseverence in his suit, may at length prevail. The world we daily converse with, objects to which we are accustomed, taint the mind. A deformed object which is continually in view seemeth less deformed. Indwelling lusts long restrained may break out again, as roses nipped in the summer near about bearing time bear in winter. Satan still waiteth, and his temptations do importunately return upon us. I confess this is no excuse, yet it may be a cause. Satan's continued temptations should make us more watchful. Long experience of the vanity of worldly things should wean us from them, and lust long kept under is the more easily bridled. Yet the continual presence of temptation showeth the daily necessity of gracious helps and means. Partly by their own security. A man of long standing, being secure of salvation, may grow remiss and negligent; and supposing that he hath grace, and is possessed of the love of God, may think that there needeth not such diligence as when he was doubtful. And if he go round in his accustomed tract of duties, may carry it as if he were now past all danger, and so insensibly decayeth. After the first labours of regeneration, and the difficulties of reconciliation with God are past over, and freedom from the terrors of the law in part obtained, and they have gotten some peace and confidence, then they are in danger of this security: Rev. iii. 17, 18, 'Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.' It is not spoken to beginners, and persons unacquainted with Christ, but to old lukewarm professors. Well, then, there needeth watchfulness to the very last. Man is a very changeable creature; therefore we should always stand upon our guard. Partly because the course of temptations may be altered; the devil doth not always play the same game. As it is said of Joab, 1 Kings ii. 28, 'Joab turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom.' In his old age he miscarried. A man may withstand one kind of brunt, and yet fail in another. The children of God prosperous differ from the children of God afflicted. We had need be provided for all weathers: Phil. iv. 12, 'I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.' The young prophet withstood the king, yet was overcome by the enticings of the old prophet, 1 Kings xiii. 4, with the 19th. Lot, that was chaste in Sodom, miscarried in the mountains, where were none but his own family. When conscience is cast asleep, even a child of God may fall into the grossest sins. David's heart smote him when he cut off the lap of Saul's garment, yet afterwards fell into uncleanness and blood, and lay asleep in it a long time, till

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Nathan the prophet roused him up. Well, then, the fathers must be written unto, as well as the young men and babes. You would think it a great misery if a mariner, after he hath weathered out all tempests at sea, should suffer shipwreck in the haven's mouth; so for you to do an unseemly action after you have long professed yourselves servants of Jesus Christ, and have been assisted by him in several conditions.

2. They must be written unto first, that their growth may be promoted; that they may be stirred up to more seriousness, and more diligence, and more fruitfulness.

[1.] After so long a standing, and so much means, more growth and tendency towards perfection may be justly expected from them: Ps. xcii. 13, 14, 'Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God; they shall bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing.' The courts of God are a kindly soil; they that grow there are kept fresh and lively, and fruitful towards God. The decay of the outward man doth not hinder the renewing of the inward. Their last works are better than the first; they shall have great liberty and delight in God to the last: Isa. xl. 31, 'They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.' When nature seemeth to be clean spent, there is a sweet supply of spiritual strength. Eagles are vigorous, they fly strongly and swiftly, and renew their youth; some say by casting their bill when their upper beak groweth crooked with age, and shooteth up the lower; or rather by moulting and casting their feathers: Ps. lxxxiv. 10, 'They go on from strength to strength' in the heavenly journey, always get ground; we should always be learning something; as we grow older, we should grow wiser and better.

[2.] Their manifold experience should make them better. It is a miserable thing to pass under so many providences, and not to be bettered and improved by them: Deut. xxix. 2-6, 'And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, and the signs and those great miracles: yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink; that ye might know that I am the Lord your God.' Surely none live long in the world but they have much experience of the bitterness of sin: Jer. ii. 19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee: know therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of hosts.' It is dangerous meddling with forbidden fruit. Of the vanity of the creature: Ps. cx. 96, 'I have seen an end of all perfection.' Some find it to their bitter cost. This vanity doted on and trusted in causeth vexation of spirit. Oh, the naughtiness of the world! John xv. 19, 'If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' Satan's indefatigable malice: 2 Cor. ii. 11, 'Lest Satan should get an advantage of us,

for we are not ignorant of his devices;' 1 Peter v. 8, 'For the devil, like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.' On the other side, oh, the comfort, peace, and blessedness that attendeth holy walking! Micah ii. 7, 'Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?' Ps. cxix. 56, 'This I had because I kept thy precepts.' This peace, this comfort, this joy in the Holy Ghost. Of God's hearing prayer: Ps. cxvi. 1, 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.' Seasonable relief in difficulties and straits: Ps. xlvi. 1, 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' The sweet revivings in afflictions and trouble: Rom. v. 3-5, 'And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' Fulfilling of promises: Ps. xviii. 30, 'As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried; he is a buckler to all those that trust in him;' and many such like. Now it is an argument of spiritual stupidness and folly, that a christian should be trained up for a long time in these things, and be not a jot the wiser; if his faith be not stronger, his love to God more fervent, and hatred of sin more lively and earnest; if he cannot wait upon God with a more composed spirit in the midst of this world's uncertainties; therefore they are to be excited and written unto.

Use 2. Is to show us what is a proper meditation for the aged christians—God's ancientness and eternity. Their thoughts should be more taken up about this, about him who was before all things, and will be when all things shall be no more. Surely they that are going out of the world, they should not be contented with anything that had once a beginning, and within a little while will have an end; their great business is to know the eternal God, and eternally to enjoy him. They have had long experience of the transitory nature of earthly things, which should weaken temptations, and blare the glory of them in their eyes. They are going to converse with him immediately who 'in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of his hands: they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail,' Heb. i. 10-12, Ps. cii. 25, 26. Christ is eternal, and cannot be perishing or die; and this is the rock of the church's comfort. God from the mount of eternity beholdeth all successions and changes of the creature, but he cannot be changed. The world may be changed, and we, being mortal, may be changed, and must be changed that we may inherit eternal life; but he from the beginning to the end is still the same, and shall destroy all enemies, consume the world with fire, and eternally glorify the saints. We are but of yesterday, and to-morrow we shall be gone, but 'Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Though days and years are in a continual flux and motion about him, yet he is the same for ever, he is the beginning without beginning, and the end without end; before all, after all, and in all. Think often of his unchangeableness; but consider also your own vanity, whose glory and perfection is like a summer flower, or like a vapour ascending for a little time. Our purposes are soon broken off, and made of none effect.

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SERMON V.

I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one, &c.—1 JOHN ii. 13, 14.

WE come now to the second rank of christians, such as are called young men. They are described—

1. By the perfection proper to their age, 'Because ye are strong.' As old men are noted for wisdom, so young men for strength: Prov. xx. 29, 'The glory of young men is their strength.'

2. The subordinate cause or means, 'And the word of God abideth in you.'

3. The effect and fruit, and that is victory over Satan, 'And ye have overcome the wicked one.'

That which is said concerning this rank and order may be comprised in these propositions—

1. There are a middle sort of christians, who may be called young men.

2. These above others are exposed to temptations and conflicts.

3. That which is most eminent in this age and rank of christians is strength.

4. This strength they have because the word of God abideth in them.

5. Those that have the word of God abiding in them overcome the wicked one.

Prop. 1. That there are a middle sort of christians, who may be called young men.

So the apostle frameth the distinction; and the reason of the thing carrieth it, for experience telleth us that there are some christians or believers who have felt comfort in Christ, tasted the good word of God, and are affected with the offers of an heavenly life, and thereupon have renounced the devil, the world, and the flesh, that they may seek their happiness in God through Christ; yet they have not attained to that strength of grace and comfort, nor that experience in the ways of godliness, as the fathers have gotten; neither do they walk therein so evenly and constantly as they do; so that they cannot be placed among the higher sort of christians; neither yet are they so weak and unexperienced as the babes. It will not be lost time a little to show more particularly wherein they differ from the fathers, or the old and more experienced christians, and from the babes and younger sort.

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1. From the fathers they differ—

[1.] Because they are not so well settled in an heavenly frame of spirit. Though they set their faces heavenward, yet they are often apt to look back, and are not so constantly exercised about heavenly things, or doing all things to eternal ends, but that they are cumbered with many vain, loose, and roving imaginations and dreams of riches, preferment, worldly pomp, and ease and honour; as if that God whom they have chosen for their portion were bound to provide these things for them, and in that measure wherein they crave them. In this rank I place the disciples before the pouring out of the Spirit. I cannot count them babes, they being so long then trained up in Christ's company; nor yet fathers, because before the solemn pouring out of the Holy Ghost they had not attained to the perfection of the gospel-spirit, which is not the spirit of this world, but the earnest of a better inheritance. Therefore we find them troubled when Christ telleth them of the cross, and how hard a matter it was to enter into the kingdom of God, Mark x. 26. Contending among themselves who should be greatest (and that in a time when the passion was near at hand, Luke xxii. 21, 24), the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons (no doubt set a-work by them, Mat. xx. 21) came to Christ with this request, 'Grant that these my two sons may sit the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left in thy kingdom.' There were many pleasant dreams about worldly happiness in the hearts of christians. The apostles and their friends did dream of an earthly kingdom of Christ, and worldly honours to be distributed to his servants and followers, though Christ did often warn them to the contrary, and seek to prepare them for the cross. And doth not the love of the dignities, and honours, and profits, and pleasures of the world still creep into the hearts of believers, and tickle and inveigle them with many a vain thought and corrupt lust? Surely yes. Witness their frequent thoughts of turning the tide and stream of affairs, and comforting themselves more with hopes of seeing their desire upon their enemies, and of temporal ease, than of the heavenly felicity; their vain wishing for what others have, and misliking that which is their own; their offence at God's providence, if he doth not find them meat for their lusts, and maintain them at such a rate as they fancy. Yet if we should say, they have no grace, we should condemn the generation of the just, and speak against plain experience.

[2.] In that they have not so much superiority and command over their affections and passions as the fathers have; though they are not at the beck and command of every foolish and hurtful lust, yet they are often assaulted and perplexed, yea, overcome with the rebellion of their carnal affections and inordinate passions, which put them to no small trouble. To these the apostle speaketh, Col. iii. 5, 'Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry.' Paul himself had his violent paroxysms: Rom. vii. 19, 21, 23, 'For the good that I would I do not; but the evil I would not, that I do. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.' And David was fain to keep his mouth as with a bridle, Ps. xxxix. 1. They see a great need of curbing their passions, and reforming their thoughts, and bridling their tongues.

[3.] In that they are not so wise and experienced in the spiritual warfare, and therefore are often foiled, though they do also often over come. Unruly affections may unsettle and distemper them. In their prosperity they may remit of their fervency, zeal, and diligence. In adversity they may have despondency and distrustful thoughts at God's providence; murmuring and discontent may break out: Ps. xxxi. 22, 'I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes;' Ps. cxvi. 11, 'I said in my haste, All men are liars.' In their callings, they may bewray too much earthly-mindedness and discontent and carnal aims; the inexperienced are easily surprised, and the evils they groan under are neither at once nor easily subdued; they are often distempered with inward lusts and outward occasions.

2. From the babes they differ—

[1.] Because they have been longer engaged in the practice of godliness, and so they have a more serious consideration of their state and ways, that they may avoid sin and the occasions thereof. They have BO much acquaintance with the heavenly life as to see the need of watching, praying, and striving: Mark xiii. 37, 'What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch;' 1 Cor. xvi. 13, 'Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves like men, be strong;' Ps. xxxix. 1, 'I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me.' Those affections and passions which were wont to be common matters with them, they pray more often and earnestly against them, and so stand upon their guard. Though they are not totally overcome, yet they resist the occasions of sin, and have a holy jealousy over themselves lest they be overtaken. Those things which were not much regarded in times past, that were passed over as things pardoned of course, are now thought of with shame and bitterness.

[2.] They are more diligent in the use of means. Their continual work is to subdue their passions and corrupt inclinations, to weaken their rebellious desires, and defeat temptations. They heartily purpose and covenant with God to bring their hearts into a better frame: Ps. cxix. 112, 'I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even to the end.' They busy themselves about getting spiritual furniture and strength, even the complete armour of God, whereby they may stand out against the assaults of the wicked one: Eph. vi. 12, 13, 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.' None knoweth the need of the spiritual armour, nor is so earnest to get it, as this kind of christian; being continually exercised with conflicts and temptations, he would not be unprepared, and knoweth the malice of Satan, and his own infirmities. Practical conviction is best, and leaveth a deeper sense upon the heart than a doctrinal discovery.

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[3.] They are more versed in the word of God, though not skilful in the word of righteousness, as the fathers; yet not as unskilful as the babes: Heb. v. 13, 'For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.' They are learning and studying the word, how to

govern their passions and direct their way: Ps. cxix. 9, ‘Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.’ They would not have the peace of their souls disturbed: they are taken into God’s blessed flock, and are daily furnishing themselves with spiritual knowledge.

Prop. 2. The middle sorts of christians or young men are most exposed to temptations and conflicts.

The devil is an enemy to all mankind, but especially to young men. Noah, Solomon were tempted when in years; but the young age are most assaulted. The devil layeth snares for them, partly because those are most prone to sin, being passionate, rash, self-willed, and head strong; wrestle with stronger lusts through the abundance of heat and spirit: 2 Tim. ii. 22, ‘Fly youthful lusts.’ Company, worldly business, pleasures, are a very great snare to them, who are so prone to worldly affections and actions and fleshly lusts as they are; and therefore soon caught in the devil’s snares, and taken at his will and pleasure. Partly because young men are most capable of doing God or the devil most service; that being the choice time of their life, and they being in the prime of their days. Children are but entering into the world, and old men are going out of this life; therefore they should be the more cautious and watchful. The faculties of their souls are most vigorous, the members of their bodies most active. Therefore the devil is especially an enemy to young men; none are in greater danger than they to be drawn to wickedness.

1. It is true of christians young in grace; these especially are busied in fighting against the temptations of Satan, and in resisting and subduing their own unruly lusts. This age is a life of conflicts; they have many rebellious desires, vain thoughts and wishes, inordinate affections; and therefore if they be serious in their work, they must expect blows and troubles: Heb. x. 32, ‘After ye were enlightened, ye endured a great fight of afflictions,’ φωτισθέντες. Baptism by the ancients was called φωτισμὸς, and to baptize φωτιζείν, and times of baptism, ἡμέρας τῶν φωτῶν; the newly baptized, ωεοφωτιστοὺς; the font, φωτιστήριον. Possibly the word in this use might not be so ancient as the apostles’ days, however it was then used for the first taking up of the profession of christianity, Heb. vi. 4. Those were once enlightened, φωτισθέντες. The first creature was light: 2 Cor. iv. 6, ‘God commanded the light to shine out of darkness.’ Presently after they had received the faith of Christ, and were admitted into the church by baptism, they endured πολλὴν ἄθλησιν, rapine, scourges, persecutions, haled before tribunals of men. Many in their first time were put to bitter and sore conflicts. Jesus Christ as soon as he was baptized, which was his consecration or solemn, inauguration into the exercise of his mediatorial office, was then tempted: Mat. iv. 1, ‘Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.’ As soon as he is installed into his office, he entereth into the lists with Satan. The church of the Jews, as soon as God began to separate them from the Egyptians, at their first setting forth they were pursued: and even after they came into the wilderness, they were set on by the Amalekites, Exod. xvii. 18. The primitive christian church is set forth by the visional emblem of a dragon, ready to devour the man

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child as soon as it was born, Rev. xii. 4. So it is with particular persons very often; Paul when converted, presently the Jews conspire to kill him. God may permit this, partly to abate their carnal confidence. Many a man because newly converted, having had as yet no thorough and full experience of the strength of sin, the danger of temptation and his own weakness, may bear it a little too high upon the confidence of his own resolutions, which, because they are sincere and undissembled, he thinketh they may be easily maintained. Now God, to humble him, and to show that it is not in him that willeth and runneth, Rom. ix. 16, that it is not their own purposes, though sincere, that will secure them, suffereth Satan to tempt, and his instruments to vex us, sin to put forth its strength, that we may have experience of our own weakness and nothingness, and that our strength lieth in Jesus Christ rather than in ourselves. The best are in danger of self-confidence, even those whose resolutions and purposes against sin are most sincere, and therefore Satan is suffered to tempt them; as the Canaanites were suffered in the land, and many times had the better of Israel, to show that the victory was not gotten by their own bow and strength. And partly to glorify his own grace, for his power is perfected in our weakness, 2 Cor. xii. 10; that is, discovered with more advantage. Christians when young are put upon sore trials, to show that they have not this power of themselves, but of the Lord. A young christian is the best instance for this purpose. A man of long experience might seem to stand by his own strength, but when those who are sorely exercised with temptation are maintained against the most violent impression the devil can make upon them, it is more for the glory of God's grace. Take an instance in David and Joseph, an old and a young man, 2 Sam. xi. 2, 3, with Gen. xxxix. 7-10. Joseph a single man, David had a multitude of wives; Joseph had the advantage of secrecy, David was fain to make way for his lusts by other sins; Joseph was solicited, David was the solicitor; Joseph shuns all occasions, David seeketh them out. Yet the one standeth and the other is foiled. The fall of the experienced man brought a great deal of dishonour to God, as the other made much for the praise of his grace. And partly that they may be fitted and prepared to walk with God in their after-course in all holiness and righteousness, when once they are seasoned in Christ's warfare. The old Germans were wont to dip their children newly born in the Rhine, thereby to harden and prepare them for the toil of war and labour: Lam. iii. 27, 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.' The yoke of duty, the yoke of afflictions and temptations; they are thereby seasoned for all their lives after. And partly to try their thankfulness for receiving Christ, and the inestimable benefits of his love. We profess in pangs of conscience to be willing to receive Christ upon the hardest terms, though reduced to rags and beggary, and the greatest extremities; and this is no more than needeth. Our religion and the apparent light of truth compelleth us to use those terms: Mat. xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; and when he hath found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.' God will try whether we will stand to our word, or whether this be a compliment extorted from us by the present pang; and that we are resolved to fight as well as work: Rom. vi. 13, 'Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.' Now though God keep back the assault of

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furious and boisterous temptations for a while, yet at length after some time it is needful to try the sincerity of our covenant vow.

2. The devil tempteth and molesteth the saints, either in hope to recover the prey (newly taken out of his hands) back again; as Pharaoh made hue and cry after Israel as soon as they were escaped. After long experience and many resistances he hath the less hopes. It is in vain to think he will be dispossessed quietly: 2 Peter ii. 18, 'For when, they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who lived in error;' ὄντως, clean, or ὀλίγως, for a little while, escaped from error; or else to weary them, and to make their pilgrimage uncomfortable. At first, while they are admiring the love of God, and the offers of grace to sinners, and their blessed change is fresh in their memories, and that woful estate wherein they were by nature, while they are but as brands plucked out of the burning, the devil dareth not set upon them; but when these qualms of love are over, he is very busy in hope they will return to their old master, when they find nothing but blows and buffets; or if not, that they shall never serve God cheerfully. The devil is not only an enemy to our grace, but to our peace and comfort. They snarl at the feast God hath provided for us: Ps. xxiii. 5, 'Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.' The devils grieve and envy at the riches of God's bounty to his beloved ones.

3. In regard of themselves and their own flesh, which is not as yet perfectly subdued to Christ's discipline. The bullock at first yoking is most unruly; the fire at the first kindling casts forth much smoke: Rom. vii. 9, 'Sin revived, and I died.' They have much to do with a naughty heart: Mat. vii. 14, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way;' at least, at the beginning, or upon our first entrance upon christianity; and when christians are young and raw, and of little experience in the ways of God, it is more tedious to them; they are more unprovided, more unresolved, than they thought themselves to be; and they set upon the mortification of sin, and feel the force of corrupt nature more powerful than ever they imagined it would be, and their light and love is increased, and so their sin is more grievous than it was before. When a man is dead in trespasses and sins, he hath no feeling; but when he has a deeper insight into the law, and the nest of unclean birds is more discovered, then a child of God begins to groan: Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' When first we began to be serious, the guilt of sin troubled us, and engaged us to look after justification by Christ; but when we are more acquainted with God, the power of sin troubleth us, and we are more engaged to look after mortification, and so we are put upon the greater conflicts.

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Prop. 3. That which is most eminent in this rank of christians is strength, 'Because ye are strong.' How strong?

There is the strength of the body and there is the strength of the soul.

1. The strength of the body; that is incident to young men naturally considered: Prov. xx. 29, ‘The glory of young men is their strength.’ But this is no great thing in a spiritual eye and consideration; for a bull or an ox may exceed us in this kind of strength, for they are strong to labour, Ps. cxliv. 14; and a robust temper of body doth more often incline to sin than to virtue and grace. So many show their strength in pouring down strong drink: Isa. v. 22, ‘Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink.’ Many wicked ones glory in their ability to take in much liquor, and go away with it; or else in prodigious lust; they spend their strength on women, contrary to Prov. xxxi. 3, ‘Give not thy strength unto women;’ or at best have only strength for bodily conflicts. Now this is not the strength intended, not strength for bodily conflicts, but for wrestling with Satan and spiritual wickedness; not strength of nature, but grace; strength to overcome temptations to sin, to govern our passions and affections in the fear of God, to do the things which God commandeth. This much excelleth the outward bodily strength: Prov. xvi. 32, ‘He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.’ These are strong indeed; the others may be feeble and impotent; as Samson had great bodily strength, but was easily overcome by his lusts. That is a weak heart that lieth open to the assault of every temptation, that is at the beck of every foolish and hurtful lust, as pride, sensuality, worldliness, carnal fear, and sorrow; and so an imperious heart is a weak heart: Ezek. xvi. 30, ‘How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord! seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman.’

2. The strength of the soul, which is the property of christians, often spoken of in scripture: Ps. cxxxviii. 3, ‘And strengthen me with strength in my soul;’ Eph. iii. 6, ‘To be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.’ This is the fruit of grace, for by nature we have it not: Rom. v. 6, ‘When we were yet without strength;’ without any power to help ourselves out of that misery into which we had plunged ourselves; but by grace there is a power whereby a christian is enabled to all spiritual duties, 2 Tim. i. 7, a spirit of power, of love, and a sound mind.

This spiritual strength serveth for three uses—

[1.] To bear burdens with patience. A heavy burden requireth a sound back: Col. i. 11, ‘Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joy fulness.’ If we cannot bear afflictions and troubles with courage and cheerfulness, we are little acquainted with spiritual strength: Prov. xxiv. 10, ‘If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.’ As a weak man sinketh under his burden.

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[2.] To perform duties with cheerfulness. That is a part of a christian’s strength to be able to work hard, as well as bear much: Phil. iv. 13, ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.’ The grace of Christ disposeth us to every duty to which we are called by him. He enableth those whom he employeth. There is a sluggishness in most christians; they excuse themselves by their weakness: Christ maketh them able for everything that lieth within the compass of their duty. If men did awaken the strength which they have, or improve what God vouchsafeth to them by the

sanctifying motions of his Spirit, they would not be so weak as they pretend to be. But as lazy beggars, who personate and act diseases because they would not work, so they idly complain for want of strength. They spare their pains, and then cry out they are impotent, because they are loath to stir up themselves. There are two extremes—pride and sloth: pride is seen in self-confidence; sloth in a neglect of the grace given.

[3.] To resist temptations with success. Our necessities are many, so must our strength be to fight as well as to work and bear. When the apostle was about to treat of the spiritual armour, he prefaceth it thus: Eph. vi. 10, 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' When we think with Samson to go forth and shake ourselves as at other times, we feel sad gyves and fetters; we must use the spade as well as the trowel. We are assaulted with all kinds of temptations; by the devil, as a tempter, and vexer, and opposer of the saints; by the world, persecuting and enticing; by the flesh, as rebelling against and shrinking from the discipline of the Spirit. Now the strength of the soul lieth in a firm resolution opposite to fears and snares. It is said of Joseph that his 'bow abode in its strength,' Gen. xlix. 44. His was a snaring temptation, but Joseph was kept innocent in all. So it is opposite to a fearful heart: Isa. xxxv. 4, 'Say to them of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense, he will come and save you.' Now whether strength be opposite to snares or fears, it is the fruit, not of natural boldness, but of faith. The strength of the soul lies in a sound belief of the truths of the gospel: 1 Peter v. 9, 'Whom resist, steadfast in the faith/ It is a lamentable thing to see what a poor cowardly spirit there is in most christians; how soon they are captivated, or discouraged with every slender assault or petty temptation, and their resolutions are shaken with the appearance of every difficulty. This is not so much want of strength as sluggishness and cowardice, and neglect of the grace given. Well, then, this is common to all christians that are strong, but more especially to the middle sort, whose strength is most exercised and tried. They have need to be strong who are assaulted by the evil one; their lusts are more boiling hot, and sooner set a-work; they had need get faith, sobriety, humility, temperance, and suchlike, for in these things lieth the strength of the soul. This is the armour of God, and in these things should they excel.

Prop. 4. This strength they have because the word of God abideth in them.

This middle clause looketh both ways: 'Ye are strong, because the word of God abideth in you; and ye have overcome the wicked one, because the word abideth in you;' 1 Peter ii. 2, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.' The word of God is the food of the soul, and so increaseth strength against temptations. The strength of the mind lieth in reason, and the word of God is our storehouse of reasons. It is the great weapon of the spiritual warfare: Eph. vi. 17, 'Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' Jesus Christ made use of this argument to foil Satan with, *Sic scriptum est*, 'It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,' Mat. iv. 7. The word of God laid up in the heart, and made use of pertinently by the christian soldier, hath somewhat in it to ward off the blow of any temptation.

The seasonable calling to mind such a scripture, forbidding or threatening for such an evil, or pressing the practice of such a duty, or speaking comfort or encouragement to a soul exercised with such a cross, it is a great relief. In temptations to have the word ready at hand, whether precepts, threatenings, or promises, to lay up all kind of spiritual knowledge, is to take a notable antidote and preservative against sin: Ps. cxix. 11, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' Hid, not for concealment, but for custody. When the young man's soul is well stocked and furnished with the word of God, he hath his spiritual weapon ready, and is prepared for all assaults.

1. The precepts and doctrines of the word abide in them: Ps. xxxvii. 31, 'The law of God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide.' A lively active sense of his duty is kept fresh upon his heart; and then, when they are tempted, they answer as the Rechabites, We dare not; our father commanded us otherwise, Jer. xxxv. 6. Take, for instance, Joseph: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' When we are stored with good principles, it will be a great help to us in all businesses and affairs: Prov. vi. 22, 'Bind them upon thine heart; and when thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.' Wicked men's sin engrosseth all their thoughts, employeth them all the day, and it stayeth in the fancy all the night; it saluteth them first in the morning. But now a christian, that is a law to himself, a bible to himself, the word of God urgeth him to his duty, directeth him in his work, seasoneth his business, restraineth him from sin. His heart thus furnished casteth in seasonable thoughts and directions upon all occasions, when he is in company, when he is alone. In company: 'A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things,' Mat. xii. 34, 35, full of gracious discourse. The tap runneth according to the liquor wherewith the vessel is filled. When alone, his reins instruct him in the night season, Ps. xvi. 7. When without all outward helps, his heart furnisheth him with matter of comfort, counsel, and reproof. The frothiness of our spirits, the barrenness and leanness of our souls, come from the want of transcribing the truths of the bible or God's blessed book upon our hearts. A man that hath his pocket full of brass farthings, and some few pieces of gold and silver, will more readily draw out farthings than pieces of gold or silver or valuable money. Vain thoughts are so ready with us because we have stored our minds with trash.

2. The promise. These must abide in us for comfort against temptations, desertions, and afflictions: Job xxii. 22, 'Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart;' as you would do choice things, that they may not be lost or embezzled. In a time of trial, one promise of God will give you more true comfort and support than all the arguings of men. In a time of wants and straits, how sweet is it to remember how amply we are provided for in the covenant! Ps. cxix. 111, 'Thy testimonies have I taken for an heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart.' And in doubts and discouragements by reason of pressures and troubles: Ps. cxix. 5, 'This is my comfort in afflictions, thy word hath quickened me;' Heb. xii. 5, 'Have you forgotten the consolation which speaketh to you as children?' It is good to have the promises familiar with us, that we may not have them to seek in a time of distress; happy is the man that hath his

quiver full of them. So for temptations, what promises God hath made to the thirsty, what encouragements are given to those that strive after grace; so to seek after God in holiness and righteousness: Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' What assistance is secured to them that watch and pray, 1 Peter v. 9, 10; how God giveth more grace to the humble, to overpower the natural spirit, James iv. 5, 6; how willing God is to receive us upon our penitence after we are foiled. This maketh the young christian take courage, though his spiritual course be often interrupted.

3. The threatenings. Many lusts are strange and boisterous, and are deaf to all milder motives. By the threatenings, God standeth as with a drawn sword in their way to stop them, if tempted to a sensual fleshly life: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' Many are strongly inclined and wedded to sensual satisfactions, a sporting life. Consider, what am I a-doing? if tempted to any inordinate complacency in creature comforts: Ps. lxxiii. 27, 'Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring from thee;' and they that only mind earthly things, their 'end is destruction,' Phil. iii. 19.

But what is this abiding?

There must be receiving before there can be abiding. There are some will not take the word in: John viii. 37, 'My word hath no place in you.' They have no room for Christ, his directions, and comforts. The soul must be emptied before the word can have place in you. This reception is opposed by inward corruption: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things which are of God.' They cannot digest it, being so contrary to the dictates of flesh and blood. It cannot sink down into their hearts to take root there, but floateth in their imaginations, there is such unanswerableness to things spiritual. So the devil opposeth it: Mat. xiii. 19, 'Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in the heart.' When he seeth men begin to be serious, he seeketh to divert these thoughts.

Prop. 5, Those that have the word of God abiding in them overcome the wicked one. Where—(1.) The adversary, 'the wicked one;' (2.) The victory, 'have overcome,' as a thing past.

1. The adversary, 'The wicked one.' As God is the holy One, so the devil here and elsewhere is called 'the wicked one;' 1 John v. 18, 'The wicked one toucheth him not;' Eph. vi. 16, 'That you may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.' Satan is so called, partly because he is wicked in himself; the eldest sinner and the greatest sinner: 1 John iii. 8, 'The devil sinneth from the beginning.' And partly because his great work and business is to draw and drive others to sin and wickedness; therefore called the father of sinners: John viii. 44, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do;' as Jubal is the father of such as handle the harp and the organ, Gen. iv. 21. All the sins in the world, both actual and original, are by his furtherance. Some sins are singularly diabolical, and such as could not be acted by man in an ordinary course of sinning; as Judas' treason: John xiii. 2, 'The devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot

to betray him,' Blasphemous thoughts against God, unnatural sins, self-murder, these he may inject into the hearts of the godly, as the envious man may throw weeds into the garden that do not grow there: but in common sins Satan hath a great hand and strong; as in David's numbering the people: 1 Chron. xxi. 1, 'And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.' In our wrath and passion we give place to Satan, Eph. iv. 27; he omitteth no opportunity of gaining his further interest in the heart: 1 Cor. vii. 5, 'Lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency;' 1 Tim. iii. 6, 'Not a novice, lest he be lifted up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil.' And partly because all his temptations tend to sin, and are solicitations to sin. God tempts, and Satan tempteth. God tempteth to discover some notable effect of grace in his servants: Gen. xxii. 1, 'God did tempt Abraham,' not to infuse evil, or solicit to evil, for so 'God tempteth no man;' James i. 13, 'Let no man say when he is tempted, he is tempted of God, for God tempteth no man.' God's tempting is always good, and for good; as a general without any injustice may put the valiantest of his army in the greatest dangers. In the temptation we must distinguish the mere trial and solicitation to sin. Satan's temptings are evil, and for evil, therefore he is called 'the wicked one.'

2. What is the victory? for the apostle speaketh of it as a thing past, 'Ye have overcome.'

Ans. In these considerations—

1. The devil is an enemy, with whom we cannot make peace, but must fight against him till we overcome. So that here it cometh to a point, either we must perish or conquer. On the devil's part there is great enmity, unwearied activity, and unsatiable cruelty; and on our part there must be constant resistance and watchfulness. He is still in action, and nothing less will satisfy him but the destruction of souls. None of Christ's soldiers must think of flying or yielding; not flying. It is very notable that among the pieces of the spiritual armour there is no piece for the back parts, because there is no flight in this warfare, but we must stand it out to the last. No yielding; for the more way we give to Satan, he tyranniseth the more; and the more stoutly he is opposed, the more he loseth ground: Mat. xii. 44, 45, when the house is empty, swept, and garnished, and prepared for Satan, then he bringeth worse devils.

2. There is hope of this victory. Whilst we keep up the fight, our striving is a degree of conquest: James iv. 8, 'Resist the devil, and he shall flee from you.' Though God suspendeth the victory, yet if he giveth strength and courage to fight, you have overcome. A christian hath offensive and defensive weapons, but Satan only offensive weapons, darts and wiles. A christian hath a sword and shield; the conquest is begun as long as you stand out against his wiles, Eph. vi. 11, and quench his fiery darts, ver. 16. If he doth not overcome us, and unsettle our love to God, we overcome him.

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3. There are great preparations for a victory. The devil is a conquered adversary: Col. ii. 15, 'And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.' A disarmed enemy: Heb. ii. 14, 'That through death he might destroy him that had the

power of death, that is, the devil.' We do but set upon the relics of a battle already fought with success.

4. The devil hath been conquered, and is conquered in part by these spiritual young men. The apostle speaketh of such as are strong, and had the word of God abiding in their hearts. They are not such weak young men as Rehoboam, whom every company and every temptation doth carry away; but strong christians, who are victorious and over come; as Joseph: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?' There are some the word of God doth only flash in their minds, but doth not abide in them; over them the devil prevaileth: 'The evil one catcheth away the good seed sown in their heart,' Mat. xiii. 19. But in those on whom the word hath made so deep an impression that it cannot be rooted out, these overcome the evil one: 1 John v. 18, 'He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not.' These use all care and diligence that the devil gets no hold on them, that he doth not touch them with a deadly wound; these young men in Christ have gotten a victory over Satan, which is the greatest fortitude.

5. Though the final conquest be hereafter, yet it is sure and near: Rom. xvi. 20, 'The God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet shortly.' There will a time of triumph come, when he that is a soldier now shall then be a conqueror. Tread him under your feet, set your feet upon the necks of these kings, as Joshua. He will not only tread Satan to pieces, but under your feet.

Use. If this be the age of conquests, let us not count it strange. There are many wise reasons why God permits it, for his own glory, and to discover the riches of his grace.

SERMON VI

I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father, &c.—1 JOHN ii. 13, 14.

WE come now to the lowest rank of christians, and they are 'little children,' or the babes in Christ: their property is that they 'have known the Father.' It is spoken with allusion to little children in a natural consideration, who know their parents if they know nothing else, and cry after them, and frame themselves to call them by their names, though imperfectly, and with a stammering tongue; so these spiritual little children hang upon their Father, whatever they are ignorant of. These babes are driven by their necessity to seek a father in heaven, and show their owning of God in that relation, more by their desires and childlike impressions than by any actual and full grown confidence. But the other, the aged, own God as their Father by a more abundant persuasion of his love, and not only by choice, but by sense.

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We must distinguish these christians from others, and first from the two former sorts mentioned, then from the carnal.

1. They differ from the fathers in two things—(1.) The object known; (2.) The degree of knowledge.

[1.] The object is diversified, 'Him that was from the beginning,' and 'the Father.' It is one thing to know God as a creator, another thing to know him as a father. The more old or grown christian takes him up under another notion than the babes do. Nothing more needful for children than to have a father, to whom they may repair in all their wants, and who may take care for them; accordingly they own God as a father.

[2.] The act, 'You have known the Father.' This knowledge is an initial knowledge; the act of knowledge is attributed to the fathers and the little children, but yet there is a difference in the degree.

(1.) Little children have but a taste of God's fatherly love: 1 Peter ii. 3, 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' The fathers had a deeper draught and longer experience, by which they are more confirmed in the sense of their adoption: 1 John iii. 1, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' But these babes have but some general and obvious apprehensions of God's being a merciful father in Christ; the one are skilled in the first principles of christianity, the other are versed in the deeper mysteries of godliness.

(2.) These little children know God as a father, because they have never yet been put upon exercise and occasions to question his love; but when they are tried with afflictions, or conflict with temptations, they are filled with doubts and fears. It is one of the weaknesses incident to this age, that they must be set on the lap, and dandled with comforts; for young children are not as yet acquainted with the rod and the frown of a father: Heb. xii. 5, 'And ye have forgotten the exhortation, which speaketh unto you as children.' As soon as they meet with any trouble inward or outward, they fall into heavy damps and discouragements, fearing that all their commerce with God was but a shadow and a dream; whereas the fathers or aged christians have tried him in all conditions, and can look upon him as a father when he smileth and when he frowns, and know that he is the God of the valleys as well as the hills and mountains, and that his love doth not alter with their condition; as Christ said, 'My God,' when he was upon the cross and forsaken.

2. They differ from the young men in Christ. Before I tell yon how they differ from them, I must acquaint you that there are two sorts of babes or little children. First, Some are as it were in the birth, *inter regenerandum*: Gal. iv. 19, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you.' They are such as have good motions and inclinations to spiritual and heavenly things, but they are so often interrupted by the discovery and breaking out of the carnal nature, that we cannot yet say that Christ is formed in them; yet there are hopeful intimations that the work is a-doing, though the doctrine and practice of the gospel is not so purely and perfectly received. Secondly, The other are such as hang upon the breast, as infants new born: 1 Peter ii. 2, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby;' who have

much ado to maintain life between one duty and another. These differ from the young men, partly because they are raw and inexperienced, and so are guilty of many oversights, are more easily deceived by Satan and his instruments: Eph. iv. 14, ‘That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.’ And partly because they are ignorant of the power of corruption, and the many inordinate lusts and passions which lurk in them, and often break out to their dishonour and discouragement. Therefore the apostle mindeth such, 1 Peter i. 14, ‘Not to fashion themselves according to the former lusts of their ignorance.’ Weaknesses and infirmities are most rife then. And partly because they do not understand their duty in their first entrance upon their christian course so well as they do afterwards, and therefore either cleave to things out of blind zeal, or else condemn them out of rashness and indiscretion: Rom. xiv. 1, ‘Him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations.’ They are easily carried away with a vain show, and either allow or condemn things without due warrant. And partly because they are not so strong as the young men, nor so full of spiritual confidence, but are full of fears, as little children are easily frighted with anything. Their faith being little, doubts arise and fears prevail: Mat. vi. 30, ‘O ye of little faith!’ Mat. viii. 26, ‘Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?’ Mat. xvi. 8, ‘Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith!’ Weak christians are timorous, not being used to conflicts and difficulties, perplexed with doubtful thoughts. Christ saith, John xvi. 12, ‘I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.’ Through their incapacity they cannot take in many truths; they who have the Spirit in some measure may yet remain incapable of some divine truths, and do continue under many weaknesses and errors of mind, and are apt to stumble and quarrel at many truths. As weak shoulders shrink under heavy burdens, so do weak understandings and light and pre-occupied affections under spiritual and heavenly truths; or as weak stomachs cast up the strong meat which they cannot digest. So the apostle: 1 Cor. iii. 2, 3, ‘I could not speak to you as spiritual, but as to babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet are ye able.’ By ‘milk,’ he meaneth the plain doctrines of the christian religion; by ‘meat,’ the more exact discussion of these points.

3. We must distinguish these from the carnal or the temporary; for though they be not so heavenly, so prudent, so strong as the more grown christians, yet there is a clear distinction between them and the unconverted.

[1.] They have the common spirit of all christians. God’s favour is all in all to them, insomuch as they cannot be satisfied without it: Ps. iv. 6, 7, ‘Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and wine increased.’ This is that they long after, and labour after, and wait for, that they may understand how God is affected towards them. About this their thoughts are chiefly occupied, and upon this they lay out their time and care: Ps. xxvii. 4, ‘One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to

inquire in his temple.' Now the temporary have never this high esteem of the favour of God as to prefer it simply and comparatively above all other contentments whatsoever.

[2.] Though their main care be about getting off the guilt of sin for the present, yet there is an unfeigned purpose that they may not in the smallest matters offend and displease God, but to the utter most of their knowledge they are careful to perform their duty. There is in them that good and honest heart: Luke viii. 15, 'But that on the good ground are they who in an honest and good heart have heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience;' though there be many weaknesses and inadvertencies, because they know not the corruptions of their own hearts, nor the force of temptations, and it may be do not so fully understand their duty.

[3.] These weak christians do or should remember that God will not always bear with their weaknesses, and from time to time dispense with their follies, and wink at them. They must grow more solid and prudent, more settled into an heavenly frame and temper: 1 Thes. iv. 1, 'We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so you would abound more and more;' 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day;' Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'They go from strength to strength, till they appear before God in Zion.' They must come out of their childish state in time; as the grain of mustard-seed when it is once rooted must grow up into a tree. We must go on from one degree of grace to another.

[4.] Their knowledge of God as a father differeth from that knowledge which temporaries have, because it is an active and operative knowledge: God's being a father implieth both duty and privilege, and none, know him aright but those that perform the duties of children, and depend upon him for the privileges of children.

(1.) This knowledge implieth the performance of the duties of children, which are to love, please, and honour their father: Mal. i. 6, 'A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master. If I be a father, where is mine honour? if a master, where is my fear?' 1 Peter i. 14, 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.' In the 17th verse., 'And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' There must be a tenderness and a fear to offend their heavenly Father; for God will not be flattered with empty titles. That is a dishonour and a mockage, as it was for them to call Christ 'King of the Jews,' and to spit upon him, and buffet him. Therefore there is no true owning and knowing of him as a father unless we be thereby strongly moved to a care of obedience.

(2.) There are the privileges of children, and this knowing of the Father implieth trust and dependence: Ps. ix. 10, 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.' And therefore little children do so know the Father as to depend upon him for protection in all dangers, and provision of all necessaries, and finally for the heavenly in heritance and their everlasting portion; for they

are begotten to a lively hope, 1 Peter i. 3; and therefore, as soon as they are born again, they begin to look for a child's portion, and to apply their minds to heavenly things; and so, because of their weakness, put themselves under the conduct and government of God as their everlasting father. From this the character of these little children or babes in Christ may be sufficiently understood.

Doct. That even the lowest sort of christians do know God as a father.

I shall illustrate this point by three considerations—

1. That God standeth in the relation of a father to his people.

2. That the lowest sort of christians do know him under this relation.

3. How this is the point which constituteth the difference between them and others.

I. For the first consideration, that God standeth in the relation of a father to his people. God is a father either in a general respect by creation, or in a more special regard by adoption.

1. By creation. He gave being to all things, but to man and angels reason. To establish the relation of a father, there must be communication of life and likeness. A painter that maketh a picture like himself is not the father of it, for though there be likeness, yet no life. The sun in propriety of speech is not the father of the frogs and putrid creatures which are quickened by its heat. This relation is applied only to univocal generations and rational creatures. A bull that produceth a calf like himself is not called the father of it; in ordinary speaking we call it the sire, and the heifer the dam. Now God is the Father of angels, and angels are the sons of God: Job xxxviii. 7, 'When the morning-stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy.' So men. Adam was the son of God, Luke iii. 38. Once more, though we have deformed ourselves, and are not the same that we were when we were first created, yet still in regard of some sorry remains of God's image, and the light of reason yet kept, we are called the sons of God, and God is called 'our Father;' yea, more a father than our natural parents are. Our parents concur to our being but instrumentally, but God originally. Now, as the writing is the work of the penman rather than of the pen, so are we the workman ship of God rather than of our parents. He forms us in the womb; our parents know not whether the child will be male or female, beautiful or deformed, cannot tell the number of the bones, muscles, veins, arteries; this God appointeth. The soul, which was the better part of man, is of his immediate creation; therefore he is called 'the Father of spirits,' Heb. xii. 9, 'Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits?' they do not run in the channel of carnal generation or fleshly descent. In this general sense, by virtue of creation, God is the Father of all men, good and bad.

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2. More especially, there is a particular sort of men to whom God is a father in Christ, and they are his children. This title is not by nature, but by grace: John i. 12, 'But as many as received him,

to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.' As many as believe in his name have this privilege, to be called 'the sons of God.' Although the best that ever lived have reason to judge themselves to be unworthy to be in the rank of servants to the Lord, yet it pleaseth him to advance the meanest that receive Christ by faith to the dignity and privilege of being his children. All such, even the meanest believer not excluded, may call God father. The thing itself, nakedly considered, is a greater dignity than the world can afford us; as a thing to be wondered at rather than told: 1 John iii. 1, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' Admire it we may, express it to the full we cannot. It was said, 1 Sam. xviii. 22, 'Seemeth it a light thing to you to be a king's son-in-law?' We may with better reason say, Is it a small matter to become sons and daughters to the most high God? But if we consider how it was brought about, it doth more heighten it in our thoughts. The foundation of it was laid in the election of God; for 'we were predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,' Eph. i. 5. But before his decree could be executed and take place, the redemption of Christ was necessary. For we read, Gal. iv. 4, 5, 'But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.' Sin needed to be expiated by the Son of God in our nature before God would bestow this honour upon us. Christ was to be our brother before God would be our father; and to take a mother upon earth, that we might have a father in heaven; yea, to be made 'under the law,' to endure the law's curse, before we could be instated in this blessing. What need had God to be at such expense for poor worthless creatures? He had a Son of his own, in whom his soul found full complacency and delight. Men adopt *in orbitatis solatium*; it is a remedy found out for the comfort of them who have no children. It was never heard of that a father who had a son should adopt a son. Now that the Lord should adopt and take us into his family, who are the children of the devil by nature, this dignity, as it imports great privilege to us, so it calleth for great duty at our hands.

[1.] It importeth great privilege to us. There are great benefits accrue to us thereby.

(1.) The gift of the Holy Ghost. God, as a father by creation, gave us our natural endowments; but as a father by adoption, he giveth us the supernatural grace of the Spirit. It was given to Christ without measure, that all God's children and the members of Christ's mystical body might receive it from him as the head and fountain of their life: 'Because we are sons, he hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father,' Gal. iv. 6. Whosoever hath this high privilege of adoption conferred upon them, they have the Spirit of God given to them, to reside and dwell in their hearts, as their sanctifier, guide, and comforter, to sanctify and to transform them into the likeness of Christ: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' To guide them in all their ways: Rom. viii. 14, 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' To comfort them with a sense of their gracious estate for the present: Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God;' and to

assure them of a blessed estate for the future: 2 Cor. i. 22, ‘Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.’ The residence and dwelling of the Holy Ghost in our hearts is most felt in prayer: Rom. viii. 26, ‘Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered;’ Jude 20, ‘Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost;’ teaching the saints to address themselves to God as a father, with a familiar and childlike confidence, and yet with a holy reverence; with a humble submission, and yet with a holy vehemency and earnestness, opposite to that careless formality and deadness which is in other men’s prayers.

(2.) We have a blessed and excellent inheritance to look for here; all the children are heirs and ‘joint-heirs with Christ,’ Rom. viii. 17, as soon as we are adopted and taken into God’s family, though little of this dignity appeareth or maketh any fair show in the world: 1 John iii. 1, 2, ‘Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Behold, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.’ We only know who are the sons of God, but not what it is to be the sons of God; yet that right and hope that we have may allay all our cares, and fears, and sorrows, during the time of our abasement and humiliation: Luke xii. 32, ‘Fear not, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’

(3.) In all his dealings for the present, God retaineth a fatherly affection to us, pitying our miseries, and pardoning our failings: Ps. ciii. 13, ‘Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.’ We need not much ado, or much entreat, or hire a father to pity a child in misery. So he pardoneth our failings: Mal. iii. 27, ‘I will spare them, as a man spareth his only son that serveth him.’ A parent will not be inexorable, nor severe upon every failing of a dutiful child and an only son. We often forget the duty of children, but God will not forget the mercies of a father. As a parent saith, He is my child, though a faulty child or stubborn child, so will he spare us notwithstanding infirmities, supplying all our necessities: Mat. vi. 25, ‘Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on: is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?’ ver. 30, ‘Wherefore if God clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?’ ver. 32, ‘Your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of all these things.’ God is not ignorant of our condition, nor mindless of it. Carking taketh his work out of his hands; but the remembrance of a father dasheth all our distrustful thoughts. So protection in dangers, both for the inward and outward man. The soul is guarded by the Spirit: 2 Peter i. 3, 4, ‘According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.’ The body by the angels; their charge is not *cura*

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animarum, but *custodia corporis*, not the care of their souls, but the safety of their bodies. God's children are well guarded and guided till they come to their final estate. Heaven is kept for them, and they for it.

[2.] It calleth for great duty at our hands. I must mention that, because we are very apt to challenge the privileges when we neglect the duties which belong to God's children. It calleth for conformity and likeness to him in all divine perfections.

(1.) In holiness and purity: 1 Peter i. 15, 'But as he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' Com passion, mercy, and goodness: Eph. v. 1, 'Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.' Compassion and mercy: Mat. v. 44, 45, 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and unjust;' Luke vi. 35, 36, 'But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for no thing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.' So for truth: Isa. lxiii. 8, 'Surely they are my people, children that will not lie.' There is no divine virtue but there should be some representation and shadow of it at least found in us. God's dear children should be like him. All graces should be made lovely and amiable to us by his pattern and example.

(2.) In ready obedience to his laws. In one place we read, 'dear children,' Eph. v. 1, in another, 'obedient children,' 1 Peter i. 14. God taxeth his people for their unsuitable walking to this relation: Jer. iii. 4, 5, 'Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father? Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst.' Can we call him father whom we care not continually to displease?

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(3.) Subjection and humble submission to his correction: Heb. xii. 5-10, 'And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor fault when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If yon endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? for they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' God hath castigations for all his children. It is consistent with the love of good-will and with the love of complacency. After that he hath made us amiable, the rod of correction will not wholly be laid aside while God's children are in the flesh. In heaven, where there is no danger, there is no use of it any more, because then they are fully and perfectly sanctified. Those whom God suffereth to go on in their sins to their own eternal undoing, they have not the privilege of sons, and therefore not the discipline of God's

family; they are bastards. Νόθοι there doth not bear the notion of an illegitimate, but a degenerate son. Many profess themselves the children of God, but they are not owned as such. It is a sad and woful thing for a child to be left to himself, and to be suffered to go on in untoward courses; but far more sad it is for a man to be suffered to go on in sin without any chastisement and correction. God seemeth to cast them off, and to leave them to their own lusts, that they may perish for ever. Children, though they take it ill at the hands of others, yet take it patiently when beaten for their faults by their own parents, who under God are the cause of their being, and maintain and love them, and even in correcting seek their good, much more their souls' good hereafter. Earthly parents may err by wanting wisdom, and out of passion and rashness their chastisements may be arbitrary and irregular, but God never mingleth passion with his rod; there is more of compassion than passion in it; it is but only medicinal. His chastisements flow from the purest love, and are regulated by perfect wisdom, and tend to and end in holiness and happiness. Therefore, John xviii. 11, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink of it?' I speak the more in this case, because the comfort of adoption is for such a time; and because the great error of these children is, that they had known the Father, yet would be dandled and never feel the rod.

II. For the second consideration, that the lowest sort of christians do know God in the relation of a father.

1. Christ hath taught all his disciples to say, 'Our Father,' Mat. vi. 9. There is none that cometh to pray with any confidence but taketh him up under this relation. We must all own him as a father, either by sense or by choice; either by a sense of his fatherly love in Christ, or else we must choose and esteem him as a father, resolve to have no father but God, and depend upon him, and obey him as such: Jer. iii. 19, 'Thou shalt call me, My father, and not turn away from me;' that is, take him and acknowledge him as a father, and promise to continue loyal to him.

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2. Adoption is one of the first privileges. As soon as a man owneth Christ, he is adopted and taken into God's family: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God;' John xx. 17, 'I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.' The state of the person is altered; past sins are forgiven, and ground is laid for a future pardon. It is one of the first privileges we have as soon as we belong to Christ. What Christ is, he maketh his people to be in their proportion and measure.

3. It is God's covenant He hath promised that all his 'shall know him, from the least to the greatest,' Heb. viii. 11. God hath no child so little but he knoweth his Father, though he be of little experience in the world. God hath showed himself to be a father in Christ. God hath elsewhere promised to give his people 'a heart to know him,' Jer. xxiv. 7. They cannot else belong to him, nor he be their God, nor they his children.

III. For the third consideration, how this is the constitutive difference. This was spoken to before.

Use 1. To inform us what care ought to be taken for the institution of little children; for though spiritual growth be mainly intended, yet natural age is not excluded or exempted. Some little ones may have a strange knowledge of God, and a sense of religion: Prov. xxii. 6, 'Train up a child in the way that he shall go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' The tender twig is soonest bowed. We tame a lion when he is young, and a horse when a colt. What we learn young is most easily received, and firmly retained, before the mind be forestalled. Seneca took notice of it, *Omnes praeoccupati sumus*—our minds are wedded to evil, before set right toward God; thence cometh the difficulty. Consider they are children of the covenant, and should be entered betimes, Deut. xxix. from ver. 10 to 14. Christ hath great respect for little children, and he blameth those that kept them from him. God commandeth us to teach our children: Deut. vi. 7, 'And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up;' and we are commanded to 'bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' Eph. vi. 4. He that gave the precept will find the blessing. He expecteth it, and reckoneth upon it: Gen. xviii. 19, 'For I know that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall know the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.' Men promise this when they bring their children to baptism. They dedicate their children to the Lord, and educate them for the world and the flesh. Call upon your children as David doth upon Solomon: 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, 'And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind.'

Use 2. If the lowest sort of christians do know God as a father, do we know God as a father? have we a Father in heaven? are we reconciled to him by Jesus Christ? You will know it mainly by this, the state of adoption; there is a spirit of adoption that doth accompany it. There is a state of adoption, and a spirit of adoption: 'Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father,' Gal. iv. 6. It discovereth itself in prayer, because it maketh us come in a familiar and childlike manner to God. A spirit of grace breaketh out into a spirit of supplication: Zech. xii. 10, 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications.' But as to your constant frame, have you the spirit of a son, the spirit of an heir? The spirit of a son, that will discover itself in prayer. And it is a spirit of obedience; there is a childlike reverence and dread of God; they dare not offend him; as the Rechabites, Jer. xxxv. 5, 6.

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SERMONS UPON 1 JOHN III

SERMON I.

Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.—1 JOHN iii. 1.

THE apostle had said in the close of the former chapter, 'that every one that doeth righteousness is born of God;' now this being so great a privilege to be adopted into God's family, and acknowledged and reckoned among his children, the apostle pauseth on it a while, and doth excite them to wonder and reverence in the contemplation of it, that the argument may have the more force to persuade them to righteousness and holiness, wherein they would resemble God, as children do their father: 'Behold what manner of love,' &c.

In the words we have—

1. A great privilege represented.

2. An anticipation of an objection or an exception made to that privilege. This dignity hath no outward appearance to discover itself to the world. Therefore the privilege must not be esteemed by the world's judgment, who are blind in God's matters: 'Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.'

The first I am to deal with at this time, and there observe—

1. The privilege itself, 'That we should be called the sons of God.'

2. The fountain and rise of this; the love of God is the bottom cause.

3. The wonderful degree of this love as to this instance, effect, or expression of it, 'What manner of love.'

4. The note of attention by which he excites our dull minds to the consideration of it, 'Behold.'

Let me explain these words a little.

1. The privilege itself is to be 'called the sons of God.' Mark, not subjects or servants, but sons; and to be called the sons of God is to be the sons of God, for that is the idiotism of the Hebrew phrase: Isa. lviii. 13, 'Thou shalt call the sabbath a delight;' that is, make it to be so. So in this matter it is often used: Gen. xxi. 12, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called;' that is, owned and acknowledged to be thy children: Mat. v. 9, 'They shall be called the children of God.' Yea it is said of our Lord Christ himself, Luke i. 35, 'That holy thing which is born of thee shall be called the Son of God.'

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2. The fountain and first rise is the 'love of the Father,' who is everywhere represented as the first cause of our blessedness. Of our redemption: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' 1 John iv. 10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son

to be a propitiation for our sins.' The cause of our regeneration: Eph. ii. 4, 'But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.' And here it is made the cause of our adoption: 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' God's love is nothing else but his good-will and resolution to impart such great privileges to us; together with his acquiescence and well-pleasedness with what he doth for us: he did it because he would do it; he was resolved to do it, and took pleasure in it.

3. The wonderful degree in the expression of his love, 'What manner of love.' The expression noteth not only the quality, but quantity; as in other places: Mat. viii. 27, 'What manner of man is this?' or how great a man is this, 'that even the winds and seas obey him?' 2 Peter iii. 11, 'What manner of persons ought we to be?' which noteth not only the manner or kind, but the degree of holiness. Therefore I would read it here, not only 'what manner of love,' but 'how great love.'

4. The note of attention, or the term used exciting our attention, 'Behold.' There is a threefold 'behold' in scripture, and they are applicable to this place; as—

[1.] *Ecce demonstrantis*, the behold of demonstration, or pointing with the hand, which is referred to a thing or person present, and noteth the certainty of sense; as John i. 29, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.' There he was then before their eyes, and he pointed at him as present. If prefixed to a doctrine, it noteth the certainty of faith: Job v. 27, 'Lo this, we have searched it; hear it, and know it for thy good;' believe it as a certain truth.

[2.] There is *ecce admirantis aut excitantis*, the behold of admiration, or awakening our drowsy minds, when anything weighty or any extraordinary thing is spoken of; this is to excite our attention as to an important truth, worthy of our most serious thoughts and raised affections. As in a case of evil: Lam. i. 12, 'Behold, see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.' So here in the case of good, 'What manner of love?' is there any love like unto this love? And all is that we may entertain it with wonder and reverence.

[3.] There is *ecce exultantis aut gratulantis*, the behold of gratulation, as rejoicing and blessing ourselves in the privilege: Ps. cxxi. 4, 'Behold, he that keepeth Israel never slumbereth nor sleepeth.'

Now all these take place here. Behold it with faith and confidence as a certain truth, behold it with wonder and reverence as a high dignity; behold it with love and delight as a blessed privilege to have God for our father, Christ for our elder brother, and heaven for our portion; what can we desire more? It is a certain truth, we should believe it more firmly; it is an important truth, we should consider it more seriously; it is a comfortable truth, we should improve it to our greater joy and consolation.

From the whole observe this doctrine—

That the love of God in adopting us into his family, and acknowledging us for his children, is such an act of grace as cannot be sufficiently considered and admired by his people.

I shall prove three things—

1. That there is such a relation as that of father and children between God and his people.

2. That this is a blessed and glorious privilege.

3. That believers ought to be excited to the earnest consideration of it.

I. That there is such a relation as that of father and children between God and his people. There is a relation between God and all his creatures; for as God gave being to all, so he hath an interest and propriety in them. But the inanimate and brute creatures are his instruments by which he serveth his providence: Ps. cxix. 91, ‘They continue this day according to thine ordinance, for they are all thy servants.’ All creatures are subjected to the law and overruling government of his providence. Man is under his proper government. Adam in the covenant of works was rather God’s subject and hired servant than his son. The children of Israel were his children, but as children in their nonage, as an heir while he is a child: Gal. iv. 1, ‘An heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all.’ A servile spirit was uppermost in that dispensation. But with respect to the gospel covenant of grace, so we are most strictly said to be the children of God: Hosea i. 10, ‘In the place where it is said to them, Ye are not my people, there shall it be said that ye are the sons of the living God;’ 2 Cor. vi. 18, ‘I win be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters.’ He will own us as a father, and we must be to him in the relation of children. God hath a seed among men whom he hath begotten by his Spirit, and hath adopted and taken into his family; he hath a paternal affection towards them, and they filial dispositions towards mm; he hath a paternal care and providence over them, and they filial confidence and dependence upon him; he expects the honour of a father, and we may expect the privileges of children, for he hath begotten us to a lively hope. This special relation is distinct from his common relation to other men.

1. It proceedeth from a distinct cause, his special and peculiar love, not from that common goodness and bounty which he expresseth to all his creatures: Ps. cxlv. 9, ‘The Lord is good to all, his tender mercy is over all his works.’ But this is the special act of his grace, or of his great love: Eph. ii. 4, 5, ‘But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.’

2. The foundation of this relation is not our being which we have from him as a creator, but our new being which we have from him as a father in Christ: ‘We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.’ As we are men, God is a governor to us, and we are his subjects; but as we are new men, born again, God is a father to us and we are his children: the former relation ceaseth not, but ariseth in it.

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3. The whole commerce and communion that is between us and him is on God's part fatherly, on our part childlike. On God's part fatherly, in a way of grace and love, pardoning our sins and frailties, and giving us the helps of his grace: Mal. iii. 17, 'I will spare them, as a man spareth his only son that serveth him;' Ps. ciii. 13, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth those that fear him.' A faulty child is a child, and therefore not so easily turned out of the family as a servant. We often forget the duty of children, but God doth not forget the mercy of a father. So on our part childlike; that is, for the main we are loving and obedient to God, make it our work to love and please him, and count it our happiness to be beloved of him. Love is at the bottom of God's dispensations to us, and at the bottom of our duties to him; he giveth us his choicest benefits, as becomes his special love to us, and we perform him the best service we can: 'For the love of Christ constraineth us.' He hath given us a heart to know him and love him as a father, and he loveth us as his dear children. In short, fatherly benefits are fullest, sweetest, and surest; for he giveth us himself, his Spirit, grace, glory, every good thing. So filial duty is the choicest: 1 Peter i. 14, 'As dear children, not fashioning yourselves to the former lusts of your ignorance;' Eph. v. 1, 'Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.' No motive so engaging as that, nor none goes so much to the heart of a christian.

II. That this is a blessed and glorious privilege will appear if we consider—

First, The person adopting, the great and glorious God, who is so far above us, so happy within himself, and needeth not us nor our choicest love and service; who had a son of his own, Jesus Christ, the eternally begotten of the Father, 'the Son of his love,' in whom his soul found such full complacency and delight. If men adopt, it is *in orbitatis gratiam*, as a remedy found out for the comfort of them who have no children. Never was it heard of that a father who had a son should adopt a son. Therefore it heightens the privilege that God who had a son that 'thought it no robbery to be equal with him' in power; a son that 'was the express image of his person,' the object of his full delight, 'being daily his delight, and rejoicing before him;' I say, that God should vouchsafe to such unworthy creatures as we are so dear and honourable a relation to himself is wonderful.

Secondly, The persons who are adopted, miserable sinners, who were strangers and enemies to God: 'Children of wrath, even as others;' those who were born heirs of God's curse, 'dead in trespasses and sins;' who had cast away the mercies of our creation. Now, that strangers should not only be taken into the family, but put in the place of children, and dealt with as children; that enemies should not only be reconciled, but have the blessed God to become their father in Christ; that children of wrath should be called to inherit a blessing; that those who were dead in trespasses and sins, and had so often offended God, should be begotten to a lively hope; that slaves to sin and Satan should be made free indeed, even called into the glorious liberty of the children of God; this is that we may wonder at, and say, 'What manner of love is this that we should be called the children of God!' The prodigal son, when he returned to his father, said, 'I am not worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.' We have all played the prodigal, cast away the mercies

of our creation for a very trifle. We blame Adam for selling himself and his posterity for an apple, and Esau for parting with his birthright for one morsel of meat; but ‘we have sold ourselves for nought.’ Therefore every son of Adam may say, I am not worthy to be called a son. We have forfeited all comfortable relations to God, and the privileges depending thereupon; therefore what astonishing mercy was this!

Thirdly, The bottom cause and fountain of this mercy and grace, or that which moved God, was his love; this was that which set his power and mercy at work to bring us into this estate.

1. This was an eternal love; the first foundation of it was laid in the election of God; there is the bottom stone in this building: ‘From before the foundation of the world we were predestinated to the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will.’ Then was the way of man’s recovery stated, the privileges, the terms, the persons who should enjoy them. Upon these terms it was agreed. Now what are we that the thoughts of God should be taken up about us so long ago, that he should show such favour to lost mankind, and to us in particular?

2. It was a free love: ‘I will love them freely.’ God was not inclined hereunto by our worth, but out of his own free love was graciously pleased to call us with an holy calling, and to give us a new being and an holy nature, that being regenerated, we might be adopted, that so he might love us tenderly as his children, and seek our felicity. In other adoptions men are at liberty to choose the best and most accomplished. Nature is limited, but adoption is free. Whatever our children be, distorted or deformed in body or depraved in mind, yet they are our children; we cannot cast them off. But where we choose one at our free will and pleasure, we take such as have drawn our affection by some good qualities and carriage of theirs. Now what good endowments had we to commend us to God, who are sinners by nature and practice, children of the devil, enslaved to sin? If God had respected our deservings, he might have cast us into hell rather than taken us into his family, we were so infinitely below him, so rebellious against him; therefore ‘behold what manner of love God hath bestowed upon us.’

3. It is special peculiar love, not common to the world; yet this love was bestowed upon us: ‘In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil.’ Some live and die the children of the devil, always retain the satanical nature, and are not renewed according to the image of God; yea, the greatest part of the world do so: ‘We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.’ Now the difference is not from ourselves, but from God, and cometh from God, that made thee to differ; all our good is from God, and from his mere love and goodness.

4. It is a costly love, considering the way how it is brought about; for before God’s eternal purposes could be executed, and conveniently be made known to the world, redemption by Christ was necessary; therefore it is said that ‘he was made of a woman, made under the law, that we that were under the law might receive the adoption of sons.’ Sin needed to be expiated by the Son of God in our nature before God would bestow this honour upon us. Christ was to be our brother

before God would be our father, and to take a mother upon earth that we might have a father in heaven; yea, to endure the law's curse before we could be instated in the blessing. In the business of our redemption he was treated as a slave or servant, that we might be treated as sons. Judas sold him for thirty pieces of silver, Mat. xxvi. 15, and that was the price of a slave, Exod. xxi. 32. And the apostle telleth us that he came in the form of a servant, even he that was lord of all: 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' Now when so much is necessary to bring about this privilege, surely it should be the more admired by us. It was pure infinite love, and his love remarkably and particularly expressed towards us, that he will bestow such a privilege upon us: 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.' It is a great and wonderful love; it cannot be said how or how much.

Fourthly, The dignity itself nakedly considered; it is a greater honour than the world can afford to us, a matter to be rather wondered at than told. Admire it we may, express it to the full we cannot. David saith, 'Seemeth it a light thing to be a king's son-in-law?' We may with better reason say, Is it nothing to be taken into God's family, and to become sons and daughters to the most high God? This was the honour and title of Christ himself, solemnly proclaimed from heaven: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' and we have it in our proportion and measure: 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' Blessed is that soul that is admit ted into such a relation to God. All relations may blush and hide their faces in comparison of this; for all the splendid titles which are so greatly affected by men are but empty shows and shadows in comparison of this glorious and blessed privilege; they come short behind it, either in true honour or profit; therefore it is a higher instance of the love of God than if he had made us monarchs of the world, or if a man could produce his pedigree from an uninterrupted line of kings and princes. Alas! how much better is it to be born of the Spirit than of the froth of the blood? These things continue with us but to the grave; but to be children of God will be our honour and interest to all eternity.

Fifthly, It is not a naked and empty title, but giveth us a right to the greatest privileges imaginable; as our giving empty titles to God without duty on our part is looked upon as a mockage: Mal. i. 6, 'If I be a father, where is mine honour? if I be a master where is my fear?' As the soldiers called Christ the king of the Jews, and spat upon him and buffeted him. So on God's part, if he called himself a father, he will perform all the parts of a father to us; for he hath more abundant love to us than any title or notion can make out or express.

But what benefits depend upon it? Very many; they may be referred to two heads—what God will do as a father for the present and for the future.

1. With respect to the present state; and there—

[1.] He will give us the Holy Spirit to be our sanctifier, guide, and comforter. This is a gift which he giveth to none but his children, and he giveth it to all his children. This suiteth with the

greatness and love of our Father, and it is a father's gift indeed, and absolutely necessary for such children as we are to God. In ourselves (we said before) there is no intrinsic worth in us, but God puts a more excellent spirit into us. God as a creator gave us our natural endowments; but as a father he giveth us the supernatural grace of the Spirit. The Spirit was given to Christ without measure, that all God's children and the members of his mystical body may receive it from him as the head and fountain of their life: Gal. iv. 6, 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' If we have this high privilege of adoption, we have also the Spirit of adoption to reside and dwell in our hearts, to be our sanctifier, guide, and comforter. Our sanctifier to change our hearts, and to transform us into the image of God and Christ: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image;' and Titus iii. 5, 'According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' To guide us in all our ways, and restrain us from sin: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' Quickening us to holiness: Ps. cxliii. 10, 'Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.' Especially to help us in the great duties of the spiritual life; as prayer: Jude 20, 'Praying in the Holy Ghost;' Rom. viii. 26, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered.' That they may address themselves to God as a father, in a familiar manner, with confidence, and yet with a holy reverence becoming both his majesty and his love; with a humble submission, and yet with a holy vehemency and earnestness, opposite to that careless formality and deadness which is in other men's prayers. Now how great a privilege is this, to have such a help at hand, a comforter as a witness! Rom. viii. 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.' As an earnest: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit.' Indeed the Spirit is not so necessarily a comforter as a sanctifier; yet a comforter he is, and if not so explicitly and manifestly, we may blame ourselves. This is God's allowance, and we deprive our selves of the benefit of it by our folly and indiscretion.

[2.] He giveth us an allowance of such temporal things, of outward mercies, as are convenient for us: Mat. vi. 25, 30, 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on: is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to-morrow is cut down; shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?' A christian hath two things to relieve him against all his distrustful fears and cares—adoption and particular providence. He hath his Father, and his Father is not ignorant of his condition and mindless of it; and therefore though he hath little or nothing in his hand, it is enough that his Father keepeth the purse for him, whose care extendeth to all things and persons, who hath the hearts of all men in his hands, and performeth all things according to his own will. He knoweth their persons, necessities, and temptations; and if we trust

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him for our heavenly inheritance, we may well trust him for our daily maintenance, which he vouchsafeth to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, and also to his enemies; nay, sometimes while they are sinning against him, and dishonouring his name, oppressing his servants, opposing his interest in the world. He that feedeth a kite, will he not feed a child? He that supplieth his enemies, will he not take care of his family? You would think that person monstrously cruel that should feed his dogs and starve his children. This cannot without blasphemy be imagined of our gracious and heavenly Father. If God be your Father, you can want nothing that is good; but the determination of what is good must be left to his wisdom, for we are not so fit to judge of it, and to discern our own good, and therefore must commit all to his fatherly care and wise providence. Indeed he chooseth rather to profit us than to please us in his dispensations, and it is your duty to refer all to his wisdom and faithfulness.

2. With respect to the life to come. Eternal blessedness is the fruit of adoption: Rom. viii. 17, 'If sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if we suffer with him, we shall be glorified together.' We have a blessed inheritance to look for as soon as we are adopted and taken into God's family, we have a right to it though not admitted into the fruition of it; and the right and hope that we have now is enough to counterbalance all temptations both on the right hand and on the left. The blessedness we hope for doth infinitely outweigh the carnal pleasures and delights of sin, which tempt us to disobey our Father's will. What are the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, to those blessed delights and glorious things which our Father hath provided for us in heaven? It was Esau's profaneness to part with his birthright, Heb. xii. 16, and Naboth's generosity to refuse it, 1 Kings xxi. 3. On the left hand there is enough to allay the fears and sorrows of the present life: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' If we have the kingdom at last, it is no great matter what we suffer by the way: Rom. viii. 18, 'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' So that during the time of our hope we have great encouragement. But more of this in the following part of the text. But hereafter we fully receive the fruits of our adoption: Rom. viii. 23, 'Waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body.' The manifestation is at the resurrection, the fruition in heaven: Rom. viii. 19, 'The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' Then God's children are seen in all their glory. But in heaven, there we have the fullest and largest demonstration of God's love and favour. It is love and grace now that he is pleased to pass by our offences and take us into his family, to give us a taste of his love, and a right to his heavenly kingdom, and to employ us in his service, but then it is another manner of love; grace, indeed, when not only taken into his family, but into his presence and palace: John xii. 26, 'Where I am, there also shall my servant be.' Not only have the right, but the possession: Mat., xxv. 34, 'Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' And not only have some remote service and ministration, but be

everlastingly employed in loving, delighting, and praising God among those blessed creatures who are our blessed companions with us in this work.

III. That believers ought to be excited to the earnest consideration of it.

1. To quicken our thankfulness, which is the chief motive and principle of gospel-obedience. There is a slackness and slowness of heart in holy things; there are sundry methods, and ways, and means to work upon us, but they may all be reduced to two—love and fear; and hope may be joined herein with love. We are thankful not only for the benefits we have received, but the benefits we expect from the love and goodness of God. Now all the motives that belong to fear do not make so kindly, so strong, and so durable an impression as those that arise from love. In fear we force ourselves, but love begets an inclination: it is love, and not fear, that is the bias and inclination of the soul. And look, what difference there is between a forcible impression and a natural and voluntary inclination, that there is between fear and love. A man is forced to do a thing by fear which he had rather leave undone; but as for love *non cogitur, sed cogit*—'The love of Christ constraineth us.' The constraints of fear are ingrate, and unacceptable to the soul; but of love, pleasing. This appears by the Israelites making brick for Pharaoh, when forced by their taskmasters; and the Jews repairing the city and the temple: Neh. iv. 6, 'The people had a mind to the work.' Nothing now worketh upon love but love: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him because he loved us first; we love him who first loved us.' And where have we the fairest prospect of God's love, but in this relation of love, and adopting us to be his children, and to be heirs of glory by Jesus Christ? The sum of what is spoken is this: That when we love God most, we are most pleasing to God and ourselves; our duties run on the most freely and sweetly, and we are most like abundantly to love God when our thoughts are most steeped in the love of God.

2. That we may keep up the joy of our faith and comfort in afflictions from the world. Though we be God's children, yet the greatest part of the world treateth us as slaves. The apostle intimateth so much in the text: 'The world knoweth us not.' Princes in disguise in a foreign land may meet with manifold abuses, which otherwise would not be offered to them if their quality and condition were known; so God's children and heirs make no fair show in the flesh. But 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' It doth support us often and frequently to consider the world cannot hate us so much as God loveth us. If the world be an enemy, God is a father; they cannot put so much disgrace and contempt upon us as God will put glory. If you be to them 'the scurf and off-scouring of all things,' you are to God as jewels; if they thrust you out of the world, God will receive you to heaven; if they prepare a dungeon, God hath prepared a kingdom.

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3. That we may be satisfied and contented with our portion; if you have God to your Father, what though you be straitened in the world? A man has no interest in spiritual privileges unless he doth prize and value them; for God will not cast pearls before swine, that trample them under their feet. Now the practical estimation exceedeth the speculative when we are contented in the Want

of other things; as David saith, Ps. xvii. 14, 15, ‘From men which are thy right hand, O Lord, from men of the world, whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I will be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.’ We need not envy others their portion; there should be a well-pleasedness in our condition: Ps. xvi. 5-7, ‘The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night-season.’

4. To stir us up to be exemplary in holiness; for if God be match less in his love, we should be singular in our holiness; our return must carry proportion with our receipts: ‘Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!’ Then the inference may well be, ‘What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?’ and we should study to please him more. As fatherly love, and the benefits depending thereupon, are fullest and surest; so should filial duty be highest and freest.

5. We should consider it, that we may clear up our interest the more in it, and not foolishly content ourselves with an inferior happiness. Surely if it be so certain a truth, and so great a privilege, we should see that it be ours, and be able to say, ‘What manner of love hath God bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of the most high God!’

Use 1. And indeed the use that I shall make of it is to persuade you to put in for a share in this blessed privilege. To direct you in this, let me tell you—

1. That this new relation dependeth on the new birth, and that none are adopted but those that are regenerated and renewed to the image and likeness of God; all others, though called christians, are bastards and not sons, that is, not legitimate but degenerate children. The relative change goeth along with the real, or followeth it; for the real is first, John i. 12, 13, ‘But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: for we were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.’

2. Regeneration is God’s act; but repentance and faith, which are the immediate issues of it, are ours, and you must enter by the strait gate if you would enter into God’s family, and obtain the privileges of it. We must humbly consent to take Christ upon the ends for which God offereth him, or to be and do what God hath appointed him to be and do for poor sinners: Gal. iii. 26, ‘Ye are all made children of God, by faith in Jesus ‘Christ.’ That is our first admission, by a consent to the new covenant, depending upon the merit of Christ’s sacrifice for the privileges thereof, and binding ourselves by a solemn vow to perform the duties thereof; for he presently speaks of being baptized into Christ, that we may put on Christ.

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3. If you would have the privileges of children, you must perform the duties of children; we catch at privileges, but neglect duty. Now the great duty of children is to love, please, and honour

their father: ‘If I be a father where is mine honour? If I be a master where is my fear?’ 1 Peter i. 17, ‘If ye call on the Father, who with out respect of persons judgeth every man, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.’ There must be a tenderness and a fear to offend our heavenly Father. Our privileges are the strongest engagement to duty that can be: Jer. iii. 5, ‘Thou hast said, Thou art my father; yet thou doest evil yet more and more.’ The sons of Rechab are commended for keeping so close to the institutes of their family: Jer. xxxv. 6, ‘But they said, We will drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever.’ Such a disposition is pleasing to God. So tenderly he loveth the children that are childlike and obedient. How humble and obedient was the Lord Christ, though his only-begotten Son!

4. If we would enjoy the privileges of the family, we must submit to the discipline of the family. God will take his own course in bringing up his children; our fancies and appetites must not prescribe the way, but all must be humbly submitted to his wisdom: Heb. xii. 6-10, ‘For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.’ Many times his love of good-will maketh use of the rod. Before conversion it is a means to awaken us, but after conversion we are made amiable in his sight, and objects of his love of complacency; yet the rod of correction will not wholly be laid aside. In heaven, where there is no danger of sin, there is no use of the rod. Those that are permitted to go on in their sins have not the benefit of paternal correction; therefore in the 9th and 10th verses before cited, it is said, ‘We had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; and shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.’ Children, when they take it ill to be beaten by others, yet they take it patiently to be beaten for their faults by their parents: they may err for want of wisdom, their chastisements are arbitrary and irregular; but there is more of compassion than passion in God’s rod; his chastisements come from purest love, are regulated by perfect wisdom, and tend to and end in our holiness and happiness.

5. You must submit to bear the world’s hatred, if God see fit: Rev. iv. 29, ‘They loved not their lives to the death;’ Heb. ii. 10, ‘For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings.’ And therefore, as Christ said, so must we say, John xviii. 11, ‘The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?’

6. Think often and seriously of this wonderful and matchless love; the subject requireth it.

[1.] These are things excellent and great, and such things usually force their way into our minds; all other things are trifles to this love, in making us his children. Alas! what are the things you dote upon, and wherein you applaud yourselves, to this? honours, lands, revenues, to these glorious mysteries? These are the most sweet and ravishing thoughts, a feast to the minds of all spiritual wise men: Eph. iii. 18, 'That we may, with all saints, comprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ, and to know the love of God, which passeth knowledge;' to know as much as we can, that we may be affected with it.

[2.] These are things that nearly concern us. Needless speculations we may well spare, or other men's matters; all will seek their own things: in temporals it holdeth true. Now what doth more nearly concern us than to have God for our father, Christ for our elder brother, heaven for our inheritance, angels and saints for our fellow-members in the family? It may be so, if we do not forfeit or lose this privilege by our neglect or contempt. These things are ours by offer; they may be ours by choice. Consideration doth much promote it.

[3.] They are the most necessary things. What is more necessary to our happiness than to love God as a father, which is our work, and to know we are beloved of him as children?

[4.] Things most profitable should be considered by us. There is more profit to be gotten by the tillage of a fruitful land than a barren heath; and it is idle to stand telling stories when we have higher business of concernment in hand; so it is foolishness in us to muse upon vanity when we have the love of God to think of, to let the mill grind chaff when there is such plenty of corn at hand.

SERMON II.

Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.—1 JOHN iii. 1, 2.

IN the first part of these words we have observed two things—

1. A great privilege represented.

2. An anticipation of an objection, or an exception which might be made to that privilege.

For the first, we have discoursed of the excellency of the privilege of adoption, or being God's children.

The second will give us occasion to discourse of the inconspicuousness of this privilege for the present to the world.

The objection or exception may be framed thus: There is little seen of this dignity and prerogative which you speak of as so great and glorious. The world hateth them whom you say God loveth; and their present condition is so unlike such an estate, that how can we believe it? many of God's children being mean, low, indigent, oppressed by the world, harassed with sundry calamities and afflictions, that it doth not appear that we have so great and glorious a Father; yea, what with corruption within and temptations without, we have much ado ourselves to be persuaded that we are the children of God; our condition being so much unsuitable to, and so much beneath, our rights and privileges. This objection the apostle would anticipate and prevent, both to vindicate the truth of the privilege, that it is as great and glorious as he had told them, and also to fortify them against the hatred and persecutions of the world.

But how doth he prevent it? In this prolepsis and anticipation there is—(1.) A concession; (2.) A correction.

1. By way of concession he granteth two things—

[1.] That the children of God are obnoxious to the contempt and hatred of the world, 'Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.'

[2.] That the privilege itself carrieth no splendid appearance in the world; yea, it is much obscured by the present state of those that possess it, 'It doth not appear what we shall be.'

2. By way of correction, wherein—

[1.] He asserts the reality of the privilege notwithstanding the present state, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God.'

[2.] That in the future state the glory of God's children shall be manifest, 'But we know, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.'

First, Of the concession; and there the first granted truth is—

1. That the children of God are obnoxious to the contempt and hatred of the world, 'The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.' By 'the world' is meant unbelievers, or the multitude of those that are without Christ. They know us not so as to own and love us, for they knew him not, that is, Christ. 'Him' is not referred to the next antecedent, the Father; for it is usual to express Christ by the relative word '*he*' by way of eminency, as is evident by the next verses, 'For when he shall appear.' Yea, all along the epistle: 1 John ii. 4, 'He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments,' &c.; ver. 12, 'Our sins are forgiven for his name's sake;' ver. 25, 'The promise which he hath promised us;' ver. 27, 'The anointing which he hath received from him;' ver. 28,

‘When he shall appear, we shall have boldness at his coming.’ So after the text, chap. iii. 5, ‘He was manifest to take away sin;’ ver. 16, ‘Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us;’ 1 John iv. 17, ‘As he is in the world, so are we in the world.’ It is by way of emineucy appropriated to Christ; so that the meaning is, they do not acknowledge christianity, since they do not acknowledge Christ. Yet I will not rigorously insist upon this interpretation, so as to exclude the Father and the Spirit, because the world neither know Father, Son, nor Spirit, and therefore hate and contemn the people of God, and oppose the life and power of the gospel-dispensation. They know not the Father: John xv. 21, ‘These things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me.’ They know not the Son, and therefore contemn and hate the saints: John xvi. 3, ‘These things will they do unto you, because they know not the Father nor me.’ Yea, they know not the Holy Spirit: John xiv. 17, ‘I will send you another comforter, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him; but ye know him, because he dwelleth in you.’ This is the first concession, that the world discerneth not any such great privilege, or dear and near relation between God and us.

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2. The second concession is the imperfection of the present state, by which the glory of this privilege is darkened. It doth not appear what we shall be by what we are now. We are stained with sin, and blackened with sufferings. How many infirmities are we compassed about with! How many wants, necessities, and troubles are we pressed with! There is no visible appearance of our great privilege; it doth not appear who are God’s children, or how they shall be glorified. The heirs of the world make a great show and noise; they may be pointed at where they go; there goeth such a prince, or such a lord’s son and heir; but God’s children carry no such port and state.

Secondly, By way of correction; and there—

1. He asserts the reality of the privilege, ‘Beloved, now are we the sons of God.’

[1.] Now we have the immediate ground and foundation of this new relation, which is the new birth or regeneration, whereby is given to us a new nature, which is called a divine nature, whereby we are made partakers of the life and likeness of God: Titus iii. 5, ‘According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;’ 2 Cor. v. 17, ‘If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, and all things are become new.’

[2.] We have the right thence depending; for it is said, John i. 12, ‘But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name;’ that is, right or privilege, for so the word is translated, Rev. xxii. 14, ‘Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to eat of the tree of life.’ A right then we have, though not the possession or full fruition; that is reserved for the life everlasting; but it is a title to a glorious inheritance, that surely and shortly will come in hand. Therefore this present state and condition of ours is the state and condition of the sons of God. There must be a distinction between earth and heaven; though our filiation in the world to come be another thing to what it is in this world, yet

now we are dear to God, reckoned to be of his family. God is with us now in our houses of clay, though we be not with him in his palace of glory. He is with us now in fire and water, in all conditions, though we be not in our everlasting condition of peace and rest. He loveth us, and we are precious in his sight: Isa. xliii. 3, 4, ‘For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee; since thou wast precious in my sight, and thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.’

[3.] We have the comfort of it now, and the first-fruits and earnest to show how good and sure it is: Gal. iv. 6, ‘Because ye are sons, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;’ 2 Cor. i. 22, ‘Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit;’ Rom. viii. 23, ‘We ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.’

[4.] Now the fruits and effects do break out in our conversations, so that we are more visibly like unto God than others are, so that there is a manifest difference between the children of God and the children of the devil: 1 John iii. 10, ‘In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, nor he that loveth not his brother.’ In some sort we are like him now in holiness, hereafter shall be more perfect in purity, blessedness, and immortality. The world is sensible of this difference now: 1 Peter iv. 4, ‘Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them into the same excess of riot.’ They look on the children of God as contrary to them in nature, interest, and design, having other comforts, other dependencies, other practices. There is a generation of men whose life is not carnal, who have other delights and pleasures than the rest of mankind have. It is no wonder to see men proud, covetous, voluptuous, as it is no wonder to see the sun move, or the earth stand still, or water run downward; but it is a wonder to see men live as born of God, as having other hopes and expectations, to see them renounce what they see and love for God and heaven, which they never saw, to live upon supernatural supports, to comfort themselves with invisible hopes, and to sacrifice interests, life, and all to enjoy him. A christian that roweth against the stream of flesh and blood is the world’s wonder and the world’s reproof: Heb. xi. 7, ‘By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world.’ Well, then, we are the sons of God; we have much in hand, though more in hope.

2. That in the future state the glory of God’s children shall be manifest: ‘When he shall appear we shall be like him.’ That shall be the day of the manifestation of the sons of God: Rom. viii. 19, ‘The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.’ First Christ, and then all the rest of his children: Col. iii. 3, 4, ‘Your life is hid with Christ in God; but when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory.’

Doct. That though God hath bestowed upon his people the glorious privileges of his children, yet little of this is seen in their present estate in the world.

1. I shall prove that the glory of our privileges and prerogatives is not seen in the present state.

2, Shall give you the reasons.

3. The uses.

I. Our glorious relation to God, with the effects and fruits of it, is a thing hidden and not seen.

1. It is not seen by the world; the world knoweth us not, as it knew him not; it is hidden from the world, as colours from a blind man; they have no eyes to see them—

[1.] Because they are blinded by the delusions of the flesh, and can not judge of spiritual things: 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of God, for they are folly to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' as beasts cannot judge of the affairs of a man; it is a life above them; these are things out of their sphere; they know all things after the flesh, and value them according to the interests of the flesh; spiritual prerogatives are a riddle to them.

[2.] Being blinded with malice and prejudice, they censure this estate perversely, and so malign it and oppose it: 1 Peter iv. 4, 5, 'They think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.' They are unwilling that any should part company, that there may be none to make them ashamed; and therefore, if they cannot draw others into a fellowship of their sins, they labour to blacken them with censures, or root them out by furious opposition and persecutions. But their perverse judgment should be no discouragement to the godly in the way of holiness, wherein they endeavour to imitate God, their heavenly Father.

(1.) Because if God be not known nor honoured in the world, nor Christ, nor the Spirit, why should we take it unkindly? We cannot in reason expect better entertainment in the world than Christ found in the world: John xv. 20, 'Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than the lord: if they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.' He had spoken it before to persuade them to humility and patience.

(2.) Their opinion is little to be valued, and therefore we should rather pity their ignorance than be offended by their censures. Though we be scorned and lightly esteemed, yea, persecuted by them, we must pity their ignorance of God and heavenly things. The world blindeth them: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded their minds which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them.' They are so transformed into a conformity to those things they lust after, that they know not what is true happiness and excellency. Their being of the world is the cause of their ignorance. God's people are too touchy when they stand so much upon the respects of men. It argueth a secret leaven of pride if they murmur when the world doth not esteem them. A christian is an unknown man in the world, and therefore

should not take it ill if he be slighted; he knoweth he hath the favour of God, that his hopes lie elsewhere; if they knew you better, they would use you better. When they slight you, nay, persecute and hate you, learn of your Lord to say, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

(3.) christians should be satisfied with the approbation of God: 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God! The world knoweth us not, as it knew him not.' Though the world hate us, yet if God love us, it should be enough: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe, that seek honour one of another, and are not content with the honour that cometh from God only?' We make a strange medley when we would have both. It is enough that we have God's image, God's favour and fellow ship, and are taken into God's family.

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(4.) It might be cause of suspicion to us if we were hugged and embraced by the world. However, things must be judged according to their intrinsic value and nature, not by the world's love or hatred; this should alleviate the sense of the world's contempt. The world cannot sincerely love that which is good: John xv. 19, 'If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' It is better to have the praise of their hatred than the scandal of their love and approbation.

(5.) Those that are truly blessed in their own consciences cannot be truly miserable by the judgment of other men: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversations in the world.' The bird of the bosom sings sweetest. If all the world should applaud us, or all the world condemn us, if the world condemn and our consciences acquit us, we need not be troubled; God will not ask their vote and suffrage for our condemnation or absolution.

(6.) The slanders and mockery of worldly men should be no discouragement to us in the ways of the Lord; for God will reckon with them about their hard speeches against his people: 1 Peter iv. 4, 'They speak evil of you, who shall give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.' There is not an injurious thought in wicked men's hearts, or word in their mouths, but God taketh notice of it. And therefore this may comfort us, that God will call them to a strict account for all their slanders, or at least keep us from discouragement in our duty.

2. As our dignity is not of the world, so in itself it doth not appear during our present state—(1.) Because it is spiritual, there is a veil upon it; (2.) It is hidden; (3.) Because it is future.

[1.] The privileges that belong to our dignity and prerogative of adoption are spiritual, and therefore make no fair show in the flesh; as, for instance—

(1.) The image of God is an internal image: Ps. xlv. 13, 'The king's daughter is glorious within.' The world is glorious without, but the church is glorious within; its splendour lieth not in large possessions and great revenues, but in a plentiful effusion of gifts and graces. A harlot is more painted and decked with jewels than a matron; so is the false church more adorned with outward

splendour than the true: Cant i. 5, ‘I am black, but comely, like the tents of Kedar and the curtains of Solomon.’ There are many crosses and comforts, corruptions and graces, beauty and blackness; as the wild and wandering people that carried tents up and down were black in the outside, and sullied with the weather, but carried about with them costly and valuable things; and Solomon’s rich hangings and tapestry had other coverings of smaller value, as the ark had of badgers’ skins. There may be little splendour to the eye, yet much beauty within; even the beauty of our God may be upon them. The people of God are not to be judged by their outside, but by this inward glory. The world will not believe that such mean creatures can be the sons of God.

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(2.) The life which floweth thence is hidden: Col. iii. 3, ‘Our life is hid with Christ in God;’ like the sap of the tree, which is not seen though the fruit appear.

(3.) Their comforts are spiritual, known by feeling rather than by report and imagination: ‘The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Jesus Christ.’ It is not learning, but spiritual experience will tell us what this is: Rev. ii. 17, ‘To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the hidden manna.’ It is the heart of the godly that knoweth and feeleth these comforts: ‘A stranger intermeddleth not with their joy.’ The party that hath them feeleth them, but the bystander knoweth them not.

(4.) The protection and supplies of God’s providence; it is a secret, it is a mystery, and a riddle to the world, that must have all under the view of sense: Ps. xxxi. 20, ‘Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence, from the pride of men and the strife of tongues;’ and so are said to ‘dwell in the secret of the Most High,’ Ps. xci. 1. Again ‘the secret of the Lord is upon their tabernacle;’ meaning God’s protection and providence. This is the special favour of God, which the world knoweth not of, whereby God dwelleth with his people, and doth maintain and prosper them, nobody knoweth how; but there is a secret and insensible blessing on them, as, on the contrary, there is an insensible curse like a moth, that is sufficient to blast the fairest enjoyments of the wicked. God, to provide for his children, can put a very great blessing in a little means.

[2.] Because it is hidden: Col. iii. 3, ‘Your life is hid with Christ in God;’ not only in point of security, as maintained by an invisible power, but hidden in point of obscurity; there is a veil upon it.

(1.) The spiritual life is hidden under the veil of the natural life: Gal. ii. 20, ‘The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.’ They live in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. It is a life within a life. The spiritual life is nothing else but the natural life sublimated, and overruled to nobler and higher ends. The children of God eat, and drink, and sleep, and marry and give in marriage, as others do; they have not divested themselves of the interests and concernments of flesh and blood, but all these things are governed by grace, and carried on to high and eternal ends. But that grace which overruleth this life is not seen. We can see men move and breathe, and hear them discourse, but we see not the vital principle. We hear the clock strike,

but the springs and wheels are out of sight. So are the inward motions of the soul, and the principles by which they are moved and stirred.

(2.) Another veil is that of afflictions and outward meanness and abasement: ‘The world was not worthy of them,’ yet they ‘wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins.’ Who would think so much worth should lie hid under a base outside? Would any man judge these to be highest in the favour of God, or heirs of glory? The glory was darkened and obscured by a base outside: ‘God hath chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of a kingdom.’ So miser ably poor, and yet in such a high relation to God, that they should have most of God’s heart who feel his hand so heavy and smart upon them, and have so little of this world’s good things: Ps. lxviii. 13, ‘Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.’ Sometimes God darkeneth all their outward glory, maketh them as scullions in the kitchen, yet in the meantime beautified with grace, and enriched with the evidences of his love; those that shall be at length advanced to eternal glory may long lie in a sad, black, destitute, and despised condition.

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(3.) Another veil is reproach and calumnies: 2 Cor. vi. 8, ‘As deceivers, and yet true;’ that is, counted in the world a company of dissemblers, and yet the sincere servants and children of God: ‘And judged according to men in the flesh, when they live to God in the spirit.’ Reproach is the soil and dung whereby God maketh his heritage fruitful; but the devil intendeth it for their destruction and extirpation. Satan is first a liar and then a murderer; as they would invest the christians with bear-skins, and then bait them as bears; and the world doth it to keep up their prejudices, and will not search, because they have a mind to hate.

(4.) There is another veil. Christians quench the vigour, and obscure the glory of this life by their infirmities; they have too much of Adam, and too little of Jesus, and so the spiritual life is carried on darkly and in a riddle; the good herbs and flowers are hidden in neglected gardens by the plenty of weeds. Christians are too negligent, and do not live as those that are born of God; as they said of Hannibal when he was melting his days, his time, and army in the pleasures of Capua, that there was fire in him, but it needeth blowing; so there is grace at the bottom, but it needeth a little stirring and quickening. The best of God’s children have their failings: ‘In many things we offend all.’ Now the wicked insist more upon the faults of God’s children than on their graces, as the flies pitch on a sore place, and the vultures fly over the gardens of delight to pitch on carrion. A pearl or diamond in the dirt and mire, its lustre cannot be discerned till it be washed. When corruptions are great and experiences small, a little grace can hardly be discerned; as a staff is sooner found than a needle.

[3.] It is future: ‘Now are we the children of God, but it doth not appear what we shall be;’ and so our filiation is not only hidden from others, but in a great measure from ourselves. The time of our perfection and blessedness is not yet come, and we cannot for the present judge of it; what God will do for us, and what a glory shall be revealed in us. The glory intended is not fully revealed in

scripture, for we have not a heart to conceive of it: 1 Cor. ii. 9, ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;’ 1 Cor. xii. 9, ‘Prophecy is but in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.’ And the apostle, when he was rapt into paradise, heard unspeakable words. Heavenly joys cannot be told us in an earthly dialect; the scripture is fain to lisp to us, and speak as we can understand, of things to come by things present; therefore our glory is in a great measure unknown, and will be till we get up and see what a crown of glory is prepared for us.

II. The reasons why this glory doth not appear.

1. Because now is the time of trial, hereafter of recompense; therefore now is the hiding time, hereafter is the day of manifestation of the sons of God. If the glory of the spiritual life were too sensible, there were no trial, neither of the world nor of the people of God. It is meet mere men should be distinguished here; as Christ himself might be discerned by those that had a mind to see him, yet there was obscurity enough in his person to harden those that were resolved to continue in their prejudices. Therefore it is said, Luke ii. 34, ‘This child was set for the rise and fall of many in Israel, and for a sign of contradiction to be spoken against.’ He was a stumbling-block to the wicked. So if the whole excellency of the christian state were laid open, there would be no trial. Christ had his bright side and dark side, a glory to be seen by those eyes that were anointed with spiritual eyesalve, and affliction and meanness enough to harden them that had no mind to see; so God hath his chosen ones in the world, who keep up his honour and interest; and he hath his ways to express his love to them, but not openly. Now they are called his hidden ones, with respect to his secret blessing and protection: Ps. lxxx. 3, ‘Turn again, O God, and cause thy face to shine.’ And God hath chosen this way as most suitable, both for our trial and the world.

2. Now is the time of faith, hereafter of sight; and ‘faith is the evidence of things not seen.’ Therefore in this day of faith God will not too openly express things to the view of sense, for that would destroy faith. Now we are sanctified, and justified, and live by faith.

3. That we may be conformed to our head, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came not with external appearance. The glory of the divine nature was hidden under the veil of his flesh, and his dignity and excellency under a mean and base outside: ‘He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.’ In this outward state there was nothing lovely to be seen by a carnal eye; though in true beauty surpassing men and angels, but not in outward state and condition of life: ‘Is not this the carpenter’s son?’ He had his veil of reproaches; called ‘a wine-bibber,’ and that ‘he casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.’ He was tempted of Satan, persecuted by the sons of violence. He had no sin indeed, yet counted a sinner. Now we must be made like Christ in all things; he sanctified a mean condition to us.

4. God hath chosen this way as most fit to advance his glory; he will give us little in hand, that he may daily hear from us, and we may seek our supplies from him; for the spirit of adoption was given us that we may cry, 'Abba, Father.' And also that his power may be perfect in our weakness. By infirmities, weaknesses, and wants, his fatherly love more appeareth to us than in an absolute and total exemption from them. God would not hear so often from us, nor should we have such renewed experiences, to revive the sense of his love and grace, which otherwise would be cold and dead in our hearts, were it not for those wants and afflictions during our minority and nonage.

Use 1. Be contented to be hidden from and hated by the world, if the course of your service expose you to it. As much as in him lieth, a christian should seek to be at peace with all, gain the good-will of all, that his service may not be obstructed. But none can carry it so innocently and meekly but he will meet with some opposition; but we should not stumble at the cross, be deterred from a course of godliness, or discouraged in God's stricter ways, because of the vexations and afflictions which accompany them. To this end—

1. Look upon things not as what they are esteemed to be now, but what they will be hereafter; now is the trouble, then the reward. If the blind see not these things, you should see them, 2 Peter i. 10. Present time is quickly past, therefore we should not look at things what they seem at present, but what they will prove to all eternity. Present pleasures, profits, or honours, may easily be counter-balanced by final shame. The derided, vilified believer, oh, how glorious a creature will he be, when Christ shall give him his eternal reward! Mat. v. 11, 12, 'Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, for my name's sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.'

2. Thankfully consider the benefits you have now by holiness, as well as the afflictions. The least cross is usually taken notice of more than all the advantages which follow holiness. Is your Father strange to you now? Doth not he give an hundred-fold? Mark x. 30; and give you that which is infinitely more worth than that he taketh from you? The world may be bought too dear, but not salvation and the comforts of the Spirit. Yea, as to outward things, you are not cast out of the care of his providence: 2 Cor. iv. 9, 'Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.' Though we wrestle with difficulties, yet are supported and maintained; our heavenly Father is fatherly still.

Use 2. Do not affect appearances, nor live by opinion, but content yourselves with the favour and approbation of God; an hypocrite's outside is the best, because he seeketh to please men. But count the inward life the best life, that inward adorning, the hidden man of the heart. The nettle mounteth on high when the violet shroudeth itself under its own leaves, and is only found out by its smell and fragrancy. A christian is satisfied with the honour that cometh of God only. Consider well—

1. Of the honourable estate and privileges to which believers are called, to be sons of God and friends of God.

2. The honour of his approbation in our consciences, and the testimony of our integrity, if approved of God and accepted of God, 2 Cor. v. 9, 2 Cor. x. 18. A good opinion of ourselves, and others' good opinion of us, cannot be so comfortable to us as the testimony of God concerning our sincerity.

3. His respects are many times made conspicuous to the world: 'Those that honour me, I will honour.' When a man sincerely sets himself to exalt God, God will take care to honour him in the sight of the world when it is convenient.

4. God's approbation and testimony of us at the day of judgment, 1 Cor. iv. 5; 1 Peter i. 7, 'That the trial of your faith may be found to praise and glory.'

5. Eternal glory in heaven: Rom. ii. 7, 'To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.'

Use 3. If your privileges be hidden, let your graces appear in their fruits and effects. Little of your happiness is seen, but your holiness should be apparent and visible; it is for the honour of God that his children should be like him, Mat. v. 16, and 2 Thes. i. 12. If your condition be obscured and darkened by afflictions, let it not be obscured and darkened by sins; and though you live not in a perpetual tenor of happiness, yet there must be a constant course of holiness; no greatness like that of a gracious spirit.

Use 4. Be contented with a mean condition; it is not the day of the manifestation of the sons of God: though others that are wicked have a larger allowance, God doth not misplace his hands, as Joseph thought of his father, that he did not place his hands on the right head, Gen. xlviii., when he saw Ephraim preferred before Manasseh. In what a poor condition was the only-begotten Son of God when he lived in the world! Though you do not enjoy the pleasures, honours, riches, and esteem that others do, yet if you enjoy the favour of God, it is enough; though mean, yet heirs of glory, James i. 5. God doth not esteem men according to their outward lustre, 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

Use 5. Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment, John vii. 24. Do not judge the people of God by their out side or worldly privileges: Moses could see an excellency in the people of God in their afflicted condition, Heb. xi. 25. Do not misjudge yourselves: I am a poor, afflicted, contemptible man; that may prove a temptation, Ps. lxxiii. 13, 14. Do not misjudge others because of some failings; a pearl may lie under a great deal of chaff.

SERMON III.

But we know that, when he shall appear, ice shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.—1 JOHN iii. 2.

FROM these words I observe—

That though for the present our adoption be obscured, yet when he shall appear the children of God are sure to enjoy a blessed and glorious estate.

For the clearing of this point I shall show you—

1. The nature of this blessedness.

2. The time when it shall commence.

3. The apprehension we have of it for the present,

Of these in order.

I. Of the nature of this blessed and glorious estate: 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' A transforming vision, or such a vision as changeth us into the likeness of God, is the true blessedness of the saints.

There are three things considerable in our happiness—(1.) The vision of God; (2.) A participation of his likeness; (3.) The satisfaction or delectation thence resulting.

Two of them are in the text: 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' The third is fetched from a parallel place: Ps. xvii. 15, 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thine image and likeness.' The words, 'when I awake,' note the same reason[12] with those in the text, 'when he shall appear;' that is, when we awake out of the sleep of death, at the day of the general resurrection; then we shall be satisfied, or at rest, as having attained our end.

First, For vision; that beginneth the happiness, and maketh way for all the rest: 'We shall see him as he is;' that is, we shall see God in our nature, Christ as he is now in glory, not as he was in the form of a servant. It is not meant of the essence of God, for that cannot be seen of any creature by the eyes of the body or the mind, but of the eight of Christ. It is usual in scripture to express our happiness by sight. We shall see him face to face, and we shall know as we are known; so John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.' They shall see his face. This sight is either ocular or mental.

1. Ocular; for our senses have their happiness as well as our souls, and there is a glorified eye as well as a glorified mind: Job xix. 26, 27, 'And though after my skin, worms destroy this body;

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[12] Qu. 'season'?—ED.

yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.' When our bodies are raised up again, we shall in our flesh see God; not our souls only, but our whole man shall enjoy this sight of God; not in another body, but in the same shall we see him. Though the qualities of the body be different and glorious, yet the substance is the same. We shall see the person that redeemed us, that nature wherein he suffered so much for us, and the glory that is upon him in our nature. Many out of curiosity desired to see Christ in the days of his flesh; as those Greeks that came to worship him at Jerusalem; they came to Philip and said to him, 'Sir, we would fain see Jesus;' and Zaccheus climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him; and some choice apostles were admitted to see him at his transfiguration. But then it shall be the common privilege of all the faithful; they shall see him of whom they have heard so much, and of whose goodness they have tasted so much, and whose laws they have obeyed, and upon whose merits they have depended.

But you will say, How is this so great a privilege to the godly, since the wicked shall see him? Mat. xxvi. 64, 'Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and glory, and coming in the clouds.' They shall see him who spat on him, and buffeted him, and crucified him.

Ans. (1.) That sight they have of Christ shall be but a short glimpse of his glory; for after their doom and sentence is past, they shall be immediately banished out of his presence: Mat. xxv. 41, 'Then shall he say to them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed.' But this sight of the saints shall be perpetual: 1 Thes. iv. 17, 'We shall ever be with the Lord.'

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(2.) They shall see him with shame and terror, looking upon him as to receive their just punishment: 1 John ii. 28, 'And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' Our vision shall be joyful and familiar; but the wicked are not able to endure the sight of God. As a judge they shun it, and fly from it; as Adam hid himself when the Lord God walked in the garden, Gen. iii. 8. But to believers, the sight of Christ is comfortable; he cometh for their benefit, and to put them in possession of their everlasting happiness.

(3.) The consideration of the object is different; the one look upon him as their inexorable judge, the other as their merciful saviour; their interest in him maketh him dear to their souls. These look to receive from him the full effect of their redemption and salvation, and so rejoice in his favour and presence; whereas the wicked shall see him as the God of others only, and to their eternal confusion. But to the godly it is comfortable when he shall appear in his glory; it is the glory of their God: Ps. lxvii. 6, 'God, even our God, shall bless us.' It is the glory of him whom they served, and loved, and pleased, even when this glory was under a cloud and concealed from the world. Now their faith and hope is justified, and their loyal service cometh to be rewarded. They shall see him in his glory, not as unconcerned spectators, but as the persons mainly interested therein.

2. Mental vision or contemplation. The angels, which have not bodies, are said to behold the face of our heavenly Father, Mat. xviii. 10; and when we are said to see God, it is not meant of the bodily eye, for a spirit cannot be seen with bodily eyes; so he is still the invisible God, Col. i. 15. And seeing face to face is opposed to knowing in part. And therefore it implieth a more complete knowledge than now we have. The mind is the noblest faculty, and must have its satisfaction. Now we have dull and low conceptions of God, and are little transformed by them, or weaned from worldly and fleshly lusts. Could we see God in all his glory, nothing would be dreadful, nothing would be snaringly or enticingly amiable to us any more: 1 John iii. 6, 'Whosoever sinneth hath not seen God, neither known him.' We can hardly now get such a sight of God as will prevent wilful and heinous sin; but then we shall see him, and sin no more. We shall see then the excellency of his person, the union of the two natures in the person of Christ more exactly: John xiv. 20, 'At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.' The clarity of the human nature, and what honour the Father puts upon him as mediator, all that wisdom, goodness, and power in conducting and bringing the saints into glory, and the happiness God will bestow upon them; it is no longer matter of faith, which is a darker sight, but matter of sense: 2 Cor. v. 7, 'We walk by faith now, and not by sight;' by sight then, and not by faith. Now the more perfectly we understand these things, the greater impression they make upon us. In short, not to ravel into all the particulars which then we shall know, our knowledge must needs be greater then, and more completely satisfying, if we consider what is necessary to such a vision and sight of God as the creature is capable of.

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Now three things are necessary—(1.) A prepared faculty; (2.) A suitable object; and (3.) The conjunction of both these. Now in the state of glory all these concur. The faculty is more capacious, the object is more fully represented, and the conjunction and fruition is more intimate and close than it can be elsewhere.

[1.] The faculty is more prepared, as we are more purified and clarified from the dregs of carnal sense, and those worldly vanities and fleshly lusts which do so blind the mind and divert the heart from God: Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;' Heb. xii. 14, 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' The mind is now divided or distracted between God and other things; now we have but transient glances of God, and a slight apprehension, but then a full view; and it shall be our whole work to study divinity in the Lamb's face. The more clear the glass is, the more clearly is the image reflected upon it, but the more dusky, the more imperfect is the representation; so here our understandings are not refined as they shall be hereafter.

[2.] The object is manifested and dispensed in a greater latitude; for there God is all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28, without the intervention of means. When God discovereth himself by means, we know no more of him than can be represented by these means. If a pipe should be put to a great ocean or river, the cistern or conduit can receive no more than the pipe can convey; but there we see him not in a glass, but converse with God immediately: 'We see him face to face.'

[3.] The conjunction is more intimate between the object and faculty. Here the conjunction is by faith and imperfect love, there by clear vision and perfect love: ‘He that is joined to the Lord by faith and love is one spirit.’ Oh, but what a conjunction will this be, when we shall be joined to the Lord by clear immediate sight and perfect love! Our sight is clear: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, ‘Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.’ Vision shall then succeed faith, and possession hope, and the soul adhereth to him by love, without weakness, weariness, and distraction. Surely then our vision and fruition must needs be greater, and the soul filled up with all the fulness of God, Eph. iii. 19. Well, then, gather up the severals of this argument. The understanding is sanctified; God is near to us, and liveth with us and in us; and we live near to him, and in him. We see him whom we love, and love him whom we see. Heaven and earth doth not yield one tempting object to divert us from him: Ps. lxxiii. 25, ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth I desire besides thee.’ And therefore our sight is clearer and more comfortable and full. Surely the mind is filled with as much light, and the heart with as much love and joy, as the capacity of it is able to contain. Here we are in an expecting, waiting, longing posture; but there is presence, vision, union, and fruition, our light and love being then perfect.

Secondly, Assimilation or transformation into the image of God and Christ.

Here I shall show—(1.) What likeness is; (2.) How it is the fruit of vision; for it is rendered as a reason of it, it being said, We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.’

1. What this likeness is. This was man’s first ruin, this aspiring to be like God: Gen. iii. 5, ‘Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil;’ not in a blessed conformity, but in a cursed self-sufficiency. This was the design of the first transgression: Isa. xiv. 14, ‘I will ascend above the height of the clouds, and will be like the Most High.’ It was the cause of the fall of Lucifer: I will be like the Most High; who was therefore brought down wonderfully. The men of the world aspire to be like God in greatness and power, but not in goodness and holiness. We affect or usurp divine honour, and to sit upon even ground with God. Christ came not to gratify our sin, but to make us like unto God, not equal with God. The creature is not deified, but glorified; and that glorification lieth in such a likeness and conformity as is proper to the creature. Man was at first made like God: Gen. i. 26, 27, ‘Let us make man after our own image and likeness.’ Now, when we fell from that, Christ came to repair what Adam lost, and to restore the image of God again, which was defaced in us; yea, to put more glory upon us than ever we had or could have had in Adam. This work is begun in us in this world: 2 Cor. iii. 18, ‘Beholding the glory of the Lord as in a glass, we are changed into his image and likeness from glory to glory.’ But it is perfected in heaven; we are there made more like to God. Briefly, we shall be like him in two things—in holiness and felicity.

[1.] In holiness and purity; for that is the chief thing wherein God will be resembled by his creatures. We are made holy as he is holy. Now at that day this is accomplished in the most perfect degree; for it is said, ‘He will present us faultless before the presence of his glory,’ Jude 24; and ‘holy, unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight;’ Col. i. 22, ‘Or without spot or wrinkle, or any

such thing; but that ye should be holy, and without blemish,' Eph. v. 27. There is a complete similitude and transformation. Here sin is mortified, but there it is nullified; here grace is mingled with corruption; we are like God by the first-fruits of the Spirit, but unlike him by the remainders of sin; but in heaven we are wholly like him. Here we resemble Christ, but we also resemble Adam, yea, and often show forth more of Adam than Jesus; but there we only show forth the holiness and purity of Christ; his image shineth in us without spot and blemish.

[2.] We are like him in happiness and glory, that is, in a glorious condition: 1 Cor. xv. 49, 'And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.' Now the image of the heavenly is glory and immortality. So in the parallel place: Col. iii. 4, 'We shall appear with him in glory;' that is, not only as pure and holy creatures, but as glorious and happy creatures. And more particularly it is said, Phil. iii. 2, 'That this vile body shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body, for splendour, beauty, and immortality. This is a consequent of the former; for if we be like him in holiness, we shall be like him in felicity; for God, that is a pure and holy being, is also a perfect and happy being: 'And Christ will be glorified in his saints, and admired in them that believe,' 2 Thes. i. 10. He will set the world a-wondering at the honour he will confer upon those that have honoured him in the world; they shall see him in full glory, sitting upon his throne of judgment, and afterwards at the right hand of his Father for evermore. So that we have honour conferred upon us in the judgment, and shall then abide with him for evermore in a state of glory.

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(1.) A relative and adherent glory, as the saints are admitted into a participation of his judicial power: 1 Cor. vi. 2, 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world, even angels?' They are not only judged, but judges, and that not only of men, but evil angels, who though they had a long time ago a particular punishment on them, yet then they shall have their solemn doom and sentence and whole punishment. And in this judgment the saints shall be associated with Christ. Christ judgeth by way of original authority, but the saints by consent and suffrage, which is a part of the kingdom and dominion which the upright receive in the morning, Ps. xlix. 14; that is, in the morning, of the resurrection. Those who were slighted, persecuted, and hated in the world, shall then be owned by Christ, and sit with him on the throne. Here the saints judge and condemn the world by their conversations, Heb. xi. 7; there by their vote and suffrage.

(2.) Internal and inherent, viz., the glory revealed in us, put into us. Now it is revealed to us, then in us. Our ear hath received a little hereof, but then it shall be fully accomplished in our persons, in our bodies and souls. The body shall be a glorious immortal body, shining as the sun for brightness; not decayed with age, nor wasted with sickness, nor needing the supply of food; in short, freed from all weakness and imperfection, and united to a soul fully sanctified, from which it shall never more be separated, and both together shall be the eternal temple of the Holy Ghost.

2. How it is the fruit of vision? for so it is given as a reason, 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'

I answer—There is between light and likeness a circular generation, as there is in most moral things; and on the one side it may be said we shall be like him, therefore we shall see him as he is, and also on the other side, as in the text, 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'

[1.] The first is certainly a truth, that they that are like God shall see God as he is; such are included within the promise: Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' And others are excluded out of it: Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow peace and holiness, with out which no man shall see the Lord.' And as they are included in the promise, so they are disposed and prepared for the enjoyment of this privilege, by the holy constitution of their souls for the vision and fruition of God. They are suited to this happiness by their love of God and their desire to enjoy him. If they had the happiness of heaven and did not see God, it would not satisfy them. They count it a great mercy to meet with anything of God in the ordinances. Now if you can suppose them to come to heaven, and not meet with God there, and Christ there, it would be a trouble to them in their glorified estate. So much as is pure and holy in their soul carrieth them to God, so much as is base, drossy, fetulent, disposeth them to the world and worldly things. Their hearts would be disaffected and unsuitable to this blessed estate if there were not purity there.

[2.] Vision maketh way for this likeness, which is the thing asserted in the text; take this likeness either for holiness or for glory and immortality.

(1.) For holiness. The work of likeness to God is begun in regeneration, and it entereth into the heart by knowledge or sight: Col. iii. 10, 'Renewed after the image of God, by the knowledge of him.' Sight begets likeness; so beholding the glory of the Lord as in a glass, we are changed into his image and likeness, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Now as begun, so it is perfected; when we see better, we shall become better. If sight doth transform us now, much more will it hereafter, when the veil of the flesh doth no more interpose, and we are no more blinded with the delusions thereof. When things now reported to our faith shall be under view, and not only known by hearsay, but by sight, they must needs make a deeper impression upon us.

(2.) If you interpret this likeness of glory and immortality, the glory of God in Christ is represented to us, and impressed upon us; for it is represented that we may participate thereof; and Christ doth appear that we may appear with him in glory, that the whole mystical body may carry a suitableness and conformity to the head. Moses' face shone when he saw God, Exod. xxxiv. 29. How much more will it be so in heaven! The object is unspeakably efficacious, the act of intuition is full of vigour, and the subject is prepared and fitted to be receptive of it. Christ in his vehemency of prayer was transfigured, Luke ix. 29, having in his natural body a more than ordinary sight of his God: 'As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered.'

Thirdly, The third thing is satisfaction, not mentioned in the text, but implied and supplied from a parallel place; for we having the eight and presence of God, must needs be ravished with it: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence,' or face, 'is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.'

The fruition of God's immediate presence must needs exceed all the joy which the heart of man is capable of. If this breedeth not true contentment and felicity, what will? So our admission into the everlasting estate is called 'an entering into the joy of our Lord,' Mat. xxv. 41. There must needs arise an incredible delectation from the vision of God, as also from our fruition of him, or being like unto him, and our possession of the whole estate of happiness thence resulting. Our great business will be to love what we see, and our great happiness to have what we love. This will be a full, perpetual, and never-failing delight to us. The vision hath an influence upon this joy. If the light of the sun be pleasant, how comfortable will it be to see the Sun of righteousness shining forth in all his glory? Now, when the mind is a little raised in the thoughts of God, what a delightful thing is it! Ps. civ. 34, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.' Yet how tasteless to our souls are thoughts of God now in comparison of what they will be then? There is something in us which carrieth us off from God, which liketh not to retain God in our knowledge. Now, when our hearts are more suited and prepared for that sight, our thoughts must needs be glorious and ravishing.

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Again, this likeness conduceth to this satisfaction. Take it for holiness, God himself is 'glorious in holiness,' Exod. xv. 11. Now to have the beauty of our God upon us is the greatest gift that can be bestowed upon us. When there was a debate in Ahasuerus's court, 'What should be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour?' Esther vi. 8, it was resolved, 'Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head.' Or take it for glory and immortality: 1 Peter iv. 13, 'That when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad with exceeding joy.' This is the soul's rest in God, as satisfied with the full and perfect demonstration of his love; it is the best estate we can be in, for we are not capable of a better. It is the end of our faith, and hope, and labours. Of our faith, 1 Peter i. 5; the end of our hope, Acts xxvi. 7. Now when a man hath obtained his end, then he is satisfied, as being in his perfect estate.

2. It is the utmost period of perfection men can be advanced unto, to enjoy God and be like him. Beyond God and above God nothing can be enjoyed; with God nothing can make us miserable, and with out God nothing can make us happy. If a man should enjoy all the world, there is something without him and above him that can make him miserable; if the world smileth and God frowneth, what will you do? Ps. xxxix. 11, 'When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity.' None can obstruct God's vengeance, or stop his wrath; as when the sun is gone, all the candles and torches in the world cannot make it day.

3. If a glimpse of God's love be so precious to the saints, what will the sight of his face be? Ps. iv. 6, 7, 'Who will show us any good? Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us: thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased.' If imperfect holiness be so precious, what will complete holiness be?

II. The season when we shall enjoy this, ‘When he shall appear.’

1. I take it for granted that the soul before is not only *in manu Dei*, in the hand of God, which all assert, but admitted *in conspectum Dei*, into the sight and presence of the Lord, and to see his blessed face; which opinion the scripture befriendeth in divers places; but it would divert me now to dispute it. The term fixed here is, ‘When Christ shall appear;’ that is, at the general resurrection; for it concerned the apostle, to comply with his present argument, to mention this season rather than another; for the matter in debate was about the inconspicuousness of the privileges of the gospel. He saith, hereafter it will be glorious and conspicuous, namely, ‘When he shall appear.’ There are many that had never seen Christ, when he lived upon earth, he lived in a state of obscurity; his godhead sometimes looked out through the veil of his flesh, and discovered itself in a miracle, but generally our Christ was a hidden Christ. Therefore the Jews would not believe him, because he came in such a manner as not to satisfy his own countrymen: John i. 11, ‘He came to his own, and they received him not.’ In the ordinances we see him, but darkly, as in a glass: ‘His kingdom cometh not with observation,’ Luke xvii. 20. It was not set up as other kingdoms are, with warlike preparations and visible power and glory; his people were hated, scorned, reproached, but then he shall appear himself in all his glory.

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2. Then we have our solemn absolution from all sins: Acts iii. 19, ‘Repent, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.’ And our pardon is pronounced by the judge sitting upon the throne. It is great mercy now that he is pleased to pass by our many offences, and take us into his family, and give us a right to his heavenly kingdom; but then it is another manner of grace and favour indeed when our judge shall acquit us with his own mouth, and own us as his faithful servants. Christ himself shall then appear to reward them. There were many that never had a sight of his glorious person; his bodily presence is withdrawn from us for wise reasons, and is contained within the heaven of heavens; and though this doth not hinder his spiritual influence, but we feel his operations; yet at his second coming, then shall his people be pronounced blessed by their king, sitting upon the throne in all his royalty.

3. Then shall we have glorified bodies restored unto us, wherein Christ shall be admired: 2 Thes. i. 10, ‘When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.’

4. Then Christ will present us to God by head and poll, and give an account of all that God hath given him, that they may be introduced into their everlasting estate, not one wanting: John vi. 40, ‘And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day;’ and Heb. ii. 13, ‘Behold I and the children which God hath given me.’ Man by man he will confess and own them before his Father: Luke xii. 8, ‘Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall also the Son of man confess before the angels of God.’ This is one of mine: these are those in whom I have been glorified upon earth; and then followeth the eternal kingdom.

III. The apprehension that we should have of it for the present: ‘We know.’ Knowledge signifieth both acts of the understanding, apprehension and dijudication. It is usually said that truth is the proper object and good of the understanding. Now when any truth is propounded to the understanding, there are two acts about it; we apprehend the nature and tenor of it, and we judge of it whether it be true or false. Now the first act is usually called knowledge, and when we are sufficiently informed of the nature of anything; the second is called faith and assent, either upon the natural evidence of the thing or the fidelity of the witness; but faith is not so void of evidence as not to be called knowledge also: Job xix. 25, ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth;’ and 2 Cor. v. 1, ‘We know that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;’ 1 Cor. xv. 58, ‘Wherefore, my beloved, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be vain in the Lord.’ Invisible things revealed by God are certainly known, though we never saw them. Well, then—

1. It is not a bare conjecture, but a certain knowledge; it is not only we think, we hope well, but we know. No man calleth that knowledge which is but a conjecture. It is not a may-be or a bare possibility; it is possible there may be a heaven and happiness hereafter; but it is true, it is as true as the word of God is true; we have his own hand and seal and earnest for it.

2. It is not a probable opinion, but an evident and infallible truth, as sure as if we saw it with our eyes. How cometh the believer to have such a sure prospect of a future estate? An unseen world is an unknown world; how can we be so sure of it? It is set before us by his precious promises who cannot lie: ‘And if we receive the witness of man, the witness of God is greater;’ Heb. vi. 18, ‘That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us;’ Heb. xii. 2, ‘Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.’ That word is not only confirmed by his oath, but also by his seal or miracles, Heb. iii. 4; and fulfilled prophecies: 2 Peter i. 19, ‘For we have a more sure word of prophecy.’ The old testament confirmed the kingdom of the Messiah and the privileges thereof long before it came to pass. The doctrine of the scripture, which assureth us of this estate, bears God’s image and superscription, which every thing doth that hath passed his hand, even to a gnat and pile of grass; and so shineth to us by its own light, if men were not strangely depraved and corrupted by worldly affections: 2 Cor. iv. 2-4, ‘But by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.’ Besides, God hath blessed that doctrine to the converting, comforting, and quickening of many souls in all ages and places of the world: Col. i. 6, ‘The word is come to you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.’ That doctrine which bringeth forth the fruit of a holy life, and breedeth a heavenly mind in all that hear it and receive it, that is the truth of God. In

the first age Christ did swiftly drive on the chariot of the gospel; for within a few years after his death it obtained its effect in all parts of the world; and ever since it hath held up its head against all encounters of time and revolutions of the world. Well, therefore, since we do not build upon the promise of a deceitful man, but the word of the everlasting God, why should not we be confident? 'We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.'

3. It is not a general belief, but a particular confidence: 'I know that my Redeemer liveth;' and here, that we shall be like him; he speaketh upon the supposition that we are God's children. Now to make this evident, we must have more than a word of promise; we must have the spirit of holiness opening the eyes of our mind, in seeing the truth and worth of this glorious and blessed estate: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints in light;' quickening us in the love of God and heavenly desires, to carry us to this blessed estate, as our only happiness: 2 Cor. v. 5, 'Now he that hath wrought us to this self-same thing, is God, who hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.' Causing us to groan after it, to delight in it, to continue with patience in the pursuit of it: Gal. v. 5, 'We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.' Filling us with joy as we get any hope of it, or sight of our interest in it: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' First faith seeth the feast, then love tastes it; those joys being afforded to us in our most sober and serious moods as cannot be a fantastical impression.

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Use. To show how much it concerneth us to get it evident that we are the sons of God, if there be such a glorious estate reserved for them. Now this will be made evident—

1. By regeneration; this is our legal qualification and preparative disposition. First, our legal qualification: John iii. 3, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;' 1 Peter i. 3, 'Who hath begotten us to a lively hope.' Therefore, till this change be wrought in us, we are altogether without any true and well-grounded hope of eternal life; but having gotten this new life and a new nature, we may expect this glory and blessedness as our inheritance. Now it is not only our legal qualification, or that which doth constitute our right and title, but, secondly, it is our preparative disposition. The sanctified understanding is only able to behold God, and the sanctified will and affections only capable to enjoy him. These are made meet; as Col. i. 10, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the saints in light.' This concurs conditionally and dispositively. What should a sensual heart do with God and heaven? If they cannot receive or savour spiritual things, what shall they do with heavenly things? Now that they cannot receive and savour them is plain from 1 Cor. ii. 14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;' Rom. viii. 5, 'For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things

of the Spirit.' Either heaven must be another thing, or we must be other manner of creatures than we are. Oh, then how much doth it concern us to see whether we have this new life and being; then the first principles of blessedness are introduced into the soul; the soul is a form for this very thing, that it may be like unto God. To pretend to desire heaven and dislike renovation is to pretend you would have that perfected which you cannot endure should ever be begun; therefore see that it be a thorough change, not some faint inclinations to God and the heavenly life.

2. When converted and regenerated, we have the spirit of adoption inclining us to God as a Father: Gal. iv. 6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;' Rom. viii. 15, 'But ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' So that a man is another man to God than he was before. He hath holy longings after him, delights much in converse and communion with him, especially in prayer: Zech. x. 12, 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications.' And Paul is an instance of this; for as soon as converted, he falleth a-praying. God's children have a childlike love to God, and it endeth in a childlike obedience to him, and a childlike dependence upon him for daily supplies: Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.' They likewise depend upon him for an everlasting inheritance: 1 Peter i. 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath, according to his abundant mercy, begotten us to a lively hope.' A child looketh for a child's portion. The soul loveth God, mindeth him in all things, inclineth to the ways of God, and delighteth in them as they tend to God, that he may get nearer to him, and be fitted and prepared to love him, and enjoy him for ever.

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3. A holy conversation, and suitable walking: 1 Peter iv. 14, 15, 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts of your ignorance: but as he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' A sincere endeavour of keeping all your Father's commands, and devoting yourselves wholly to his work, is the best way to demonstrate yourselves to be truly the Lord's children: Eph. v. 1, 'Be ye followers of me, as dear children.'

SERMON IV.

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—1 JOHN iii. 3.

WE have showed you—

1. That the love of God, in acknowledging us for. his children, can not be sufficiently considered and admired by us.

2. That though God hath admitted us into the glorious estate of his children, yet little of this glory is seen in our present condition in this world.

3. That though the glory of adoption be now obscured, yet we are certain that at the appearing of Christ we shall see him as he is, and be like him.

Now having showed what knowledge and certainty of it we have for the present, the apostle comes here to show how this hope worketh; and so this first argument receiveth new strength. If God hath made us children, and children that may expect so great a happiness for their portion, we should endeavour to purify ourselves more and more, that we may both be like our heavenly Father, and also show our thankfulness for so great a privilege: 'And every man that hath this hope in him,' &c.

In the words observe three things—

[1.] That a christian is described by his hope, and that hope specified or restrained to the tenor of the christian faith, 'Every man that hath this hope in him.'

[2.] This hope is described by the effect of it, 'He purifieth himself.'

[3.] And this effect by the pattern of it, 'Even as he is pure,' that is, Christ.

From which I shall make this observation—

Doct. That the hope of this blessed estate hereafter should put us upon a serious endeavour after purity of life, and a more exact conformity to Christ here.

In the handling of this I shall observe this method—

1. I shall discourse something concerning this hope.

2. Of the purity or likeness to Christ, which is the effect of it.

3. The respect or connection between both these, or how the one is inferred from the other.

I. A christian is described by his hope. Hope is a special act of the new life, and an immediate effect of our regeneration: 1 Peter i. 3, 'He hath begotten us to a lively hope.' As soon as we are made children, we begin to think of a child's portion. The new nature was made for another world; it came from thence, and carrieth the soul thither. The animal life fits us to live here, but the spiritual life hath another aim and tendency; it inclineth and disposeth us to look after the world to come, and the happiness which God hath provided for us in the heavens. All men hope for something as their happiness. The new creature liveth upon things future and unseen; for our happiness now consists not in fruition, but hope, and hope carrieth us to something beyond this life, which is our comfort and support during the absence and want of the chiefest good, and the troubles we meet

with by the way. Men are as their potent principle is, flesh or spirit: Rom. viii. 5, ‘They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.’ The flesh inclineth us to present things, the Spirit to future things. I shall a little open the nature, and show you the necessity of this hope.

1. The nature of it; it is a certain and desirous expectation of the promised blessedness: the promise is the ground of it; for hope runneth to embrace what faith has discovered in the promise: Titus i. 2, ‘According to the hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, hath promised before the world began.’

[1.] The expectation is certain, because it goeth upon the same grounds that faith doth, the infallibility of God’s promise, backed with a double reason, both of which do strongly work upon our hope. First, The goodness of Christ; he would never proselyte us to a religion that should undo us in this world, if there were not a sufficient recompense appointed for us in another world: 1 Cor. xv. 19, ‘If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.’ Surely religion was never intended to make us miserable, but happy. The design of true religion is to persuade us of God’s being and bounty. Secondly, The simplicity, and faithful and open plainness which Christ ever used; this is pleaded, John xiv. 2, ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you.’ His disciples, that were intimately acquainted with him, knew his fidelity, that he told them all things as they really were, and would never flatter them into a vain hope. All his disciples that live now may be confident of it as well as they; he lets us know the worst of the case at first, and doth not allure the senses and court the flesh, but telleth us, that, if we will follow him, we must row against the stream of our natural desires: Mat. xvi. 24, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me;’ and Luke xiv. 20, ‘If any man come to me, and hate not father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.’ Therefore the believing soul, finding so much goodness and plainness in Christ, doth certainly expect what he hath promised. Those that conversed with him in the flesh had abundant proof of it; and we that read his doctrine may observe the same goodness and mercy, and also the same simplicity and plainness of heart. And so, upon the solemn declarations of this word, which he has left in pawn with us, we may be confident of that life and immortality which he hath not only brought to light in his doctrine, but assured us of in his covenant and promise.

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[2.] The expectation is earnest and desirous, because it is as great a good as human nature is capable of. To see and enjoy God, and to be made like him, what can we desire more? Now to have such a happiness in view and prospect, must needs make us lift up our heads, and wait, and look, and long, till it comes. On this account the saints are said to ‘look for his appearing.’ Titus ii. 13, and ‘long for his appearing,’ 2 Tim. iv. 8, or love it as the most desirable thing that can befall them. With respect to this double property of our expectation, as it is certain and earnest, confident and desirous, you may discern in believers several contrary affections and dispositions of heart; as

(1.) There is both rejoicing and groaning: Rom. v. 2, ‘We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God;’ 2 Cor. v. 2, ‘We groan earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. They rejoice because they are under hope, they groan because they have not yet attained. We rejoice because the state to come is so excellent and glorious, and offered to us upon such sure and gracious terms; we groan because the present state is so mean and miserable, mean as to our sight of God and conformity to him; and miserable because of the afflictions incident to us: ‘Being burdened, we groan,’ 2 Cor. v. 4. We rejoice because the estate is so sure and certain; we groan because we are yet conflicting with difficulties, and but making our personal title and claim. We rejoice because at length we shall see God and be like him; and where this hope is lively and strong, it is such a pleasure and such a joy as none but that of actual possession can exceed. ‘We rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory,’ 2 Peter i. 8. We groan because nothing can be so great a burden as the relics of the old nature to a renewed heart: Rom. vii. 24, ‘Oh, wretched man that lam! who shall deliver me from this body of death?’ Afflictions are against our carnal interest, but the remainders of sin are against our nature, that new nature which God hath implanted in us, and which hath a tender feeling of what is displeasing to God; therefore it is the sorest burden that can be felt.

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(2.) There is another seeming contrariety of effects ascribed to hope, and that is, desiring and waiting, longing to enjoy, yet patient in tarrying God’s leisure till we do enjoy. Hope is described by both; earnest desire, which showeth our esteem of the benefit, Phil. i. 23, and yet patient, tarrying the Lord’s leisure: Rom. viii. 25, ‘If we hope for it, then do we wait with patience for it.’ Both are consistent, as in 2 Peter iii. 12, ‘Waiting for and hastening to the coming of the Lord.’ Contrary words, tarrying and hastening, and different effects, but coming from the same grace. Hope would fain enjoy, yet there is a time for labours, difficulties, and troubles; there is a longing expectation, yet a patient waiting; the time seems long, but the reward is sure. There are desires which quicken us to use all means to attain it, that is hastening; yet we are with patience to tarry God’s leisure, while we are exercised with difficulties, that is waiting. They are glorious blessings we expect, when God will open the door, and let us into the enjoyment of them; but we must stay our time, and therefore with patience we submit to God’s pleasure.

2. The necessity of this hope, which is twofold—

[1.] To support us under our difficulties; how else could we subsist under the manifold troubles of the present life? Hope is compared in scripture to two things—a helmet and an anchor. Both signify the great use and service of it, as to the encountering our present troubles. As you would not go to sea without an anchor, nor to war without a helmet, so you cannot live in the present world without hope: 1 Thes. v. 8, ‘Take to you the helmet of salvation, which is hope.’ Among the pieces of the spiritual armour, faith is compared to a shield, which covereth the whole body, but hope to a helmet, which covereth the head. This makes a believer hold up his head in all straits and difficulties. The policy of the devil is to darken or weaken the hope of eternal life, and then he knows he shall the sooner overcome us. Therefore the care of a christian should be to keep on his

helmet, to keep the hopes of his blessed estate lively and fresh, and this will make him bold and undaunted in all oppositions and troubles. Again it is compared to an anchor: Heb. vi. 19, 'Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.' As the anchor holds a ship in a tempest, so doth this hope keep the mind in a constant temper amidst the stormy gusts of temptations. Oh, how would a christian be tossed up and down, and dashed against the rocks, if he were without his anchor! He that knoweth not what shall become of his soul when he dieth, whether he shall go to heaven or hell, cannot endure great afflictions with patience and comfort, but he that knoweth death to be the worst that can befall him in the most troublesome times, can possess his soul in patience; he knoweth what he is born to, and what he shall enjoy when he comes home to God, and therefore his heart is calmed and quieted within him.

[2.] To quicken our diligence, and put life into our endeavours and resolutions, that we may not faint in the way to heaven: Acts xxiv. 16, 'Herein '(or hereupon; upon what? upon this encouragement) 'I have hope towards God, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust.' So Acts xxvi. 6, 7, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, serving God instantly day and night, hope to come.' Certainly the happiness is so great, that it deserves our best labours; and so sure, that our labour will not be in vain in the Lord; and so near, that it is but a little striving more, and looking longer, and we shall obtain: therefore surely we should follow our work close, night and day. All the world is led by hope; it is the great principle which sets every one a-work in his vocation and calling. The merchant trades in hope, the husbandman ploughs in hope, and the soldier fights in hope. Why doth the merchant travel to and fro, and run through all the known parts of the world? Hope of gain invites him, and the improvement of his stock by traffic with several nations. Why doth the husbandman till the ground, and continue his labours with such diligence and assiduity, in heats and cold, by night and by day, in showers and fair weather, and so carefully ply his business in all seasons? The harvest, and the hope of a good crop, wherewith he and his family may be sustained, engageth him. What allureth the soldier to the burden and toil of war, to expose himself to the long watches of the night, the wounds and death of the camp, and the manifold inconveniencies of that sort of life? Hope of prey and booty, or of honour and reputation over cometh all. So what sets the christian a-work, notwithstanding the difficulties which attend his service, the temptations which assault his constancy, the calamities which attend his profession, but only hope? You see to what to turn your eye, and direct your pursuit; it is the everlasting fruition of the ever-blessed God. Those that do not look for any great matter, no wonder if their endeavours be remiss and sluggish: 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.' No labour and care can be too much to approve ourselves to God, to get the soul to be without spot, and the life without blame, that we may be every way qualified, and found of him in peace, and so admitted into the joy of our Lord.

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Secondly, This hope: it is not said he that hath hope in him, but he that hath this hope; it is not a sensual enjoyment which is propounded as our blessedness, but seeing God as he is, and being like him; if our hearts be set upon the vision and likeness of God, we will be purifying ourselves

more and more. It is not a sensual paradise, but a pure sinless state. All religions propound a hope, but none such a hope as the christian religion doth: so pure, so sublime, so adequate and full to the wants and desires of the creature. Mahomet, like a man absolutely engulphed in the dissoluteness of the flesh, did accordingly propound a suitable happiness to his followers. He telleth them of a paradise watered with fair and delightful fountains, which shall flow as gently as if they were of liquid crystal; and that they shall repose themselves under the shadow of stately thick-leaved trees, which of their own motion shall entwine themselves into pleasant bowers; where they shall eat all sorts of delicious fruits in their season, and be recreated with the melody of birds warbling among their branches; where they shall be attired with magnificent apparel, bedecked with jewels and pearls, and have wives transcendently beautiful, and be feasted with rich banquets and wines served in large goblets of gold. I am loath to rake further in this puddle. In all this do you hear, christians, the voice of a beast or a man? With these baits of wantonness and carnal pleasure he sought to inveigle the minds of his followers. This is a hope fit to make brutes of us, and turn us wholly into flesh: but Christ hath propounded another manner of hope; we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; not only a state of perfect blessedness and glory, but a conformity to Christ in purity and holiness, which is begun here, and perfected there. We shall see the Lord whom we have served, loved, and pleased, and shall be like him; *similes, non pares*, not equal with him, but like to him; you shall be pure and holy, as he is holy. This is the hope which Christ propoundeth, and wherewith a believer comforteth himself; this is a hope that doth not debase the spirit of a man, but raise it to the greatest excellency and perfection it is capable of.

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Thirdly, This hope in him. If we expect to receive it from God, we must receive it upon God's terms, and according to his manner of promising it. Now he promiseth it not absolutely, but conditionally, to the pure and holy, and to none else; for it is said, Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Now the pure in heart are they that hate sin, and love righteousness. And again, Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' To see God is to behold his glory, the privilege reserved for us in heaven, where all unspeakable joys and eternal delights are communicated to us by the sight of God. Now we can never hope for this from God's hands, without holiness, or some conformity to him begun here; this is absolutely, and indispensably required of us. Hope in him is hope according to his word, such as he alloweth and warranteth, and raiseth in our hearts; for he doth not speak of an imaginary hope, but a solid hope, such as is justifiable by God's promises; not a lazy, but a lively hope.

Fourthly, Observe the quantity of the proposition; it is not particular nor indefinite, but it hath an expression of universality affixed; every man that hath this hope. It is not spoken of some eminent saints, who shall have a greater degree of glory than the ordinary sort of christians, but of all who have any interest or share in it. You might imagine else, that common christians might get through in the throng, though they be not so careful of exact purity and holiness as others are. No; every man that hath this hope; which is to show that our hope is groundless and fruitless if we be not always purging both heart and life; it is a dead, not a lively hope, a hope that hath neither comfort

or virtue in it, if it doth not run out into holiness, and a continual endeavour to mortify and subdue sin. Some wicked men live in a direct counter-motion to their hopes; they hope well, that that God that made them will save them; but they live as if they fled from heaven and salvation, and were galloping apace to hell. They abandon the company of God, as if his sight were a trouble, and his presence a burden to them, and the everlasting sabbath they shall keep with God were a misery, and not a blessedness. For these to hope, it is as if they went to heaven backward, with their backs turned upon it. And if any presume upon their good estate, and grow remiss and negligent in holy duties, they cut off their claim; for this is the constant universal rule of all that have this hope, that they are always purifying and cleansing themselves from sin, and using the means that conduce to the obtaining what they hope for; otherwise it is a hope that will leave us ashamed: Rev. xxi. 27, ‘There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.’ No unclean thing, no loathsome and filthy creature can enter into heaven.

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II. The purity and likeness to Christ, which is the effect of this hope; he purifieth himself as Christ is pure.

1. Here is an act done on the believer’s part, he ‘purifieth himself/ or a serious endeavour of purity and holiness. God giveth the new nature, first infuseth the habits of grace, and then exciteth them; and being renewed and excited by God, we set ourselves to seek after holiness and purity in heart and life. It is God’s work to cleanse the heart; but we must not be idle. We are said ‘to cleanse ourselves,’ 2 Cor. vii. 1, to ‘purge ourselves from these,’ 2 Tim. ii. 21. How can a man that is unclean by nature, purify himself?

Ans. (1.) No question it is our duty, and must be charged upon us to purify ourselves. I say, this debt of duty lieth upon us, and we must discharge it as well as we can. ‘Wash you, make you clean,’ Isa. i. 16; and ‘cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded,’ James iv. 8. The scripture calls upon man to cleanse his own soul.

(2.) God hath promised to purify the souls of his people: Ezek. xxxvi. 25, ‘I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness.’ God giveth the Holy Spirit to cleanse us, to abide in us as a living spring: though the waters of the fountain be muddy, yet the living spring worketh itself clean again. Christ purchased it for us, Eph. v. 25-27, Titus ii. 14.

(3.) Though God be the author and supreme agent, yet we are to act under him, and by the strength and power of his grace to go on with the work. First he worketh upon us, and then with us and by us: he doth not work upon us, as a carver upon a dead stone; he gave the grace, but we having life, must use it and act by it.

(4.) We have the more encouragement, having not only internal principles, but many outward helps. The ordinances: John xv. 3, ‘Ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken to you.’ Providences: Isa. xxvii. 9, ‘By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all

the fruit to take away sin.' He suiteth his providences and afflictions to the improvement of our spiritual condition. Well, then, we must purify ourselves in a true and proper sense, mind this work, implore the Lord's grace, and improve the appointed means.

2. It noteth a continued act; it is not he hath purified, but, he purifieth himself; he is always purifying, making it his daily work to clarify and refine his soul, that it may be fit for the vision of God, and the fruition of God. By nature we are altogether become filthy and abominable, Ps. xiv. 2; and after grace received, 'Who can say, My heart is clean; Prov. x. 9. There is a great deal of corruption still remaineth. By grace we cease to be wicked, but we do not cease to be sinners. Indeed, time will come when we shall have no sin, but now we cannot say that we have none: the old corrupt issue that hath long run upon us, is not yet dried up; and therefore we must be still purging and purifying the heart. And for the life, our Lord telleth us, John xiii. 10, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.' Though God's children do not wallow like swine in the puddle, yet by walking up and down in a dirty world they defile their feet anew. Again, where this likeness to God is begun, the soul purifieth itself till it attains the perfection thereof, and must never be satisfied till it gets more of it. Though you be not perfect, yet you must live as those that aim at, and would be so. Therefore a sincere, hearty, and constant desire of inward cleanness, both to have, and keep it, and increase it, is the fruit and effect of this lively hope. And these being the months of our purification, we must still be following our work, 'Cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God,' 2 Cor. vii. 1. Perfection in holiness is our mark to aim at, as well as complete happiness, and all our actions and endeavours must be levelled at this mark and scope.

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3. It noteth a discriminating act, 'He purifieth himself.' It is not said, should purify of right, *de jure*, but *de facto*; he is, and will be in this work. It is not laid down here by way of precept, or as a rule of duty, which yet would be binding upon us, but as an evidence and mark of trial, whereby the heirs of promise are notified and distinguished from others. Indulgence to sensual pleasures, or a liberty of sinning, hath no consistency with this state of blessedness; and if any should let loose the reins upon the pretence of his assurance of the love of God, and confident hopes of eternal life, he showeth that his hope is but a presumption or a groundless hope. The main business of the apostle here is to distinguish the children of God from others. All his children resemble their Father in purity and holiness, which was the proposition to be proved.

4. It noteth an unlimited endeavour, 'He purifieth himself.' He doth not say from what, he leaveth it indefinitely, because he would include all sin, and exclude none. There must be an endeavour after universal purity. A man may purify himself from wantonness, and leave covetousness behind; from sensuality, and leave pride and envy behind: James i. 21, 'Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness.' Many serve their lusts in a more cleanly manner than others, but yet they serve them, and so become inapt for the sight and fruition of God. Therefore the true believer purifieth himself from carnal vanities, worldly affections, sensual inclinations,

envious detractions, proud imaginations. We must not distinguish; a habit of purity worketh out all—all malice, all guile, all hypocrisy, all envious evil speaking, 1 Peter iv. 1. If you will have me descend to particulars, let me warn you of two things—first, fleshly lusts, 1 Peter ii. 11; and, secondly, worldly lusts, Titus ii. 12.

[1.] Fleshly lusts. Some run into excess of riot, polluting themselves with gluttony, drunkenness, uncleanness, and do not keep their vessels in sanctification and honour. Now these that are all for sensual satisfactions, or fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, are wholly strangers to such a hope. Is that soul clarified for the sight and likeness of God that is only employed to cater for the body? or is that body fit to be made like Christ's glorious body which is only used as a strainer for meat and drink to pass through, or as a channel for lusts to run in, that is not kept in sanctification and honour? 1 Thes. iv. 4, 5. Surely these wallow in the mire, and bid defiance to this pure hope.

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[2.] Worldly lusts. It is 'pure religion to keep ourselves unspotted from the world,' James i. 27. Then a man's heart is pure when it is firmly fixed upon and principally aimeth at the chief good and last end, which is eternal happiness in the enjoying of God; when it desires and intends it so as to be able to command and control all other desires. Any inordinate adhering to the creature, so as to rejoice in it apart from God, is a defilement to the immortal and high-born soul, that was made for God and blessedness to come. Alas! to many a poor despicable wretch worldly vanity is more than the sight of God.

5. This purity is described by the pattern of it, 'As he is pure.' Christ is our pattern in the glorious state, and therefore also in the sanctified and renewed state: Rom. viii. 29, 'That we might be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might have the pre-eminence in all things.' First in grace, then in glory. Hereafter 'we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Therefore now we must purify ourselves as he is pure. Besides, he is the perfect pattern and example of all purity; all other patterns of godly men will fail us in something or other, but Christ will fail us in nothing, when we set his pattern before our eyes; 1 Cor. xi. 1, 'Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.' Besides, there should be no disproportion in the mystical body; the head and members should be all of a piece: 1 Peter i. 15, 'Be ye holy, as he that hath called you is holy, in all manner of conversation.' You would take it as a great dishonour if your face should be pictured, and set to the body of a swine or any filthy beast; a monstrous disproportion in Nebuchadnezzar's image, where the head was gold, the breast silver, the thighs brass, and the feet part iron and part clay. The world should know from us that we have a pure and holy saviour; but alas! we represent a strange Christ to them.

III. I now come to the connection between both these.

1. You may take notice of the suitableness of our heart to the object, or the things believed and hoped for. That which we hope for is conformity to Christ, a pure immaculate state of bliss. Men are as their hopes are; if they pitch on carnal things, they are carnal; if upon worldly things, they

are worldly. Our affections assimilate us into the objects they fix upon. Thus the psalmist saith of idols, Ps. cxv. 8, ‘They that make them are like unto them, so are all they that put their trust in them;’ brutish, senseless, a sort of stocks and stones, as the idols themselves are. A Turkish paradise might breed a brutish spirit in us; but if we look for a pure estate, to love God with all the heart, and to serve him without spot and blemish, the temper of our souls and hearts will be answerable; such a meetness and worthiness will be found in us, Col. i. 12. If it be good to be pure and holy and without sin, why do not we set about it?

2. It is the condition indispensably required of us; it is not an indifferent thing whether we will be holy, yea or no, but absolutely necessary. Heaven is the portion of the sanctified, Acts xxvi. 18. Many things are ornamental that are not absolutely necessary; as, for instance, wealth, and wisdom with an inheritance, which make us helpful and useful; so for gifts of learning, knowledge, and utterance. Many have gone to heaven that were not learned, but never any went to heaven without holiness. No; it will not be had at a cheaper rate. As to the wicked, that will not submit to these terms, nor leave their sins, the Spirit says of them, Rev. xxii. 11, ‘He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.’ It is not a permission or persuasion, but a dreadful commination, and denunciation of as sad a judgment as can light upon a poor creature.

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3. It is the beginning of our blessedness; it is begun here, or it will never be perfected there. And how is it begun? Why, in such a sight of God as produceth an endeavour after purity and holiness. A man ‘that sinneth hath not seen God, nor known him,’ 1 John ii. 11; and ‘he that doeth evil hath not seen God,’ 3 John 11. And it is carried by the renewing and purifying the inner man: 2 Cor. iv. 16, ‘The inner man is renewed day by day.’ A present gradual participation of the divine likeness is the surest pledge of everlasting blessedness, and the greatest justification of your hopes you possibly can have.

4. Out of gratitude since God hath advanced us to so great a privilege: ‘Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!’ Hath God put such honour upon us that we should be his children, provided such a blessed estate for us hereafter, and shall not we prepare to receive it? 1 Thes. ii. 12, ‘That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory;’ 1 Thes. iv. 1, ‘Furthermore then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.’ In gratitude we are bound to consider what will please or displease God. If we expect our happiness from him, it is our concernment to serve and please him.

SERMON V.

And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, as he is pure.—1 JOHN iii. 3.

I come now to the application.

Use 1. To show the misery of those men that could never endure this purity of heart and life.

1. Do you count it a happiness to see God and be like him? If you do, why do you not desire it, and endeavour it now? Nothing can be the object of our eternal delight and satisfaction but what is the object of our present desires and endeavours. It is impossible that the soul can be satisfied with any delight and complacency in anything which formerly it was not desirous of. If you desire it not, God doth you no wrong to deny it you; he will not receive any into his blessed presence to whom it will be a burden. Satisfaction is the fulfilling of our desires and the rest of our motions. If you desire it, why do you shun God's presence now, and no more endeavour to be like him? Answer this question which way you will, it will either cut off your future hopes, or else condemn your present practice as altogether unsuitable and inconsonant thereunto.

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2. Are you in a posture to meet with God? Joseph washed himself when he was to come before Pharaoh; so did the Israelites when they came to God to hear the law. Pray what have you done to prepare for this solemn interview? Every one of you must shortly appear before God, and will you appear as a shame to your Redeemer? How will you then look him in the face with this proud, vain, carnal heart or worldly affections? Are you fit to go among the blessed spirits that are made perfect? Do I expect to tread Satan under my feet shortly, and shall I give him entertainment in my heart now? to have sin wholly subdued, and yet cherish it? to be a follower of the Lamb to all eternity, and now walk according to the course of this world? When you are wallowing in your filthiness, is this purifying yourselves as Christ is pure?

Use 2. To press us to endeavour after this purity. I must enforce it upon all sorts, young and old. First for the young: Ps. cxix. 9, 'Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.' He cloth not say direct and order, but 'cleanse his way.' We are from our birth polluted with sin. A child is not like a vessel that cometh out of the potter's shop, indifferent for good or bad infusions; but the vessel is fusty already, hath a smatch of the old man, and must be cleansed. But then, secondly, for the old, because these are hastening into the other world apace, and therefore must hasten their preparations, and be more diligent in purifying their souls, being shortly to appear before the holy God: 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Let us give diligence, that we may be found of him in peace, without spot and blame.' I must press it upon persons of a public relation, as the apostle doth upon the officers of the church: 1 Tim. iii. 9, 'Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.' Soundness of religion is best retained there where there is not only a clear head but a pure heart, as we put precious liquors in a clean vessel which are apt to be corrupted in a foul one. And also upon all christians in a private station, for without purity of heart no man shall see God, which is the common felicity of all the saints. And therefore purity of heart and life is their common character and qualification: Ps. lxxiii. 1, 'Truly God is good to Israel, to such as

are of a clean heart.' All are not Israel who are of Israel: the Israel of God are those that are clean of heart. So high and low, rich and poor. God cloth not respect men according to their outward condition, but their purity and cleanness of heart. The question is put, Ps. xxiv. 3, 4, 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place?' And it is the most important question that can be put. And the answer is, 'He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.' Every one is not promiscuously admitted into heaven, and brought into his blessed presence, but only such as have clean hands and hearts. Sion hill is a figure both of the church and heaven.

But let me a little more closely show how everything in religion obligeth us to the purifying ourselves yet more and more.

1. With respect to the God, whom we serve in the Spirit, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

[1.] Our God is pure: Hab. i. 13, 'He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;' that is, and let it go unpunished, however men please themselves in it. We should never think of him, but be ashamed of the inward remainders of corruption. The saints always express a deep abhorrency and sense of their own impurity when they have to do with God: Isa. vi. 5, 'Woe is me, I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the Lord of hosts;' Job xlii. 5, 6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes.' When God manifested himself in a way of grace, thus were the saints affected, and deservedly. God is the most holy, pure being, and the fountain of all purity and holiness; so pure, that in comparison of him the greatest purity of the creatures is but pollution: Job iv. 18, 'Behold, he puts no trust in his servants, and his angels he chargeth with folly. How much less on them that dwell in houses of clay?' Job xv. 15, 16, 'Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints, and the heavens are not clean in his sight: how much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh in iniquity as water?' The angels were never defiled with sin, yet because of the mutability of their nature, they are not clean in his sight. God cannot absolutely trust them. Oh, how much more should we confess ourselves to be vile and abhorred, who are actually defiled with sin, and do so often show what dregs and dross remain in our hearts! But though God be so good and holy in himself, yet may he dispense with the unholiness of others? No; this purity, as it implieth an exact holiness in God, and freedom from spot and defilement, so a hatred and aversion from all that is so; for none can have communion with this holy God unless they be pure and holy also: Ps. lxxiii. 1, 'God is good to such as are of a clean heart;' Ps. xviii. 26, 'With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the upright thou wilt show thyself upright.' Well, then, if God be most righteous, pure, and holy, and the angels cover their faces in his presence, and do proclaim him as only holy, and we at our best, since sin hath invaded our nature, have but a ragged, tattered holiness (Isa. lxiv. 6, 'All our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags',) it highly imports us to purify ourselves for the sight and fruition of this blessed, holy, and pure God.

[2.] Look to God incarnate, the second person in the Trinity, our Redeemer and Mediator, he also is pure and holy; and it doth more enforce this purifying ourselves as Christ is pure, so it is

said in the text; whether you consider his person, or the design of his coming into the world. For his person: Heb. vii. 26, ‘Such a high priest be came us, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners.’ This was he who is to bring us to God, and who was set up as a pat tern of holiness in our nature. He was pure and holy in his conception, birth, life, and death; as innocent and harmless as the new-born child, never tainted with the least sin; being more like God, and nearer to him, than any creature possibly can be; who chose not a monkish sequestration, but a free life of conversation with men, yet never was denied, and made partaker in their sins. And shall we be so unlike him as we are? Certainly if our hearts and lives be spotted with envy, malice, lust, ambition, affectation of greatness, and esteem in the world, and an excessive use of the pleasures thereof, to live a life so unlike to Christ is to contradict and defy our profession, and to be called christians to Christ’s dishonour; for his design in coming and dying was to cleanse, and purify, and sanctify us: Eph. v. 25-27, ‘Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish.’ The Lord Jesus, when he undertook the recovery of lapsed mankind, wanted not love to intend us the greatest benefit, nor wisdom to choose it. nor merit and worth to purchase it. But what did he in tend, choose, and purchase, but that he might sanctify and cleanse us? Herein he showed the fervency of his love, the wisdom of his choice, the value of his purchase. He saw that our great misery was that we were polluted and unclean by sin, and so made loathsome to God. Therefore, as the fervency of his love inclined him not to loath us, but to seek our good, so out of the infinite wisdom of his choice he did pitch upon the most proper and necessary benefit for us; and because of the value of his sufferings, he despaired not to get us made clean, and accordingly pursueth that work till it comes to its final perfection, and he at length takes us home to himself, as fully pure and perfect, without any spot or remnant of sinful defilement. Now this being Christ’s design, unless we would directly cross it, we are obliged to purify ourselves yet more and more.

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[3.] If you look to God the Spirit, still the argument returneth upon you with the more force and efficacy; the Spirit is to make up the match between us and our Redeemer, and to bring us to Christ, as Christ to bring us to God. Now the Spirit is a holy Spirit: Eph. i. 13, ‘Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.’ The sanctifying of our natures, and the purifying the heart by grace is his great work. If you look into the scriptures, you shall find that the soul is purified by the Spirit and for the Spirit.

(1.) By the Spirit; and therefore he is called ‘the Spirit of sanctification,’ Rom. i. 4. And sanctification is called ‘the sanctification of the Spirit,’ 2 Thes. ii. 13, because he is the great agent sent into our hearts, to begin and promote this work. He converteth us as a Spirit of holiness; he quickeneth us as a Spirit of holiness; he comforteth and sealeth us, and marketh us out for God, as a Spirit of holiness; so that if we purify not ourselves, we obstruct and hinder his special work. Indeed, the main business of a christian is to obey his sanctifying motions: 1 Peter i. 22, ‘Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit.’ The Spirit is always counselling,

directing, persuading us to purify ourselves by some notable truth or other; and as we yield to these motions, this work is carried on and prevaileth more and more.

(2.) As our souls are purified by the Spirit, so they are purified for the Spirit, that they may be made temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in; the place of his abode and residence must be kept pure and clean: 1 Cor. iii. 16, 'Know ye not that ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in yon? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple yon are.' The temple of old was consecrated to God, and there was his symbolical presence. Whoever did bring in any unclean thing, he did pollute it, and was to be punished. So it is a known truth, which none ought to be ignorant of, that the soul of a christian is God's spiritual temple, wherein he manifests his spiritual presence; to defile it is to dishonour God, and contract a great guilt upon ourselves. Surely every dirty lodging is not fit for so noble a guest; he will not dwell in an impure, an unclean heart. Where he dwelleth, he must dwell commodiously and according to his own liking. Now this consideration should the rather prevail upon us, because the dwelling of the Spirit in our hearts is the earnest and pledge of our dwelling for ever with God, and beginneth that vision and fruition of God which is perfected in heaven: 2 Cor. i. 22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit into our hearts.' Thus with respect to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

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2. With respect to the ordinances.

[1.] The word of God which is given to us to purify and cleanse us: Ps. cxix. 140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.' He that looketh upon an axe will soon see that this is an instrument made to cut; so upon the word; it is fitted to cleanse and purify the souls of men from their sinful spots and stains. The precepts require this purity, the promises and threats enforce it, and the Spirit blesseth this means as appointed and chosen by Christ. The precepts call upon us everywhere: Jer. iv. 14, 'Wash thy heart from wickedness; how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?' and in many other places: 'Wash you, make you clean,' Isa. i. 4. The promises enforce it. There are promises of purity, and promises to purity. Promises of purity: Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you: a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh.' And promises made to purity: Ps. cxix. 1, 'Blessed are the undefiled in the way.' The pure are blessed, and shall be blessed: 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' The threatenings enforce it also, for the impure are cut off from this happiness: Rev. xxi. 27, 'There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.' The Holy Ghost blesseth this means: John xvii. 17, 19, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they may be sanctified through the truth.' He doth not join the powerful operations of his Spirit with any other doctrine, that it may be known to be his word; he will honour and own it by the concomitant operation of

his Spirit: Gal. iii. 2, ‘Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?’ Now they that profess to believe this word, and do accept of it for the cure and health of their souls, are highly obliged to purify themselves yet more and more.

[2.] Prayer; it is to a holy God we pray, and from whom we expect our answer. Now a holy God expects they should be a holy people that are thus familiar with him, and beginning the acquaintance which shall be perfected in heaven: 1 Tim. ii. 8, ‘Lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting;’ and Zeph. iii. 9, ‘I will turn to them a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord.’ None are fit to call upon God but those that have a pure lip; and therefore the apostle, when he speaketh of drawing nigh to God, presently speaketh of purifying, James iv. 8, showing that the greatest intimacy of converse is between the holy God and a holy people.

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[3.] Baptism, which engageth us to purify ourselves, and assureth us also of the purifying virtue of the Lord’s grace; for if I do my part, God will on his part give grace, whereby your hearts may be purified and cleansed. It is the visible act by which we profess the acceptance of the gospel covenant; and it is but a nullity and an empty formality if this be not done. It signifieth the washing away of sin: Acts xxii. 16, ‘Arise and be baptized, for the washing away of thy sins;’ and in Titus iii. 5, ‘The washing of regeneration.’ It alludeth to baptism, wherein water is used, which by its nitrous quality doth purge and cleanse; and it is the rite used at your first dedication to God. Now the external application is nothing without the internal effect, or the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Unless the soul be purged and washed, what will the washing of the body do you good? 1 Peter iii. 21, baptism is called ‘the answer of a good conscience towards God.’ Carnal careless christians forget their baptismal covenant: 2 Peter i. 9, ‘He hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.’ But few regard it; others renounce it, but these forget it. There was water sprinkled on their bodies, but the Spirit is not sprinkled on their souls-.

[4.] The Lord’s supper, which supposeth purity of heart in all that come to it, because *in foro ecclesiae* they must be baptized before they can communicate. Christ washed his disciples’ feet before he would admit them to his table, and flatly telleth Peter, John xiii. 8, ‘If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.’ As no part in Christ, so no part with him, no admittance to spiritual communion. Now, as it supposeth it in some degree, it promoteth and advanceth it to a further degree, as we remember Christ’s blood, ‘which cleanseth us from all sin,’ 1 John i. 7, and bind ourselves anew to purge out all sin, ‘and keep the feast not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.’ In this holy ordinance we partake more of the sanctifying Spirit, and are encouraged to pursue after holiness in a confidence of this blessing.

Thus much with respect to the ordinances.

3. With respect to graces, we must purify ourselves yet more and more. I will instance in the three great graces of faith, hope, and love.

[1.] Faith: Acts xv. 9, ‘Purifying our hearts by faith,’ partly as it is an assent to the truths of the gospel, for it is a strong assent which enliveneth all truths, and maketh them effectual. They work not unless they be mingled with faith in the hearing: 1 Thes. ii. 13, ‘The word of God which ye received of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe.’ There are so many cleansing truths in the gospel, that if they be received and improved by faith, we cannot but set upon purifying. Partly as in the use of means. It dependeth on the blood of Christ for this sanctifying virtue, which was purchased thereby, John xvii. 19. And partly as it worketh by reflection, and so it is the same with love, Gal. v. 6. As it representeth our future hopes, so it is the same with hope in the text; but certain we are that if faith be in any considerable strength, it will produce purity and holiness.

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[2.] Hope doth the like, as here. Hope is a desirous expectation; for can a man hope for that he careth not for? Hope for it as good, and fly from it as evil, it cannot be. If we hope for anything, it is a sign we love it and like it, and as much as we can would get it into our hands; so if we hope to see God, and be like him, if this be our blessed and satisfying hope, we will be purifying ourselves for the present, and resemble God as much as we can for the present; for it is a contradiction that a man should be afraid of his hopes, and keep at a distance from his hopes. No; but he will pursue after them, and hasten for them.

[3.] Love will set us a-purifying. Love to God begets hatred of sin: Ps. xcvii. 10, ‘Ye that love the Lord hate evil.’ The one is as natural to the new nature as the other; and the one is inferred out of the other. Now where there is a hatred of sin, there will be an extermination of it; not a scratching at the face, but a digging at the root of it; not a little faint resistance, but a striving to get rid of the being of it; or else a groaning under it as a sore burden: Rom. vii. 24, ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?’ Therefore nothing puts us upon this perfecting holiness so much as love.

4. Our felicity and state of blessedness to which we are invited is pure and holy: 1 Peter i. 4, ‘An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved for you in the heavens.’ And it is elsewhere called ‘the inheritance of the saints in light,’ Col. i. 12. It must needs be so, for it is nothing else but the Lord himself to be enjoyed to all eternity. Now holy men are only fit for holy things. These are the months of our purification, as Esther purified herself when she was to come into the presence of Ahasuerus, Esther ii. 9.

Secondly, Having given you reasons, let me now give you some directions about the nature of this purity that ye must seek after.

1. Let it be a universal purity, beginning at the heart, and flowing from thence into the conversation. It must begin at the heart. The prophet, to cure the brackishness of the waters, casts salt into the spring; and the scripture speaketh of a pure heart as the fountain of all godliness: 2 Tim. i. 5, ‘The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned.’ Now

a pure heart is such a disposition or constitution of soul as consists in a hatred of sin and love to righteousness; and till this be in us, there is no purity. The operation of the Spirit beginneth at the soul, and from the soul it is derived to the outward man; for from the polluted fountain of the heart floweth all the pollution of life: Mat. xv. 19, 20, 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man.' Now as pollution began there, so doth purity also: Mat. xxiii. 26, 'Thou blind pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.' First purify the heart within, and then purity of life will follow of its own accord; yea, if we should be defiled where the constitution and settled disposition of the heart is for purity, you will sooner recover your state; as a living spring, when the waters are mudded and troubled, will work itself clean again. But, on the contrary, the apostle telleth us that 'some who had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, were again entangled and over come,' 2 Peter ii. 20. The constitution of their hearts was not altered, but they lived in secret love with their sins, while they seemed for a while to avoid some grosser shameful acts. Therefore the temper of your souls must be altered, that you may not delight to wallow in this muddle like swine in the mire. But it may be a thing hateful to you to sin, not only contrary to your interest, but your very nature. But then the temper of the heart being changed, you must look to the operations of the thoughts, words, and actions: Prov. xv. 26, 'The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord; but the words of the pure are pleasant words.' There is a defect in both parts of the proverb, to be supplied from the former branch to the latter, and the latter branch from the former; thus as the thoughts of the wicked, so their words are abominable to the Lord; and as the words, so the thoughts of the godly are pure and acceptable. The words depend much on the thoughts, as the thoughts do on the constitution and frame of the heart. The tap runneth according to the liquor with which the vessel is filled. We are responsible to God for thoughts, therefore our hearts should be good and holy. So also for words; the impurity of the heart bewrayeth itself much in rottenness of speech. Therefore, as the heart must be pure, so must the tongue and lip. The prophet saith, Isa. vi. 5, 'I am a man of polluted lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.' Faultiness in this kind is very frequent, and not without difficulty avoided. Then for our actions, and first for sacred ones: 2 Tim. ii. 22, 'Call on the Lord out of a pure heart;' and Mal. i. 11, 'They shall bring a pure offering.' So for ordinary conversation: Prov. xxi. 8, 'The work of the pure is right.' A man that is pure must be pure throughout, that there be no blot upon him, or spot that is not as the spot of God's children.

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2. Let it be an increasing growing purity, that every day we may be more holy and undefiled: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'Changed into the image and likeness of Christ, from glory to glory.' God having appointed us to be like his Son, fits us by degrees; and Christ by his Spirit is sanctifying and cleansing us more and more, that 'there may be no spot and blemish in us,' Eph. v. 27. And let us also be 'perfecting holiness in the fear of God,' 2 Cor. vii. 1. The more progress we have made, the more we are fitted to make a further progress, as having received more grace, and being more confirmed

in a state of holiness. Sin is a deep stain that can hardly be gotten out. Ye have purified your souls to the obedience of the truth; and you must purify still, and persevere in this work, improving all advantages: be not satisfied with any low degree of purity.

Thirdly, About the means and helps: how shall we get this clean heart, and purify ourselves as Christ is pure? (1.) Consider what God hath done; (2.) What we must do.

1. What belongeth to God.

[1.] Certain it is that none can change his own heart: Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' There is no sound part in us to mend the rest. Our pollution is so universal, that there is no principle of operation left untainted; mind, will, affections, sensual appetite, all is corrupt, and the deepness of the pollution showeth it, as well as the universality. It is not a slight tincture, but a deep dye, like cloth dyed in the wool: Isa. i. 18, 'Though your sins were as scarlet, 'or like the spots of a leopard, Jer. xiii. 13; not spots accidental, but natural; not of an external adherency but engrained, belonging to the constitution. Therefore it is God must begin to purify the heart, as the principal efficient cause. He challengeth it as proper to himself: Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean.'

[2.] What God doth he doth by Christ; he is the great remedy that God hath provided for healing and cleansing of mankind; his blood is the fountain opened for uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 1, with 1 John i. 7. And it is said, 'He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,' Rev. i. 5; and the saints are washed in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. vii. 14. More literally and plainly we have it, Titus ii. 14, where it is said, 'He hath redeemed us from all iniquity.' There was the price paid for the washing of our guilty and sinful souls, both for renewing and reconciling grace, that we may recover both the favour and image of God.

[3.] What Christ doth, he doth by the Spirit; and without the Spirit we can never cleanse and purify ourselves: 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God;' and Titus iii. 5, 6, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.'

[4.] What the Spirit doth he doth by the ordinances. There are certain ordinances and duties appointed by Christ for the purifying of our hearts, especially the word and sacraments: Eph. v. 26, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word.' Well, then, if we would be made clean, we must go to God; but God without Christ will not look towards us, but being propitiated by him, he is willing to give us grace. God sendeth us to Christ, in whom alone he is well pleased; and Christ sendeth us to the

Spirit, and his Spirit we hear of in the ordinances, which are solemnly appointed and blessed by Christ to this end: ‘Ye are clean through the word spoken to you,’ John xv. 3.

2. What we must do. It was Naaman’s error that he would be cleansed of his leprosy and. sit still, and Elisha must do all; but the prophet biddeth him go and wash; he must wash himself if he would be whole. Yea, in the general law for cleansing of the leper, after the sprinkling of the priest, the man was to wash himself, Lev. xiv. 6-8, to show that there is some work required on our part.

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But what must we do? Certainly we are to make conscience of this work of purifying and cleansing and preparing ourselves for our great hopes; for it is we that repent, believe, strive, watch against sin, though still by the power of his grace.

In short, we must earnestly deal with God about it: ‘Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean,’ Mat. viii. 2. You must depend upon the all-sufficiency of Christ’s merit and satisfaction, for the saints washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb.’ You must obey the Spirit’s sanctifying motions: Rom. viii. 13, ‘If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live; 1 Peter i. 22, ‘Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit,’ &c. You must lie at the pool. All that conscientiously use his ordinances, have some help for this holy work. It is you must keep the purifying graces, faith, hope, and love, in lively act and exercise; it is you must be careful to keep yourselves from the pollutions of the world, to prevent all sins of infirmity, and be sensible of them, and to mourn for them; and it is you must crucify the flesh more and more, check the pleasures of sin, by balancing them with your great hopes, and lament that the satisfying of the desires of the flesh have so sweet a relish. It is you must remember your baptismal vow. In short, you must get a greater hatred of sin, and a more universal care and study to please God in all things.

SERMON VI.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is a transgression of the law.—1 JOHN iii. 4.

IN the words we have a new argument to persuade to holiness. He had reasoned before from the dignity of our adoption; now from the indignity or base nature of sin, which is an act of rebellion and disloyalty against the sovereignty of God; it is in effect to proclaim war, or to break out into open rebellion against his laws: for ‘whosoever committeth sin,’ &c.

In which words observe—

1. A proposition concerning the danger of committing sin, ‘Whosoever committeth sin.’

2. The proof of it from the proper definition of sin, it ‘is a transgression of the law.’

The proposition respects the state of the sinner, the proof is taken from the nature of sin; the proposition showeth who is in the state of sin, the proof what is sin.

1. Who is in the state of sin; and so every transgressor of the law, even according to the new-covenant interpretation of it.

Observe here—

[1.] The subject, ‘He that committeth sin.’ To commit sin differeth from sinning simply taken; we all have sin in the habit: 1 John i. 8, ‘If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;’ and ‘If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us,’ ver. 10. We have sin in us, and we have sinned; but committing sin implieth something more than bare sinning: John viii. 34, ‘Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin;’ 1 John iii. 8, ‘He that committeth sin is of the devil;’ they that give up themselves to a trade of sin. It is not meant of those who have sin in them, or are conscious to daily infirmities and failings, and lament and strive against them, and labour to purify themselves yet more and more: *quisquis dat operam peccato*; so Beza rendereth it, one that is addicted to sin, and liveth in sin, against the checks of his own conscience, and doth not purify himself, and apply himself to a course of godliness.

[2.] The predicate, ‘He transgresseth the law.’ I would render it committeth a transgression of the law, or studiously breaketh it, and so forfeiteth the blessing of the gospel; for wittingly and willingly to break the law of God showeth we are under the curse of it. All are under the rule of the law, but the impenitent are under the curse of the law. It is not meant of those who sin out of infirmity, either through ignorance or incogitancy or general frailty; but of those who delight in sin, of those in whom sin reigneth; of those who deliberately, voluntarily, easily, freely, frequently break God’s laws. It is opposed to him that purifieth himself; as sin and purity are contrary, so to purify ourselves and encourage sin, are exactly contrary.

(1.) Their designs are contrary; the one is fitting himself for his everlasting estate, the other satisfieth his present lusts, and liveth according to the inclination of the flesh.

(2.) They are different in their course; the one bendeth all his endeavours to be holy and pure, as Christ is pure, the other giveth up himself to a sinful life; either maketh it his design to sin, or he giveth the boat to the stream, and does not heartily check and resist sin. Some wicked men’s hearts are set in them to do evil; but if they go not so far to make it their design and work to sin, yet they are grossly negligent; they do not make it their work not to sin, but let it reign in them. Of one sort of unregenerate men it may be said, *non proponunt peccare*; but of all unregenerate[13] men,

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[13] Qu. ‘regenerate’?—ED.

proponunt non peccare. Some are sons of Belial, who have no regard to the law of God, but live in an utter contempt and defiance thereof; but others do not frame their doings to observe it, nor improve the aids of grace to keep themselves from it, but customarily break it, live under a continual tenor and course of sin. Now if sin reign in them, they are not under grace, but under the law, transgressors in the new covenant sense.

2. The reason, 'For sin is a transgression of the law;' and wilful sin is a contempt of the law in general. It doth not become christians to do anything which doth disagree with the law of their Father; but though God dispenses with infirmities, he will not bear with iniquities; therefore if we remain in a sinful state, or live a sinful life, what manner of persons soever we are by profession, or how little soever those sins which we live in be esteemed in the world, they will prove baneful to our souls. Many carnal men, under colour of being freed from the curse of the law by Christ, indulge themselves in their sins, and either think they shall not be called to an account for these things, or, if they cry to God for mercy, think all is well, though they frequently, constantly, easily relapse into those sins again and again, and so turn the grace of God into wantonness, Jude 4; christian liberty into licentiousness, 2 Peter ii. 19. Now these are transgressors of the law, and must appear as such, and answer as such before the bar of God. And it is also a caution to good men; they must not flatter themselves in their sins, nor give way even to their infirmities, as if they were no sins. No; they are breaches of the law, and if we give way to them, we are pronounced as transgressors of it: Num. xiv. 41, 'Wherefore should ye transgress the commandment of the Lord your God?' Dan. ix. 11, 'All Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us.'

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Doct. He that liveth in a course of sin forfeits the privileges of adoption offered to him, and maketh himself guilty before God as a breaker of the law:

In pursuing this point, I shall do three things—

1. Show that all mankind is under the law of God, which still remaineth in force as an inviolable rule of righteousness.

2. That the nature and heinousness of sin is to be determined by a contrariety or want of conformity to this law.

3. That those that live in sin, or the allowed breach of the law, can not look upon themselves as God's adopted children, but are still under the curse of it.

I. For the first, that all mankind are under the law of God, it will be evidenced by these considerations—

1. That man is God's creature, and therefore his subject. The subjection of man to God is built upon this ground, his total and absolute dependence upon God, both as to creation and preservation.

We have life and breath, and all things from him, from whence there resulteth an obligation to obey him; for dependence inferreth inferiority, obedience, and subjection, such as children owe to their parents, from whom, under God, they had their being. He that made us and kept us may dispose of us at his own pleasure; for God being a creator, he is an owner; and being an owner, he is a ruler. The dominion of jurisdiction is founded in the dominion of propriety: Mat. xx. 15, 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?'

2. Man being God's subject, hath a certain law given to him, which doth require obedience from him, and doth determine his duty, particularly wherein it shall consist: Micah vi. 8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to love mercy, and do justice, and to walk humbly with thy God?' This law is partly made known to us by the light of natural conscience: Rom. ii. 14, 'The gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law;' partly by scripture; so more clearly in Ps. cxlvii. 19, 'He hath showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments to Israel; he hath not dealt so with every nation.' Now nothing is sin but what is against this law, and all that is a breach of it is a sin.

3. Man being under a law, should be very tender of breaking or disobeying it, for God never dispenseth with it, as it is purely moral, and standeth much upon keeping up his legislative authority; which may appear by these considerations—

[1.] If man could have kept it, he would have gotten life by it; that was God's first intention; and the reason why it succeeded not was through our sin. The law could not make us happy, because it became weak through our flesh, Rom. viii. 3, and Gal. iii. 21, 'If there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness had been by the law;' but a righteousness fully satisfying the demands of the law now in the fallen estate is impossible; the gospel therefore offereth another righteousness, to which the law is not contrary, but subservient.

[2.] In that God would not release the penalty of the law, nor pardon any sin against it, without satisfaction first made by the blood of Christ; the law is both the rule of our duty and God's judgment; it showeth what is due from us to God, and also what is due from God to us in case of disobedience. Now before God would save man, Jesus Christ must be subject to the law, to suffer what is imposed as a punishment, before God would save us from it: Gal. iv. 4, 5, 'But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.'

[3.] Before man can have actual benefit by this satisfaction, he must consent to return to the duty of the law, and live in obedience to God; for God never pardoneth any while they are in their rebellion, and live under the full dominion of sin, but when by covenant they return to their allegiance to their rightful Lord: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God;' Isa. lv. 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy, and to our God, for he

will abundantly pardon;' Isa. i. 16, 17, 'Wash you, make you clean, and then your sins, though they were as scarlet, shall be as white as snow.' Till a resolution of new obedience, we have no interest in the grace of the new covenant, for the way of entrance into the new covenant is by faith and repentance. Now repentance is nothing else but a sincere purpose of new obedience, or living according to the will or law of God.

[4.] Christ merited regeneration, or the spirit of holiness, that all new creatures might voluntarily keep this law, though not in absolute perfection, yet in new sincere obedience: Titus iii. 5, 6, 'He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed on us through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' Christ came to bring us into the favour of God by pardon and adoption; so into a capacity of loving, pleasing, and obeying God by regeneration. Now the new creature is fitted to obey the law: Eph. iv. 24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;' Heb. viii. 10, 'I will put my laws into their mind, and write them upon their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.' The great blessing of the gospel is grace to keep the law.

[5.] The more we keep this law, the more pleasing we are to God, and the more communion we have with Christ. As renewing grace fits us to enter into the evangelical state, so the more entirely and readily we give up ourselves to do the will of God, our interest is more clear, and our participation of the blessings of the gospel more full, and our comfort more strong: Ps. cxix. 165, 'Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them;' Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;' Ps. i. 1, 2, 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of God, and in his law doth he meditate day and night;' Titus ii. 11-13, 'The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;' and 1 John i. 7, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another.' And it is said of our Lord Jesus, Luke ii. 52, that 'he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.' If it be said of Christ, whose increase was only in the exercise, for at his first coming he had the Spirit without measure, much more of us, that, as we increase in holiness, we increase in the favour of God. Surely the more God loveth us, the more we obey his law; for all religion is to love God, which is our work, and to be beloved of him, which is our reward and happiness.

[6.] That we cannot have full communion with God till we are perfectly conformed to his law; for we are not introduced into the heavenly glory till we are perfect and complete in holiness: Eph. v. 27, 'That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish;' Col. i. 22, 'To present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable in his sight;' Jude 24, 'To present you faultless before the presence

of his glory.' During life our obedience is but imperfectly begun, but when it is completed and finished, we do not stay out of heaven one jot or moment. In heaven and the state of perfect glory, the law as purely moral is always in force; we are bound to love God and one another.

[7.] That the law is the rule of all God's judgments in the world, and his righteous process, whether against nations or persons: Rom. i. 18, 'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;' Heb. ii. 2, 'For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward,' &c.

[8.] That he will not spare his own children when they transgress it by heinous and scandalous sins; though they be the dearly beloved of his soul, and fall out but in rare instances and cases, yet they do not go away without remarks of God's displeasure: Prov. xi. 31, 'The righteous shall be recompensed on earth, much more the wicked and the sinner.' To instance in Eli, his sons are slain in battle, the ark taken, his daughter-in-law dieth, and at length the old man dieth. Witness David, after he had fallen foully; Tamar is defiled, Amnon slain, Absalom, in rebellion against him, rifleth his palace royal, defileth his concubines; he himself driven from his palace, fleeth for his life, and hath much ado to escape. All this is spoken to show that the law is still in force, that Christ came not to dissolve but to fulfil it.

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[9.] That Christ came not to dissolve our obligation to God, or ever intended it, but to promote it rather. Not to dissolve it: if he came *de jure* to free us from obedience to the law, it is to make us gods; for no creature is *sui juris*, his own to dispose of; it is impossible any created thing can be without a law, for that were to make it God, to make the creature supreme and independent, that his own will should be his rule, without liableness to another. Nor *de facto*, to set us free while we are creatures; for that were to make us devils, to live in a direct opposition to God. But rather to promote holiness; partly as his design was to restore us to obedience: Luke i. 74, 75, 'That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him with out fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.' And partly as Christ was a pattern, and came to do what he hath commanded: Mat. iii. 15, 'For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness;' Mat v. 17, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil;' Heb. v. 8, 9, 'Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.'

II. The nature and heinousness of sin is to be determined by a contrariety or want of conformity to this law; for sin presupposeth a law and lawgiver, and a debt of subjection lying upon us. We are subject to God by virtue of our dependence, but the course of this subjection and dependence is determined by the law of God, or the act of his legislative will, in what way we shall express our obedience to him; so that all sin presupposeth a law, and the power of the lawgiver. The apostle telleth us, Rom. iv. 15, 'Where there is no law, there is no transgression;' and Rom. v. 13, 'Sin is

not imputed where there is no law.' Well, then, by the law we know what is sin, the nature of it, and how great an evil it is, and the heinousness of it.

But if we would know what sin is, or what is sin, let us see how many ways this law may be transgressed: two ways especially; either by omitting what is commanded as a duty to God, or by committing what is forbidden.

1. By omitting what is commanded as a duty to God or man; as suppose invocation of God: Jer. x. 25, 'Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name;' Ps. xiv. 3, 'There is none that doeth good, no not one;' Mat. xxv. 42, 'I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink;' *non qui rapit aliena, sed qui non dat sua*; Mat. xxv. 30, 'And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Unprofitableness, if there be no more, is a damning sin. When we directly transgress an affirmative precept, that is a sin of omission; or when we do anything against a negative precept, that is a sin of commission. There is in these sins the general nature of all sin, a transgression of the law, or a disobedience and breach of a precept, and so by consequence a contempt of God's authority. When Saul had not done what God bid him to do, he telleth him, 1 Sam. xv. 23, 'That rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry;' implying that sins of omission are rebellion and stubbornness, for which God threateneth to rend the kingdom from him. So for a sin of omission he puts by Eli's family from the priesthood: 1 Sam. iii. 13, 'I will judge his house for ever, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' Now the more necessary the duties omitted are, the greater the sin is: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' 1 Cor. xvi. 22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.' Especially if the omission be total: Ps. xiv. 2, 'There is none seeketh after God;' Jer. ii. 32, 'My people have forgotten me days without number.' When duties are seasonable: Prov. xvii. 16, 'Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, and he hath no heart to it?' When the performance of a duty is easy, to stand with God for a trifle: Luke xvi. 24, he that would not give a crumb shall not have a drop. So when fully convinced of our duty: James iv. 17, 'To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' These sins are the ruin of most people in the world. They forget God; they do not seek after him. Yea, the children of God oftener offend in these kind of sins than the other kind; not so much in foul excesses, as in the omission of good duties.

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2. By committing what God hath forbidden, or breaking through the restraints God hath laid upon us, in worshipping idols, or satisfying our revenge, or fulfilling our lusts. The first sin was eating the for bidden fruit; and the decalogue consists rather of prohibitions than precepts, to meet with the corrupt nature of man. God doth as it were in his law cry to us, 'Oh, do not this abominable thing which I hate!' Jer. xliv. 4. He hath hedged up our way, and yet we break through. If you ask which is the worst of these two, sins of omission against the affirmative, or commission against the negative commandments? I answer—In some cases the one, in some the other. Sins of

commission are usually more foul and scandalous, but sins of omission, especially total neglects of necessary duties, are more dangerous. Sins of commission, when they break out into shameful acts, scourge the conscience with remorse and horror; but sins of omission bring an insensible slightness, carelessness, and hardness of heart. Our mischief cometh by neglecting what should keep religion alive in our souls. But now sins of commission may be acted in thought, word, and deed; for the whole man falleth under the law of God. These three ways of sinning are implied in Prov. viii. 13, 'Pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth.'

[1.] Thoughts are not free; the workings of the heart fall under a law: 'The thought of foolishness is sin;' Ps. cxix. 113, 'I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.' Mark, he inferreth his hatred of vain thoughts out of his love to the law. Thoughts and desires are condemned by the law of God, as well as more perfect operations.

[2.] Words also fall under the law, and we are to give an account thereof in the judgment: Mat. xii. 36, 'Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment;' James ii. 12, 'So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.' Then the judgment is carried on according to law.

[3.] Evil actions, that break out into the conversation, are consummate sins: James i. 15, 'Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin.' These being more deliberate, argue greater boldness and contempt of God, bring scandal and dishonour to his name, and convey the taint and contagion of an evil example to others. It is ill to have a fire kindled in our bosoms, but it is worse when the sparks of sin fly abroad. These acts of sin are either secret, done between God and us, without the privity of any others than the sinning parties; these are an affront to God's omnipotency, because they put more respect upon men than God, which is palliated atheism: Jer. ii. 26, 'A thief is ashamed when he is found;' Job xxiv. 15, 'The adulterer waiteth for the twilight; no eye shall see me; and disguiseth his face.' To be unjust in secret, unclean in secret, malicious, sensual, voluptuous; art thou afraid men should know it, and not afraid God should know it? Open sin, when in defiance of all that is good and holy, men will commit, and are net ashamed of it; as Absalom lay with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel: Isa. iii. 9, 'They declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not.' This is to enter into an open war and defiance against God.

III. That those that live in sin, or any allowed breach of this law, are still under the curse of it, and cannot look upon themselves as God's adopted children; for he that breaketh the law is opposed to those whom the Father hath loved with so great love, as to take them into his family, and to acknowledge them for his children.

To clear this to you—

1. It is certain that when we come to take the law out of the hand of a redeemer, we are all sinners and transgressors before God. When we first received the law out of the hand of a creator,

we were pure and upright, had no former faults to be pardoned, but were as the creation had left us; but now we have a mountain of guilt upon our backs when we are called upon to submit to the kingdom of the Mediator; therefore we come to him as one that will pay our debts, and discharge us of this heavy load, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear: Ps. cxxx. 4, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared;' Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' Pardon, rest, and ease for your burdened souls, is our first invitation; for alas! we are all sinners and transgressors.

2. Though God findeth us sinners, and we apprehend ourselves to be so, yet when he taketh us into his family, he doth not leave us so; but on God's part regeneration maketh way for adoption: John i. 12, 13, 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' And regeneration doth fit us for obedience to the law, as was said before; for it is a writing his law on our minds, and a putting it into our hearts. And on our part there is repentance, or a bitter dislike of sin, with which is a purpose of new obedience, or of forbearing the evil which the law forbiddeth, and doing the good which the law requireth; a returning to the allegiance we owe our sovereign Lord: Acts xvii. 30, 31, 'He hath commanded all men to repent, because he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.' Surely they that enter into the Mediator's kingdom, and do seriously and solemnly engage to be faithful to him, are strongly bound to be exceeding tender of doing anything against the law and will of God; partly because they now owe obedience not only to God as creator, but Christ as redeemer, who is their new lord by a beneficial right and title: Rom. xiv. 9, 'To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord of dead and living.' And their disobedience is a double transgression, and so a double displeasing of God; for bonds are multiplied by benefits. Partly because in their repentance, if it were serious, sin was complained of as the greatest burden that lay upon their consciences, the grievance from whence they sought ease, the wound which pained them at the heart, the disease their souls were sick of; and their purpose seemed firmly set to please God in all things. Now, if men cast off all care of righteousness and holiness, and take occasion from the grace of Christ to live in sin, and to build again what they have destroyed, they cast off their claim, and so make themselves transgressors of the law before God: Gal. ii. 17, 'If I build again the things which I have destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.' It is a kind of outlawing ourselves from the law of grace.

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3. None are so exact with God in the obedience of his law, but that still they need the same grace that brought them into the family to keep them in the family, and to pardon their daily failings. Not to sin is the fixed purpose of christians; but who can watch so severely, and keep such a strict guard over his own heart, but that he doth often sin and fall? But God will not deal in anger with us, and cast us out of his favour and family for every sin, through the weakness and frailty of our natures; but though we often forget the duty of children, he doth not forget the mercy of a father: Ps. ciii. 13, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him;' Mal. iii.

17, ‘I will spare them as a father spareth his only son that serveth him.’ He hath mercy in Christ for all such as do sincerely endeavour to please God, and serve him, and do not indulge themselves in deliberate sin.

4. Though God’s adopted children may through infirmity break his law, yet there is a manifest difference between them and others that live in a state of sin, either in enmity to godliness, or in a course of vanity, sensuality, or any kind of rebellion against God, rejecting his counsels, calls, and mercies, which should reclaim them. There are some who sin with fulness of deliberation: Micah ii. 1, ‘Woe to them that devise iniquity, that work evil upon their beds: when the morning is light they practise it, because it is in the power of their hands.’ With freeness of consent: Prov. vii. 22, ‘He goeth after her straightway.’ With strength of resolution: Eccles. viii. 11, ‘Their heart is fully set in them to do evil;’ Jer. xliv. 17, ‘But we will certainly do whatsoever goeth out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the city of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.’ Frequency of action: 2 Peter iii. 3, ‘Walking after then own lusts.’ Accustomed to do evil: Jer. xiii. 23. Skill and dexterity in sinning: Jer. iv. 22, ‘They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.’ Now these are not as God’s children, who have a few failings.

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Use 1. To show the dangerous condition of those who live in a course of sin; the Holy Ghost pronounceth them breakers of the law. But now the children of God, those that are taken into God’s family, have sin dwelling in them, but not reigning; remaining, but not reserved; they are often foiled, out it is besides their purpose, which is the difference between them and others, the habitual bent of their hearts being against sin. The prevailing and overpoising heart is for God; their wills are fixed, and set to please him: Heb. xiii. 18, ‘We trust we have a good conscience.’ But with the carnal it is not so; sin is more loved than hated. A man is not determined good from his conscience, but from the prevalent bent of his will. It is not enough to have a conscience rightly informed from the word of God concerning any duty, but there must be a bent, a fixed purpose to obey God in all things; which doth still put us on to do good and to avoid evil. The will is the imperial power in the soul, and the first mover and principle of all moral actions; and as it standeth disposed and constantly bent, so is the life good or evil; and where the heart is predominantly bent on righteousness, we may take comfort in our condition, though forced to grapple with remaining weaknesses. But if bare conscience calleth for that we have no mind to, though some dislikes, some feeble resistance be made, and soon suppressed, it will not excuse us from being transgressors of the law. The conscience of a convinced man is for God, but the heart and will of a renewed man is for God. A convinced man may have an imperfect will to be better, a velleity, but not a perfect volition; but in a converted man there is a will and a delight in God: ‘To will is present with me, and I delight in the law of God in the inner man,’ Rom. vii. 22.

2. The tenor of his life is for God; his course is a course of godliness; but in a natural man, his course is a course of sin, and he doth not avoid those failings which he might avoid if he were sincerely willing. Men are determined by their walk, whether it be after the flesh or after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 1. Their sins are not of settled interest and choice, but sudden passion.

3. To the godly sin is a great burden: Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' They are unwearied and instant in the use of means whereby they may get rid of it; they do not only dislike sin, but overcome it in some measure; they are always cleansing their minds from vanity and sin, and 'perfecting holiness in the fear of God,' 2 Cor. vii. 1; 'As ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so you would abound therein yet more and more,' 1 Thes. iv. 1.

4. By their falls they are much better strengthened, and cautioned against sin for time to come: Ps. li. 6, 'In the hidden parts thou hast made me to know wisdom.' The others, if sin be complained of, it is not reformed nor mortified: they are sorry for their sins for a fit, but it is not a sorrow that wounds sin to the heart, that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation 'not to be repented of;' but the others do recover themselves in such a kindly manner that their health is bettered by their disease.

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Use 2. Since it is hard to state how far a child of God may go in sinning, or what are mere infirmities consistent with grace, the best way will be to stand at a distance universally from all sin, hating all sin, and keeping a constant care and solicitude to please God in all things, and to pray with David, Ps. cxix. 133, 'Order my steps in thy word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.' It is enough to breed caution in us that a sin of infirmity in its own nature is a transgression of the law, whether it be imputed to us, yea or no; and a man that doth not make conscience of infirmities will in time not make conscience of iniquities; but that man that persists in a sinful course, certainly doth not, cannot walk uprightly with God: 1 John v. 18, 'We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is be gotten of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not.' When the rest of the world lieth in wickedness, the grace of God in his heart ordinarily is prevailing in him.

SERMON VII.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is a transgression of the law.—1 JOHN iii. 4.

FROM this scripture I have observed this doctrine—

That he that liveth in a course of sin forfeiteth the privileges of adoption offered to him, and maketh himself guilty before God as a breaker of the law.

I have showed you—

1. That all mankind is under the law of God, which still remaineth in force as an inviolable rule of righteousness.

2. That the nature and heinousness of sin is to be determined by a contrariety unto or want of conformity to this law.

3. That those that live in sin or the allowed breach of the law can not look upon themselves as God's adopted children, but are still under the curse of it.

4. I now come to show you the heinous nature of sin. Here—

I shall first show what heinousness, venom, and malignity there is in sin, to induce the children of God to a horror and hatred of it; Secondly, Give you the practical corollaries thence ensuing, that sin should be an odious thing to christians, because it is a transgression of the law of God.

First, Let me speak of the evil of sin, as it is a transgression of the law. It may be represented—

1. From the consideration of the lawgiver, to whom belongeth goodness, wisdom, and power.

2. From the law itself, which may be considered either as to the precept or the sanction, by penalties and rewards.

3. The adjuncts of the law, which are—(1.) The providences where by God confirmeth it; (2.) The means whereby he doth enforce it; (3.) The slenderness of the temptations that tempt and provoke us to break it.

If I should exactly follow this method, it would wonderfully show the malignity and evil nature of sin; as if we consider the wisdom, power, and goodness of the lawgiver. His wisdom, as the law is given by a wise God, so sin is extreme folly. His goodness, and that is two fold—either moral or beneficial. His moral goodness is his holiness and purity; so sin is an express contrariety to it. His beneficial goodness, which showeth his readiness to do good to the creature; sin is a plain denial of it: or his actual beneficence, so sin is ingratitude. His power signifieth his authority, or might and strength. To break it, as it signifieth his authority, so sin is disobedience; as his authority is grounded on his propriety, so it is robbery, or converting that which is another's to our own will. Or our covenant or consent by way of consecration, so it is sacrilege. By way of marriage union, so it is not single fornication, but adultery. As it signifieth his might, strength, or omnipotency, so it is a depreciation or contempt of his glorious majesty, or a slighting of his frowns, or a playing with the vengeance of the almighty and great God. I might go on, but because keeping to this method might be too perplexing to a popular auditory, I shall not exactly observe it, nor yet wholly deviate

from it. Now I shall show you the heinousness, venom, and malignity there is in sin, the more to induce the children of God to a horror and hatred of it, in fourteen particulars.

1. There is folly in it, as it is a deviation from the best rule which the divine wisdom hath given unto us. If we should only look upon the law as a bare direction or counsel given us by one that is wiser than we, to slight it is a contempt of the wisdom of God, as if he knew not how to govern the world, and what is meet and good for man; and so a poor worm is exalted above God: Micah vi. 8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good.' Now, shall we slight his direction, and in effect say, Our own way is better? Reason requireth that they that are not able to choose for themselves should obey their guides, and content themselves with the wisdom of others, who see farther than they do; as Elymas, when struck blind, sought somebody to lead him by the hand, Acts xiii. 11. Can a blind man feel out his way better than another who hath eyes to choose it for him? God is wiser than we; and all that would not spit in the face of their creator should think so. Now he hath reduced all moral duties to a few heads, and disposed them into an accurate method, speaking to us with particular application, 'Thou shalt not have any other gods;' and, 'Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery.' Now for us, after all this, to run of our own heads, and consult with our own foolish lusts, and the suggestions of the devil, who is our worst enemy, is desperate madness and folly; and yet so doth every one that breaketh the law in thought, word, and deed: Deut. iv. 6, 'Keep these statutes, and do them, for this is your wisdom.' The most holy are the wisest: Jer. viii. 9, 'They have rejected the word of the Lord, and then what wisdom is there in them?' They who reject that which is able to make them wise to salvation, that in which all true wisdom consisteth, that which cometh from the fountain of all wisdom, how can they be wise men, who, though wicked, would not be accounted weak and foolish? yet sin maketh us so while we refuse God's counsel, who knoweth our frame, and what is best for us. Every soul in hell is brought there by sinful folly.

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2. Laws are not only rules to direct, but have a binding force from the authority of the lawgiver. God doth not only give us counsel as a friend, but commands as a sovereign. Therefore the second notion whereby the evil of sin is set forth is that of disobedience and rebellion; and so it is a great injury done to God, because it is a depreciation or a contempt of God's authority. It is *finis operis*, though not *operantis*; though not in the intention of the man that sinneth, yet in the nature of the action. You count it great pride in Pharaoh to say, Exod. v. 2, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?' or in those rebels, Ps. xii. 4, 'Our tongues are our own; who is lord over us?' We will think, and speak, and do what we please, and own no law but our lusts. Now though you do not say thus in so many direct and formal words, yet this is the interpretation of your actions. Whenever you sin, you despise the law that forbiddeth that sin, and by consequence the authority of him that made it: 2 Sam. ii. 9, 'Wherefore hast thou sinned in despising the commandment?' Tush! I will do it; it is no matter for the law of God which standeth in the way. It may be David had no such actual thought, but yet the action itself speaketh it; for an act of irreverence and contempt of God's authority is as if it were not to be stood upon when our lusts urge us to the contrary. And certainly no man can endure to be crossed in his will by an inferior; and will God take it well at your hands?

Oh, that we could make our hearts sensible of this! It would make us cautious, and more humble when we have sinned. I am about to do that, or have done that which is a contempt of God; and is it nothing to us to slight God? Other creatures, that are under a law as well as we, dare not do so. The angels have a deep awe and reverence of God: Jude 9, 'Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, disputing about the body of Moses, durst not bring a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee.' What was the matter? An archangel durst not venture on a passionate word. Certainly a man is never good, never walketh answerably to his creation, till he hath a great reverence and dread of God's authority impressed upon his heart: Prov. xiii. 13, 'Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed, but whoso feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.' Not he that feareth a judgment, but he that feareth a commandment, durst not venture, needeth no more to move him and stop him, but to know what God will have him to do or not do; these shall be rewarded, not others; ns he that breaketh the law of any king cannot expect a reward from him. Alas! there is nothing more common than for men to make little reckoning of a commandment. But in good earnest, is it nothing to cross the will of God? You might reason as the centurion, Mat. viii. 9, 'I am a man under authority, and I have others under me.' Take either part, and consider yourselves in your subjection to men that are above you, or in your carriage to those under you, and you may shame yourselves in the manifold breaches of the law of God. You have an awe of men's laws, why not of God's? His authority is greater, and power to punish greater; you may get out of their sight while you sin, and escape out of their reach after you have offended them;' but whither will you go from God's presence?' Ps. cxxxix. 7. Set the Rechabites before you when their father was dead: Jer. xxxv. 6, 7, 'We dare not drink wine, because our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine.' But we need not go so far back; poor men and servants dare not displease them that have power over them by whom they live. If a master, or a father, or a landlord, or a magistrate be but displeased with them, how do they tremble and shake? If they know anything against their mind, they dare not do it, and shun it; they shake at the word of a man of power, or one a little above them, but make bold with God, and sin freely without check or remorse. What do we think of God, what do we make of him?

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3. It is shameful ingratitude. Man is God's beneficiary, from whom he hath received life and being, and all things, and is therefore bound to love and serve him according to his declared will. We have our being from him: Ps. c. 3, 'He made us, and not we ourselves.' And we continually depend upon him: Acts xvii. 28, 'In him we live, and move, and have our being.' And surely dependence should beget observance. Men are loath to break with, or are careful to reconcile themselves to, those upon whom they depend. As when the men of Tyre had offended Herod, they sought terms of reconciliation: Acts xii. 20, 'Making Blastus their friend, because their country was nourished by the king's country.' Now it is extreme unthankfulness, stupidity, and brutishness for us to carry ourselves undutifully towards God, who gave us our beings. Our parents, who next, under God, gave us our beings, knew not when the child was in the womb whether it would be male or female; they rocked our cradles for us, and provided for us in our frail and infant state.

When we were not capable to express one act of thankfulness, God protected us, supplied us with all necessaries, had a tender care of us, as parents are wont to have of their children: all that we have and are, we have from him; he hath preferred, honoured, and advanced us. Now should we break his laws who hath dealt so graciously and bountifully with us? Dent, xxxii. 5, 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?' Surely such ungrateful people show themselves much depraved, and more brutish than the beasts themselves, who have no capacity to know God as the first cause of all beings, yet take notice of the next hand from whom they receive their supplies, and in their kind express their gratitude to such as feed them and make much of them: Isa. i. 3, 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib.' But we take no notice and regard of God, who hath made us, and kept us, and hath been beneficial to us all our days. Surely this should shame us out of sin; for shall we offend our great benefactor? If gratitude for benefits past doth not prevail with us, yet interest should; for all our benefits plainly must come from God. You have more to do with God than men; you are to ask your comforts daily from him, and therefore should study to please him. You are nothing but what he hath made you, and what he must continue every moment to you. Now you that are to go a begging to him daily, and receive all your comforts from his hands, should you break his laws and cross his will? For if you will not hear God, how should he hear you? Prov. xxviii. 9, 'He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination.' Men observe those most with whom they have most to do. Love is not to be requited with unkindness and ingratitude. If our lawgiver be also our benefactor, men should shame themselves out of sin. Even our common mercies point to heaven, and tell us whence they come, and for what.

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4. It is a disowning of God's propriety in us, as if we were not his own, and God had not power to do with his own as he pleaseth. The creature is absolutely at God's dispose, not only as he hath a jurisdiction over us as his subjects, but a propriety in us as his goods. A prince hath a more absolute power over his lands and his own goods than he hath over his subjects; over his subjects he hath a dominion of jurisdiction, but over his goods a dominion of propriety. God is not only a ruler, but an owner, as he made us out of nothing, and bought us when we were worse than nothing, and still keepeth us from returning into our original nothing again. Now, shall those that are absolutely his own withdraw themselves from him, and live according to their own will, and think and speak and do what they list? Surely it is a plain denial of God's propriety in us and lordship over us: Ps. xii. 4, 'Our tongues are our own, who is lord over us?' Alas! we have no will of our own, nor mind of our own, nor tongue of our own; no wealth nor strength, nor interests of our own; all these are God's, and must be improved for him. If we speak, it must be for God, or as God hath directed; if we think, we should think for God: everything is his, and must be used not negatively only, not against him, but positively for him. It robbeth God of his propriety. If we consider his natural right, so sin is such an injury and wrong to God as theft and robbery. If we consider our own covenant, by which we voluntarily own God's right and property in us, so it is adultery and breach of marriage vows. If we consider this covenant as being made in a way of devoting and consecrating of ourselves

from a common to a holy use, so it is sacrilege; all which aggravate sin, and should make it more odious to our thoughts.

5. It is a contempt of God's holiness and purity, as if he were indifferent to good and evil, and stood not upon his law, whether men broke it or kept it, and would not call them to an account, and judge them for it. Whereas God standeth punctually and precisely upon his law; the least point is dearer unto him than all the world in some sense: Mat. v. 18, 'But not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass away.' God maketh great reckoning of it, but we make little reckoning of it when we do so freely break it. He hath given a law to be kept to a tittle, and we break it in every tittle. God hath been peremptory and precise, and showed himself a holy and jealous God when it hath been broken in a small and inconsiderable circumstance, as we would think. Witness the breach made upon Uzzah, and upon the men of Bethshemesh, 1 Sam. vi. 19; a poor man that gathered sticks on the sabbath-day was struck dead; the turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt; the striking of Zacharias, John's father, dumb; the hindering Moses from entering into Canaan, for smiting the rock twice. And after all this, we think we may venture, and no harm will come of it. Surely we cannot be too tender of the law. We are bidden to keep it as the apple of the eye, Prov. vii. 2. The eye is a tender place, and is offended with the least dust; now as we would be chary of the eye, so should we be of the law of God.

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6. It is a denial of the goodness of God, as if he were envious of the happiness and welfare of mankind, as if he had planted in us desires which he would not have satisfied, only to vex and torment us, and had fettered us and restrained us unreasonably, and his commands were grievous, and his yoke intolerable; yea, ensnared us by keeping us from that which is good and comfortable for us. The devil inspired this thought into our first parents, in the first sin that ever was committed. And the first in every kind is the measure of all the rest, Gen. iii. 4, 5. Is God so kind, and yet deals unkindly with man, to put him into a garden, and plant trees on purpose to anger him; that he might have that continually in his eye which he might not enjoy; to deny him the use of that fruit which only had the virtue to make him truly happy? These were the insinuations of Satan, by which he undermineth their obedience. You see his battery is against God's goodness and kindness to man, which he endeavoureth to discredit, and make man doubt of, by all the ways he can; so still the same thing is implied in every sin, that God is envious, and therefore we are impatient of his restraints. Though but one tree reserved, Satan thinketh this a fit occasion of raising a jealousy, as if that which he had withheld from man had been far better than that which he granted to him. If he prevailed so much upon our first parents in their estate of innocency, no marvel if he prevails so easily upon their posterity in this state of corruption. We are too impatient of his yoke: Ps. ii. 4, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us;' 'And the carnal mind is enmity to the law,' Rom. viii. 7. They can not endure to have their liberty infringed, and to resign up their wills to the will of God, though he requireth nothing but for our good, Deut. vi. 24. And therefore his sovereignty should not be disclaimed by man, nor the exercise of it be grievous to

him. Men would fain cast away bonds and cords, as if the crossing of their humours were an infringing of their happiness.

7. It is a depreciation and contempt of God's glorious majesty. What else shall we make of a plain contest with him, and a flat contradiction to his holy will? for while we make our carnal and depraved will the rule and guide of our actions against God's holy will, we plainly contend with him, whose will shall stand, his or ours, and so cast off God's authority, and seek to jostle him out of his throne; we. pluck the crown off his head, and the sceptre out of his hands, usurping his authority, and so slight the eternal power of this glorious king, as if he were not able to avenge the wrongs done to his majesty, but that we could make our part good against him: 1 Cor. x. 22, 'Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?' Isa. xlv. 9, 'Woe unto him that striveth with his maker.' Such a perfect disagreement with the almighty and holy God argueth an entering into the lists with him, as if we could carry our cause, or endure his greatest terrors. And will God be despised by man who is a worm, who is nothing but what God maketh him to be? Shall a silly worm dare enter into a contest with the almighty God, who can chastise him, and do justice upon him in a moment? For still the world is upheld by his providential influence and sustentation. We may escape men, either get out of their reach, or else outlive their wrath; but who can fly from God? Ps. cxxxix., and 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,' Heb. x. 31. We should think of these things. We carry it so as if we had courage and strength enough to withstand God's judgments: Ezek. xxii. 14, 'Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee?'

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8. It is a questioning, if not a flat denial of God's omnisciency and omnipresence, as if he did not see or regard the actions of men, since we dare do that in the presence of God which we would scarce do before a little child. Ahasuerus said, Esther vii. 8, 'Will he force the queen also before me in the house?' Shall we break his laws before his face? Who would void his excrements before his prince? It is a homely similitude, but such as is warranted by the types of the law: Deut. xxiii. 12-14, 'Thou shalt cover that which cometh from thee, that thy camp may be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee.' It is not natural filthiness which God abhorreth, but moral sin is most loathsome to him; and yet we commit it before his face, and are not ashamed, which showeth that either we have contemptible[14] thoughts of God, or that he doth not see or regard us. The prophet telleth us, Jer. ii. 28, 'The thief is ashamed when he is found;' that is, taken in the fact. Did we believe God's omnipresence and all-seeing eye, we would always be careful of our actions; but we do that before the face of God which he infinitely hateth. Whatever your underlings do behind your backs, you would not bear it if they did it before your face. All the sins thou committest, thou dost them in the very face of God, who beholdest the evil and the good.

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[14] That is, 'contemptuous.'—ED.

9. It is the violation of a law which is holy, just, and good. Hitherto we have brought considerations that concern the lawgiver; now I speak of the very law itself. The matter of it recommendeth itself to our consciences, as tending to the glory of God, and conducing to preserve the rectitude of our natures. Whatever God hath required ought to be done upon God's authority, though the thing itself (setting God's injunction aside) did not deserve our respect and regard; as Naaman's servant told him, 2 Kings v. 13, 'If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?' So whatever God commandeth, the stamp of his authority puts a respect upon it; how much more when his laws are so equal, that, if a man were well in his wits, he would prefer them before liberty itself? Rom. vii. 12, 'Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just and good;' the law in general, and every command in particular, even that commandment which had wrought such tragical effects in his own heart. Thus men that understand themselves speak well of the law, even when it is contrary to their corrupt natures and humours. It is a law fit for God to give and us to receive. You say we must obey, but you think his commands are grievous; and so you obey him out of necessity, not out of delight. Oh, no; for though God may command what he will, yet he hath commanded nothing but what is good and holy. All his laws suit and agree well with his holiness, wisdom, and goodness, and also with the excellency and rectitude of our nature; and so setting aside God's authority, they commend themselves to us by their own evidence: Phil. iv. 8, 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things.' There are certain things that are immutably good, and by their own proper worth command our love, because of their exact suitableness to the divine nature, which is the eternal rule and reason of all that is good, as also because of their agreeableness to the reasonable nature, so far as there is anything good and divine in it; and such are most, if not all, the laws which God hath required of us. He hath not required us to lance or gash ourselves, to offer our children in sacrifice, nor to observe any of those barbarous customs which any of the gentiles took up and adapted to their wild superstition: 'What hath the Lord required of thee, but to love and fear him, and serve him all your days?' Deut. x. 12. He doth not require that we should run to the ends of the earth, or pierce the clouds, but 'to love mercy, do justice, and to walk humbly with thy God;' to live in purity, chastity, sobriety, temperance. Now first good men, whose eyes are open, who are not grown brutish by indulging their lusts and sensual appetites, they judge these to be holy and good laws: Ps. cxix. 173, 'I esteem thy precepts concerning all things to be right;' and ver. 138, 'Thy testimonies are righteous, and very faithful.' They have such a naturalness to the law, that they are very tender of breaking it. Secondly, I propound it to ordinary men. If conscience be suffered to speak, it would plead the equity of God's laws; even carnal men like this obedience in others, though, being overcome by their own lusts, they cannot bring their hearts to it. They are counted excellent: Prov. xii. 36, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' There is a secret sentiment of the holiness of these precepts; a reverence is darted into their consciences. The wicked, that hate the saints, count them excellent. They fear them, and therefore

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hate them; for all fear in wicked men is slavish, both the fear of God, and the fear of the saints. Many could wish themselves better, though they have not a serious purpose and resolution, as the incontinent and voluptuous. Thirdly, The general sense of mankind, who all consent to the things contained in this law, as holy, pure, true, and just. For the second table there is no doubt. Conscience, without the help of any other teacher, will sufficiently convince any reasonable man that this law is agreeable to the nature of man. And much of the first table will be seen also; so that natural light will incline men to these things: Rom. ii. 14, 'For the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law.' There are some things in nature which always observe their course, as that light things should move upwards, and heavy bodies downward; but there are other things that happen for the most part, though not always, as for men to use the right hand and not the left; so there are some things which have such an eminent holiness and righteousness in them, that by the universal consent of mankind they are approved; as that God should be loved above all, that children should honour their parents, that I should do as I would be done by; for these things are agreeable with the divine nature, and also with the reasonable nature, so far as it is a copy of it; other things may be variable, which are not clearly reconcilable with our notions of God. Fourthly, By the sentiments which men have of a holy, sober, godly life when they come to die, and the disallowance of a dissolute carnal life: Job xxvii. 8, 'What hope hath the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God shall take away his soul?' Jer. xvii. 11, 'At his latter end he shall be a fool.' Then men's mistakes do usually appear, and their carnal confidences vanish: 'Whereas the just man's end is peace,' Isa. xxxviii. 3, and Ps. xxxvii. 37. When men are entering upon the confines of eternity, they are wiser; the fumes of lust are then blown over. Now I look upon these as testimonies to God's law. The apostle saith, 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.' It is not from the fancy or melancholy of the dying person, nor from his distemper, but from his reason and the law of God. If it did only proceed from the distemper, or the sharp vapours of a disease, it were another matter. This anguish of spirit which death occasioneth by reason of sin is from a higher cause, the dread of God's justice, who will proceed according to his law, which the guilty person hath so often and so much violated and broken; they are not the ravings of a fever, nor the fruits of natural timorousness and credulity. No; it is a more serious business than so. This trouble is justified by the law of God and the highest reason. Fifthly, By reason; thus: That among beings some are better, others are worse, is out of all doubt; that the best beings should be most prized and esteemed is as clear as the former; therefore if I prize a mean thing equally with the best, or above the best, I unquestionably err against the law of nature. There are two objects propounded to our esteem God and man, Mat. xxii. 37-40. There is an infinite distance between the things themselves, so should there be in our respect to them. We owe more duty, honour, and service to God than to men. What more rational than to love God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves? Among men, some are superiors, some inferiors, some equals. As to common nature, all are equal, therefore an equal respect is due to them; we must do to them as we would be done by; for as there is a difference of persons, as parents, husbands, masters, so there are different laws. God hath considered not only what may conduce most to his own glory, but what is fit for men:

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‘These things are good and profitable unto men,’ Titus ii. 8. All are content others should be just and merciful, whatever they be themselves: it is for the good of human society, for all the uses and turns of mankind, without which the world would be but a den of thieves, or public stage whereon to act all manner of villany. Sixthly, By supposing the contrary. Do but for argument’s sake suppose the contrary of all that God hath said concerning the embracing: of virtue and the shunning: of vice. If God should free us from these laws, and leave us to our own choice, that whatever our naughty hearts desire we should follow after it without any let and restraint on our part, you would see the world were not to be lived in; yea, not only free us from it, but command the contrary. Suppose he had forbidden us all respect to himself, commanded us to worship false gods, to transform or misrepresent his glory by images, to fall down before stocks and stones, that we should blaspheme his name continually, and despise all those glorious attributes which clearly shine forth in the creation, if he had commanded us to be impious to our parents, to fill the world with murders, adulteries, robberies, and thefts, to pursue others with slanders and false-witnessings, and that all this would be acceptable to him. Doth not the heart of man abhor such a conceit? Yea, the fiercest beasts would abhor it, if they were capable of having such an idea and speculation represented unto them. Now should we break such a law as this, so reasonable and evident, so conducible to the honouring of God, and the governing of ourselves, and commerce with others? Surely the ways of God are equal.

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10. It is a disorder in nature, or a breach in the moral order and harmony of the world, whilst man, the most excellent of all visible creatures, is so perverted and depraved, like the chief string to an instrument broken and out of tune. God hath appointed all creatures their work and service, and the chiefest part of his workmanship is spoiled and disordered. He was certainly the chief wheel in this curious artifice. God hath made all things by number, weight, and measure; no creature so depraved and unfitted for his use as man; the rest of the creatures continue according to his ordinance, Ps. cxix. 91. They are all subject to him according to the rule and law of their creation, the proud waves of the sea not excepted: Jer. v. 22, ‘I have placed the sand for a bound to the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can. they not prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it.’ That vast collection of waters, which no might or sleight of man is able to master, yet it cannot stir an inch further than the Lord pleaseth. Now what an aggravation is this of man’s sin, who will not be ruled by God, who is able to rule and overrule the sea, the most unruly creature of all others! The sea itself observeth God’s law; but he complaineth there that his people had revolted from it, ver. 23. Man alone of all creatures transgresseth the law which God hath prescribed, and goeth beyond the assigned bounds. The inanimate creatures, that have no sense and reason and choice, do not pass the line of their decree; so that sin is a greater disorder than for the sea to break its bounds: Ps. cxlvi. 6, ‘Which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that therein is; which keepeth truth for ever.’ Sun, moon, and stars keep their orb and course, and observe the just points of their compass; man only is eccentric and exorbitant.

11. It is a disbelief of the promises and threatenings wherewith the law is enforced; for in the law, besides the precept, there is a sanction by penalties and rewards. In the two former considerations, we considered sin as it transgresseth the precept of the law; now we come to consider the sanction of the law, as it offereth death or life to the transgressors and observers of it: Deut. xxx. 15, 'I have set before thee life and death, good and evil.' Now this is as little believed as the precept is obeyed; and thence cometh all our boldness in sinning, and coldness in duty. First, If we believed his promises, by which he doth allure us to obedience, we would be more forward and ready to comply with his precepts. Surely God meaneth as he speaketh; he will make good his word to the obedient; but the sinner thinketh not so, and therefore is loath to undergo the difficulties of obedience, because he hath so little sense and certainty of the fulfilling of the promise. The apostle telleth us, Heb. xi. 6, 'That without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all that diligently seek him;' implying that if the fundamental truths of God's being and bounty were well rooted in our hearts, we could not be so careless as we are, nor so barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; our unbelief lieth at the bottom of all our carelessness, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Secondly, Threatenings; if these were more believed, we would not venture as we do; for you cannot drive a doll ass into the fire which is kindled before him: Prov. i. 17, 'In vain is the snare laid in the sight of any bird.' And would a reasonable creature wilfully run into so great a danger if he were sensible of it? and if he did believe these fearful threatenings, would he venture upon them? We think God doth not intend any execution of them, but only frightens us with a deceitful terror and a cry of false fire. Unbelief had a great predominancy in the first sin: 'Ye shall not surely die,' Gen. iii. 4; and still it is a main ingredient. Men embolden themselves to rebellion, because they look upon God's wrath as a vain scarecrow.

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12. It is a slighting of all those providences by which he would confirm and back his law. The Lord knoweth how apt we are to be guided by present sense. Things future, and that lie in another world, leave little impression upon our hearts; and therefore the terror of wrath to come cannot prevail against strong and violent affections to things that are present. The pleasures of sin being apprehended by sense, work more strongly upon the affections than things absent can do, which want that help of sense to convey them to our minds which the affections are much moved by; therefore God by some sensible dispensations will wean us from evil, and draw us to good, as by the mercies of this life, by public judgments, by chastenings. Even carnal nature is apt to be pleased with these kind of mercies, protection, provisions, and many worldly comforts: Ps. cxix. 56, 'This I had because I kept thy precepts;' Mat. vi. 33, 'First seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' But alas! a naughty heart slighteth these expressions of God's common goodness: Rom. ii. 4, 'Despisest thou the riches of his goodness?' So all those chastisings by which God will show us the bitter fruit of sin: Jer. ii. 19, 'Know therefore and see that k is an evil thing, and a bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God;' Jer. iv. 18, 'Thy way and thy doings have procured these things to thee: this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter.' All the hurt that cometh to us in this world is the fruit of sin; this is little taken notice of.

13. It is a contempt of all those means by which God useth to enforce his laws, and quicken the sense of our duty upon our hearts; such are the strivings and pressing motions of his Spirit, Gen. vi. 3. The Spirit warneth us of our danger when we are running into sin, and when we are slack and negligent mindeth us of our duty; the good Spirit doth not cease his importunities towards the wicked till they banish him from themselves. Such are also the checks of conscience, which taketh God's part in the soul, and beareth witness against our sins when other faculties conspire against him, Rom. ii. 15. So the instructions of our friends and teachers: Prov. iv. 12, 13, 'How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof! nor have I obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instruct me.' Instructions and warnings to the contrary do much aggravate and represent the evil nature and wilfulness of sinners, that nothing will stop them, and they are angry with those that would hinder them from going to hell. Of the same nature is the holy conversation of the godly: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah condemned the world by preparing an ark;' and John vii. 7, 'The world cannot hate you. but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.' Not only by doctrine, but conversation, a living reproof; the godly are hated as objects reviving guilt.

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14. The slenderness of the temptation that irritates us to break the laws of God doth also show the malignity of sin; for what is it but the pleasing of the carnal faculty? James i. 14, 'Every man is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.' He is enticed and drawn away by the love of some sensitive pleasure; this is all the recompense, all that is put in balance against the offending of God and the dreadful consequences of it; and then you will see what sin is. It is a light esteem of the favour of God, whilst a little base and brutish pleasure is preferred before it. When therefore a little sensitive delight, a little defiling transitory pleasure, is chosen before God, he is despised, and pleasure is loved before him: 2 Tim. iii. 4, 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. The fountain of living waters is forsaken for a broken cistern,' Jer. ii. 13; the creature for the creator, as if our souls found more delight and content in it than God. All the happiness in heaven is laid by for a little pomp and pleasure here on earth. In short, sense and appetite is preferred before reason and conscience, and so we make the beast to ride the man, things temporal before eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 16, and the present world before the world to come, 2 Tim. iv. 10, a preferring the body before the soul, the frail flesh before the immortal substance, and its pleasure before the concernments of the life to come; and so a parting with, or selling of all manner of happiness for a thing of nought.

Secondly, I come to give you the corollaries, or practical inferences thence deduced.

1. We see hence the folly of them who make a mock and sport of sin: Prov. xiv. 9, 'Fools make a mock of sin;' and Prov. xxvi. 18, 19, 'As a madman casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?' Many when they have committed sin themselves, or enticed others to sin, laugh at it as if they were in jest. As when they have sworn an oath or told a lie, or cozened or cheated their neighbours, or fallen into adultery or intemperance; nay, when they see others troubled about sin, they mock and laugh at it. That which I shall say to

these men shall be in two things. First, However they make light of sin now, yet when they come to die, it will sting them to the quick: 1 Cor. xv. 56, ‘The sting of death is sin.’ They will see it is no jesting matter to affront a God of infinite wisdom, majesty, and power, that it is no matter of sport whether a man shall be saved or damned, be eternally happy or eternally miserable. Secondly, The next thing I shall say to them is, that to make a sport of sin showeth great obduracy and hardness of heart, and searedness of conscience. Men do not easily get into this frame of spirit, but it is after long sinning. It is custom brings dedolency, and it is somewhile before men get the mastery of conscience, and are past feeling, Eph. iv. 19. The seat of scorners is the highest degree of sin, Ps. i. 1.

2. It showeth the folly of those that do not only make a light reckoning of sin themselves, but think also that God makes little account of it. But if God makes little account of sin, why doth he so strictly forbid it? Why doth he punish it so grievously and terribly? First, In his internal government, with horrors of conscience, which are more grievous than death itself: Prov. xviii. 14, ‘A wounded spirit who can bear?’ and Job saith, chap. vii. 15, ‘My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life.’ This vexation is so grievous, that death is preferred before it. For Judas to speak thus and act thus, being overcome of despair, is no marvel; but for Job thus to express himself is worthy our notice. Secondly, If God makes no reckoning of sin, why do little children die, and that sometimes with racking and grievous pain? Rom. v. 14, ‘Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.’ It is not a mere chance. Thirdly, If God makes little account of sin, why did the Lord Jesus endure those grievous agonies, so that his soul was heavy to death, Mat. xxvi. 38, and he sweated drops of blood? Was this a fable, or was this in vain? Or else sin is another thing than we usually take it to be. If God make so little reckoning of sin, then, in the fourth place, what is the reason that small sins have met with so great a judgment; angels made devils for an aspiring thought; Adam for eating an apple; Uzzah for touching the ark; Ananias and Sapphira for one lie both struck dead; Lot’s wife for looking back turned into a pillar of salt? No sin is little that is committed against the great God.

3. How just is God in appointing eternal punishment as the fruit and reward of sin! Consider, first, it is an eternal God and an eternal happiness that is despised by the sinner; and for what base things, and for what a vile price do men hazard the favour of God, and forfeit the hopes of the life to come? Heb. xii. 16, ‘Not a profane person, as Esau, who sold his birthright for a morsel of meat.’ And they that despise eternal blessedness, can you blame God if they suffer eternal misery? Secondly, So great is the force of sensual allurements, that nothing is fit to break our inclination to them but eternal punishment. The flesh is importunate, the satisfaction present and at hand; but the pleasure is but for a season, and the torment is eternal, that is the great check given to the lusts of the flesh. Chrysostom represents the case by the instance of a soldier upon his watch, very inclinable to sleep, but threatened with a lingering and slow torture if he gave way to it. Now be the man never so much inclinable to sleep, yet the fear of the torture keepeth him waking. So doth God deal with us,

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he counter balanceth present delights with eternal torments. Thirdly, It is a man's own choice; it is offered to us, whether upon this condition we will venture to sin: Prov. viii. 36, 'He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul; all that hate me love death.' Simply no man loveth death or chooseth evil; not directly, but interpretatively and consequentially; but they swallow the hook that will swallow the bait, especially after due warning to the contrary. God sets both before us, life and death, eternal life and eternal death; and none can blame God for giving us our choice.

4. If all sin be so odious, how much more a life of sin! Every sin is an act of rebellion against God, but the state of sin is a state of rebellion against God; therefore they that live in a course of worldliness, or sensuality, or enmity to godliness, and will not be reclaimed, are not only bare sinners, but impenitent sinners; there is obstinacy and hardness of heart added to their obliquity and defection from the rule of righteousness. Now to wander, and love to wander, and keep out of the way, must needs render us more culpable. Every act of sin hath so much sinfulness in it that it is an amazing thing to consider it; but when this is our course and trade of life, there are not only many multiplied acts, but the person is involved and entangled in the curse of the law, and all this sin shall at last be charged upon him to his just condemnation.

5. The necessity of entering into the gospel-covenant. Now this is done by repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

[1.] Repentance towards God. Now repentance is a breaking off from the former course of sin: Isa. i. 16, 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well.' The law leaveth a man sinful, guilty, disobedient, both by nature and by practice obnoxious to the wrath and curse of God. This course must be broken off if we will be saved. By the law is the knowledge of sin, both *quoad naturam peccati*, and *inhaerentiam subjecti*, Rom. iii. 20, both what is sin, and who is the sinner. It worketh wrath, Rom. iv. 15; since the fall it doth condemn us; it can never acquit us; it doth convince of sin, and bind us over to death. Now out of this wretched estate we should come betimes: Dan. iv. 27, 'Wherefore, king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee; break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.' He was a great oppressor, therefore Daniel preacheth righteousness and mercy to him. The true penitent sets himself against his former reigning sins, and alters the course of his former life. Sins of youth are dangerous, and may stick by us long after they are committed: Job xiii. 7, 'Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me possess the sins of my youth;' and Ps. xxv. 7, 'Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.' An old bruise may be felt a long time afterwards.

[2.] Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to take away sin. We need both his renewing and reconciling grace to procure our pardon and heal our natures. To procure our pardon; for sin is a greater evil than we can easily imagine, and therefore we should be more affected with the pardon which Christ purchased for us, and in the covenant doth apply to us, Ps. xxxii. 1, 2. The necessity

also of his renewing grace, or the gift of the sanctifying Spirit merited by Christ, Titus iii. 5, 6, that we may be prepared to obey God for the future, and to avoid so great an evil as sin is.

6. The necessity of persevering in the gospel-estate by new obedience, and a continual dependence on the grace of the Redeemer. First, New obedience: God's people cannot be too watchful against sin, against the least sin; for it is a breach of our Father's commandments, which the world maketh little reckoning of; yet if it be a sin, abhor it as an offence to God, a breach of his law. You must not consider how the world will look upon it, but how God will look upon it. Yet take heed of being scrupulous in small sins while you offend in greater, straining at a gnat when you swallow a camel. You must hate all sins, even the least; and let it not be a small thing to you to transgress the law of God. Secondly, Dependence upon the grace and mercy of our Redeemer; for we need it to the very last. The obedience of the best man upon earth is imperfect and defective:. Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' So Ps. xix. 12, 'Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret offences.' As God for Christ's sake took us at first with all our faults, so this gracious covenant and the mercy of our Redeemer is our best plea at last.

7. What reason we have to submit to the sharpest providences which God in his corrective discipline puts us under: Isa. xxvii. 9, 'By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged.' No evil can be as bad as sin; the least sin is worse than the greatest suffering. In suffering, the offence is done to us; in sin, to God. The evil of suffering is but for a moment, the evil of sin for ever. In suffering we lose some worldly comfort and happiness; but in sinning we lose or hazard the favour of God. Suffering pincheth the flesh, but sin staineth the soul; therefore the sinful estate is far worse than the afflicted. Now if by the one we can get rid of the other, we should not murmur, but be thankful rather; though the mortifying of sin cost us dear, yet the cost is well recompensed if sin thereby be subdued.

8. That a renewed heart should be affected, not only with the evil after sin, but with the evil in sin; for, to persuade God's children to a conformity to their Father, he urgeth this argument, that it is a breach of the law. The law hath penalties annexed, but he speaketh of it rather as a violation and breach. As we love the law because it is pure, so we should hate sin as it is contrary to this pure law. The heart is never thoroughly converted to God till holiness hath our love, and sin as sin our hatred. We are to regard the sanction, but first the precept, and have an awe of God's authority upon our hearts before we fear his vengeance; to hate it as it is an affront to God, and a contradiction to his holy will.

THE END OF VOL. XX.

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