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THE

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VOL. XVI.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

VOLUME XVI.

CONTAINING

SERMONS ON SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

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SERMONS

ON

SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

SERMONS

ON

SEVERAL TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Right Honourable Philip Lord Wharton, Baron of Wharton, in the County of Westmoreland.

My Lord,—It is not from the common custom and reasons of dedications of books to persons eminent for greatness and piety, viz., to recommend an obscure author, or to set off a mean work, that your lordship's name is inscribed to these sermons. The author of them, the late Reverend Dr Thomas Manton, was a star of the first magnitude in our horizon, and his works praise him in the gate; and though the ensuing sermons are far short of that politeness and exactness that they would have had if they had passed his own finishing hand, yet, such as they are, they plainly show their author. He was a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth; he was a faithful labourer in God's vineyard; and though his preaching was so constant, yet in all his sermons may be observed that solidness of judgment, exactness of method, fulness of matter, strength of argument, persuasive elegancy, together with such a serious vein of piety running through the whole, as few have come near him, but none have excelled him.

Your lordship had the opportunity of an intimate acquaintance with him, and the advantage of sitting under his ministry for many years, in whose light you greatly rejoiced, while God continued him with us; and when he was pleased to remove him by death, the afflictive sense you had of that great and public, as well as your own private loss, showed the high value and esteem you had of him. But your respects to him were not buried in his grave, but have been upon all occasions ever since shown to his surviving relations, who desire hereby to make their public acknowledgments of your lordship's signal favours to them. And I beg your lordship, upon this occasion, to give me leave to make the like acknowledgments of that support, countenance and respects I have had from your lordship for above sixteen years I have been your chaplain; since it was by the means of this author that I had the honour of being taken into your lordship's family.

My Lord, God hath set your lordship in a very high and honourable station, in which you have shined as a light upon a hill. And as he hath given you great opportunities, so he hath also given you a large heart to serve him; and this hath given you a large room in the hearts of those that fear God, and hath made your name to be truly great and honourable. How amiable a thing is it to see greatness and goodness in con-

junction! But alas! how rare are the instances of it in this degenerate age! How few great ones are there that countenance despised religion! But still, when it hath been under the greatest discouragements, your lordship hath publicly owned the ways of God, your house hath been always open to his faithful ministers, and your interest hath always been improved for promoting the interest of the gospel.

God hath lengthened out your life to a good old age; and that he may yet prolong your life for further service to his name and interest, is the prayer of all those who know your steady and unshaken adherence to the principles you have owned. It hath pleased the wise God to exercise you with various troubles in your declining years, in the death of many of your nearest relations, especially in the late wide breach he hath made in your family by taking away your religious lady, whose extraordinary endowments of mind, exemplary piety, and singular usefulness, made her justly dear to you, and admired by all that knew her. Such a trial as this would shock an ordinary and common patience and constancy of mind; yet God, by the supports of his grace, hath enabled you to bear it. This amazing stroke is a loud call from God to a recess from this world, now the less desirable, because so dear a part of yourself is removed out of it; and to a preparation for a better state, to which she is gone, and your lordship is hastening. How pleasant will the meeting be, when you shall again see each other, and know and love one another in a better manner than in this world you could! when all those frailties and infirmities, which give sometimes a little interruption to the comfort of the nearest relations, in this state of weakness and mortality, shall be fully done away!

In the meantime, that God would strengthen your lordship's faith and patience, that he would increase and multiply his blessings, temporal and spiritual, on your lordship, and all the branches of your noble family, and that he would reward all that labour of love that you have shown to his servant's name and interest, with an eternal weight of glory, is the daily prayer of, right honourable, your lordship's most obedient and faithful servant and chaplain,

WILLIAM TAYLOR.

February 6, 169⅞.

THE PREFACE.

CHRISTIAN READER,—It is a singular instance of the divine providence that he should call home the labourers to rest and reward, while yet their labours are employed in the vineyard. The Reverend Dr Manton now rests from his labours; the comfort and conscience of his works follow him, but the usefulness of them yet abides with us. This mantle dropped from our prophet when he was taken up, and we hope the good Spirit will convey by it a double portion of grace to us who are left behind.

Let it not affright thee, reader, to hear a dead saint speak, a dead minister preach; for it is the same spirit of life and power which once breathed from the pulpit that now breathes from the press; the same gospel which once dropped from his gracious lips flows now from his sanctified pen.

Although the serious perusal of these spiritual discourses will more effectually commend them to thy acceptance than the most elaborate recommendation of the prefacer, yet I must not betray the truth in concealing what the observing reader will soon discern; acquired learning humbly waiting upon divine revelation; great ministerial gifts managed by greater grace; warm affections guided by a solid judgment; fervent love to saints and sinners, kindled by a burning zeal for the interest of a Saviour; and a plain elegancy of style adapted to the meanest capacity, yet far above the contempt of the highest pretender.

I can sincerely aver that it is no part of the design of this epistle to conciliate a reputation to these writings from the acknowledged repute of their reverend author: divine truths need not those vulgar artifices; they carry their own credentials themselves: nor yet to greaten the author by magnifying his works. Grace kept him above those temptations when labouring at the footstool, and glory has advanced him beyond their reach, now triumphing at the throne. It was then his sufficient honour to be an earthen vessel filled with heavenly treasure, that he might fill and enrich others; and he is now engaged, to his greater satisfaction, in blessing that ever-blessed God who served his gracious counsels of him in the honourable though despised work of the ministry.

That which I have in my eye is to lead thee into the admiration of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'who, when he ascended up on high, gave gifts unto men, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry' To all he has given some, to none has he given all, but wisely divided

to every man severally as he will, 1 Cor. xii. 11, Where he has given least, they have a competency; where he has bestowed most, there is no redundancy: none shall have cause to boast of his ten talents; none reason to murmur that he has but one: but that which we must ever adore and admire, is, that where he has bestowed most liberally ministerial abilities, he has also bequeathed sanctifying grace to keep them humble, to secure them against pride, and preserve them in a meek dependence upon himself; that he should give them a due proportion of ballast to keep them steady, lest they should overset with bearing too great a sail; that he should make and keep them lowly in their own eyes, who are precious in the eyes of others, and gracious in his. And still further, to admire his power that has wrought such glorious things by weak instruments; saved them that believe by (what the world accounts) the foolishness of preaching; dismantled the strongholds of sin and Satan by the gentle breathing of the word and Spirit; subdued proud, broken and softened hard hearts, not by might, not by power, not by the secular sword, but by the soft whispers of grace, by melting, bleeding, tender affections.

I have yet a further reach in this address, both upon preachers and their hearers.

1. To the former I would humbly offer, that they would so preach, so pray, so labour, as they that are convinced they are all this while a-dying, that are passing every moment from the improving of to the accounting for their talents. Dying ministers preach living sermons. It deserves our observation that God, who honoured his servant Ezekiel with abundance of glorious revelations and visions, enough to have swelled a bubble till it broke, to have lifted up a poor worm above its measure, should yet always use to him that abasing term, son of man; warning him, and in him all his faithful ministers, to fulfil their ministry, to work while it is called to day, that 'whatever their hand findeth to do, they should do it with all their might, because there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither they are going,' Eccles. ix. 10. How joyfully will a minister receive the summons to his audit, when a good conscience shall afford him this testimony, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith!' 2 Tim. iv. 7. How edifying would their preaching be, could they carry these thoughts with them into the pulpit—The eye that now sees me shall see me no more; the ear that now hears me shall in a little while hear me no more; there must be a last time that I must speak in Christ's name to this people, and this may be that last time! Oh! with what fervent prayer, with what earnestness of affection, with what yearning bowels to perishing sinners, with what zeal for their conversion, would they engage in their Master's service, were their souls impregnated with lively quick apprehensions, that the graves are ready to receive them!

2. Nor would it less affect the hearers, and awake their conscience to improve the labours of their ministers, could they maintain upon their hearts a vigorous sense, that they are dying apace from their faithful ministers, and they from them; to repent, pray, believe, work out their salvation, make their calling and election sure, at another rate of diligence than what is usually found amongst them.

Reader, I will engross thee no longer to myself. Be no more my reader, but the author's: there thou wilt find much better entertainment. And yet, because I would not lose thy good company—

First, It must be a ravishing sight to behold divine grace in all its dimensions: grace working in the heart of God towards lost man, and grace working in the heart of renewed man towards God. Let us therefore fix our meditations upon Titus ii. 11–14, where we shall meet with—

1. The whole duty of man, viz., 'the grace of God teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.' A word suitable, seasonable to our present day, wherein the vigour of religion runs out into leaves; when empty notions, too high for this world, and too low for the next, have eaten out the life and power of practical godliness; when we dispute and quarrel ourselves out of our charity each to other, and our obediential love to our God; when the name of grace is so abused to gracelessness, and professors can believe anything and practise nothing. But grace would teach us other lessons; as, (1.) To live soberly and temperately to ourselves; not perverting the ends of divine bounty and indulgence to make provision for the flesh, to be food for devouring lusts, fuel for the fire of raging corruptions; but moderately to serve our bodies, that they may serve our souls, and both serve our God. (2.) To live righteously towards all men, giving to all their due in all relations, superiors, inferiors and equals; owing nothing to any man but love; a debt which we must always pay, and always owe; that 'we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things,' ver. 10. This is that which recommends religion to the sons of men; it is this 'well-doing, which puts to silence the ignorance of foolish men,' 1 Peter ii. 15. For men are not much concerned what we are to God, if we be unjust, false, treacherous, unfaithful, and over-reaching towards our neighbour. And, (3.) That we demean ourselves, in all the turnings of our conversation, holily towards God. Let our conscientious discharge of first-table duties be the test of our uprightness in those of the second; let our honesty and sincerity in those of the second evidence our holiness in those of the first.

[2.] Come we now to that pleasing view of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Where we find a twofold design of Christ in his death and sufferings—(1.) He had a noble design *for* us; he dealt with God, gave himself for us to him. (2.) He had a design *upon* us too, that he might purify us to himself. He redeems us from this present world, as well as from wrath to come, Gal. i. 4. Redeems us from ourselves, as well as from sin and Satan; takes us not only out of the hands of the law and justice, but out of our own; 'that they who live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again,' 2 Cor. v. 15.

Secondly, Because faith is a grace that has always the labouring oar, a grace that bears the heat and burden of the day, that has the world and the evil one to overcome; and that it may be victorious over those, must first learn to lay hold on God's own strength, and over-

come him too. And because this grace unites us to Christ, and then draws virtue from Christ to maintain that union, and support the spiritual life; and because it ventures far, flies high, and runs great risk, and has therefore great need of good security, let us again read our author's glorious discourses upon 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.' A word from a God that cannot lie is a sufficient security for faith to rest upon. Upon this single security we might safely venture the weight of all our souls, the stress of all our concerns. It is upon this alone the apostle, Titus i. 1, 2, encourages us to lay 'the hope of eternal life,' even upon the promise of him that cannot lie. But our gracious God, knowing the weakness of our faith, the fears and jealousies of guilty souls, has added his oath to his word, that from such double security we might have strong consolation. O happy souls, for whose sakes God will vouchsafe to swear! O miserable sinners, who will not give credence to a swearing God! a God that swears by himself, because he has no greater thing to swear by. Had he sworn by the heavens and earth, they shall perish, and with them the security had perished; but he swears by himself, 'As I live, saith the Lord!' and faith, having got this ground to place its engine upon, is able to overturn the world. What has it not been able to suffer, when divine truth is its warrant? What has it not been able to do when the same truth is its security? It has 'subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, grew strong out of weakness, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of aliens,' Heb. xi. 33, 34. I will add, it has routed legions of devils, triumphed over death, the grave and hell, challenged the whole world to come in, and 'lay anything to the charge of God's elect;' for it has a God to justify the believing sinner; a Christ that died for the sinner once, and 'lives for ever at the right hand of God, to make intercession for him,' Rom. viii. 33, 34. Now then, let faith know its security. The oath of man, when yet every man is a liar, puts an end to all controversies amongst men. Let the oath of God, who can no more lie than he can die, put an end to our slavish fears, perplexing doubts, all our suspicions of God and his word; and let the soul return to its rest, for God has dealt graciously with it.

But I have forgot myself, and wronged thee too, Christian reader, whilst we wander, and lose ourselves in these pleasing anticipations. For more abundant satisfaction in these and many important truths, I refer thee to the following discourses; only have patience to be advertised of two or three smaller matters—

1. Rest fully assured that, though these pieces are posthumous births, they are not spurious, but the legitimate and genuine offspring of the same father with those that were first-born. They carry the lineaments, the signature, the image of their elder brother, and have been compared line by line, word by word, with the author's manuscripts, by an unquestionable voucher.

2. Let it not offend thee that the same truths, and perhaps in the same words, are repeated, which frequently happens in the course of

any man's ministry, when the same subject has been formerly handled; and yet care has been taken, as much as could possibly be, to prevent all nauseousness; yet sometimes it could not be done, without disjointing and mangling the sermons.

3. Be so just as not to impute the crimes of the printer to the author or publisher, which yet are such as an ordinary charity may pardon or a small ingenuity correct. The rest is only to commit thee, reader, and these discourses, to the blessing of our gracious God, with whom remember thy unworthy servant in the service of the gospel,

VIN. ALSOP.

January 17, 169⅔.

A SERMON PREACHED ON MATTHEW XXII. 11–13.

And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not a wedding-garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? and he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.—MAT. xxii. 11–13.

THESE words are the conclusion of a parable, wherein the ample and rich provision which God hath made for poor sinners in the gospel is compared to a feast; not an ordinary feast, but a marriage feast; not an ordinary marriage, but the marriage of the king's son. In the structure of the parable there is a twofold invitation—the former of the Jews, the latter of the gentiles. In that paragraph that concerns the Jews, observe three things—the invitation itself, the success, and the issue.

1. The invitation itself is in vers. 3, 4, 'And he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage.' There is a double call—the first call, ver. 3; the second call, ver. 4. God will take not the first repulse, but will try again before he will quit a people. He punisheth not the contempt of his grace suddenly, but sendeth once more to see if men will repent, and be sorry for their former negligence.

More particularly, the first call was by the prophets foretelling the coming of Christ into the world. The second was by the apostles representing him as already come. In the second call, more earnest words are used, 'I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, all things are ready: come to the marriage.' God omitteth nothing that belongeth to the salvation of his people. He is ready to bless us, his Son to receive us, his Spirit to help us. All things are

ready, if we are ready; we need but come and take what God hath provided for us.

2. The success of this invitation or offer of grace. Some slighted it, others rejected it with malice. Some slighted it: ver. 5, *οἱ δὲ ἀμελήσαντες*, 'They made light of it, and went their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.' They had other business to mind than come to a marriage feast. In Luke it is said, 'They made excuse,' Luke xiv. 18, 19. But excusing is refusing. The sinner's plea is outwardly and formally, *non vacat;* but the very intrinsic reason and reality is, *non placet.* They care not for these things, being biassed and prepossessed with other affections. Others rejected it with malice: ver. 6, 'And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.' This is the unworthy return which the unthankful world maketh to God for the tenders of gospel grace; they do not only refuse his offers, but persecute his servants, that have no other design upon them but the promoting of their salvation.

3. The issue: ver. 7, 'When the king heard thereof, he was wroth, and sent forth his servants, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.' So did God deal with the Jews; he sent an army of Romans against them, and destroyed them utterly. The Romans are called his army, for all creatures are at God's command. The pagans may be *flagellum Dei*, the rod and scourge whereby God will punish his people. Contempt of the gospel joined with persecution of the preachers of it bringeth utter ruin and devastation.

The next part of the parable is God's inviting other guests, or his calling of the gentiles, vers. 9, 10. There is the charge to invite, and the success.

1. The charge to invite: 'Go into the highways, and as many as you shall find, bid to the marriage.' The Jews are represented as living in a community and city society, because of their visible church relation to God; but gentiles as dispersed up and down in lanes and highways; and upon the Jews' refusal, they are called to the feast: 'Go preach the gospel to every creature.'

2. The servants' obedience, and their success: 'So these servants went out into the highways, and gathered together as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests.' Observe, a people may want God, but God cannot want a people to serve him. Again, all that give their names to Christ are not found. Some coming to the gospel in truth, others entering into the visible church in hypocrisy: for there is a mixture of good and bad. So sometimes the church is full, but heaven never the fuller; for though they receive the gospel, they do not receive it in full power and efficacy.

3. You have the carriage of the king towards the hypocritical guests: 'And when the king came to see his guests,' &c.

In the words observe three things—(1.) The discovery, ver. 11; (2.) The expostulation, ver. 12; (3.) The doom and sentence, ver. 13.

1. The discovery: ver. 11, 'And when the king came to see the guests, he saw there a man that had not on a wedding-garment.' Christ is represented under the notion of a king, to show that when God treateth us most familiarly and socially, yet still he retaineth his

sovereignty, and will show the magnificence of a king, entertaining his subjects of all sorts, reduced now to his obedience; and also keeps up the state and majesty of a king, will be honoured by all those that come to partake of his feast. The king cometh to see the guests; that is, to discern whether they come to his feast in such manner as is required. All that receive the gospel must look to have their sincerity tried, for the king will visit and observe the guests. In this view and observation he saw there a man that had not on a wedding garment: among all the guests, there seemeth but one found out. You must not thence conclude that the unsound and insincere professors of the gospel are but few. No; this is not spoken for that intent. This one impersonateth and representeth many; for it is said, ver. 14, 'That many are called, but few are chosen.' But the meaning is, that in the throng and multitude of converts, if there were but one that is insincere, God can espy him and find him out. The fault of the person discovered is, that he had not ἔνδυμα γάμου, a better sort of array than those that were used or worn upon ordinary occasions. While they were in the lanes and highways, ordinary apparel would serve the turn; but if they will come to the feast, the marriage feast of the king's son, they must have suitable array. It is a disgrace to a wedding feast not to come with a wedding garment; to take the christian profession, and continue in their pagan sins and practices. Repentance and reformation of life is the new garment of the soul; that only will become the gospel feast.

2. The expostulation: ver. 12, 'He saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? and the man was speechless;' ἑταῖρε: Fellow, how camest thou? God loveth to make the sinner convinced, and condemned in his own conscience, 'that he may be clear when he judgeth, and justified in all his proceedings with him,' Ps. li. 4. The effect of this expostulation is that the man was speechless; he had nothing to say; saw it was unreasonable to come without it. They that embrace the gospel, and live in an unmortified and impenitent manner, can have nothing to plead by way of excuse. This man was as confident before, and as bold as the other guests, but now is abashed, hath nothing to say, it being so necessary and reasonable to come to a wedding feast with a wedding garment.

3. The doom and sentence: ver. 13, 'Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness; where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Mark, he is not only not permitted to taste of the feast, or remain among the guests, but falleth under a terrible sentence of the king and judge, which will certainly be executed upon him, and he for ever must remain in a most dismal and doleful condition. No vengeance so sore as that of the gospel. Besides the forfeiture of our hopes and the possibility of our recovery, there is that which the scripture calleth a 'sorer punishment,' Heb. x. 29. Conscience in hell will have a special kind of accusing and self-tormenting in our reflecting on the refusal of the remedy; and Christ will pronounce a heavier doom if we obey not the gospel, to which we profess to submit.

Doct. That it is dangerous to come to God's feast without a wedding garment.

First, I shall explain—(1.) What is God's feast; (2.) What is coming to this feast; (3.) What is the wedding garment.

Secondly. I shall confirm it, and show why it is so dangerous.

1. What is God's feast? It is usual in scripture to set forth the grace of the gospel by the notion of a feast. These blessed privileges of remission of sins and eternal life, as dispensed by Christ, are fitly called so. See some places where those celestial dainties whereby God feedeth his people in the word and sacraments are called so: Isa. xxv. 6, 'And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.' The entertainer is the Lord of hosts; the place is this mountain, alluding to Mount Sion, a figure of the church; the guests are all people, gentiles as well as Jews, Rev. vii. 9; the provision for meat are fat things, full of marrow, as the fatted calf was brought for the entertaining of the returning prodigal, Luke xv. 23; for drink, wines not racked, but well refined on the lees, which are usually most generous and sprightly; by all which is set forth those choice soul-refreshings which are the fruits of Christ's purchase, and dispensed in the word and sacraments to those who will come and take them. So Ps. xxxvi. 8, 'They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures.' They are provided for out of an unexhausted magazine, and continually supplied with a fluent stream of divine plenty. And Prov. ix. 2, 'Wisdom hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table;' that is, in the gospel all kinds of comforts and spiritual gifts and graces are ready prepared, and offered freely to us. God hath made excellent provision for the entertainment of his own family. So here it is compared to a marriage feast of a king's son, wherein all kind of pomp and glory useth to be shown. This feast serveth for two uses—(1.) The honour of God; (2.) The comfort and refreshment of sinful man.

[1.] For the honour of God, to show his magnificence and royalty, and the glory of his exceeding great grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. For thus we find feasts made by great kings and potentates; as Esther, chap. i. 3, 4, 'He made a feast unto all his princes and his servants, to show them the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty.' And so Belshazzar made a feast to a thousand of his lords, Dan. v. 1. And so the great God, to show the riches of his glorious grace, hath made a feast of fat things, and wines well refined upon the lees; the choicest blessings. Love is gone to the utmost. Beyond God there is nothing. God reconciled and God enjoyed are the chiefest blessings we can enjoy.

[2.] For the comfort and refreshment of sinful man. When man was banished out of paradise, he had no tree of life by which he might be refreshed, and would perish for need and hunger but that God had mercy on him and prepared a banquet, a rich banquet of grace. His fatlings are killed, his wines are mingled; the crucified body of Christ, and his blood shed for the expiation of sins and procuring eternal life; this is meat indeed, and drink indeed. There is in it all that we can expect in a feast.

(1.) Ample satisfaction to every soul that is spiritually hungry and thirsty: Ps. xxxvi. 8, 'They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and Ps. xxii. 26, 'The meek shall eat, and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your hearts shall live for ever.' The poor humble christian shall be satisfied with this spiritual food, and feel the vital effects of it. It shall be to him an eucharist indeed: Ps. lxv. 4, 'They shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house.' There is no defect or want in God's feast. Here is remission of sins to allay our legal fears, eternal life to satisfy our desires of happiness. But many prefer husks before the fatted calf, swinish pleasures before these chaste delights, one morsel of meat before the birthright. These besot the heart for a while, but they cannot satisfy it.

(2) Joy, pleasure, and delight. What will cheer the heart and conscience, if reconciliation with God, and the favour of God, and the fruition of God will not cheer us? The pardon of sin is the true reviving thing: Mat. ix. 2, 'Be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee.' And so also the hopes of glory: Rom. v. 1, 2, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' So that here is heavenly joy, and pleasure unspeakable and full of glory: Isa. lv. 2, 'Let your soul delight itself in fatness;' and Ps. lxiii. 5, 'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.' Did we once drink of this wine and taste of this fatness, how should we walk before the Lord with joy and cheerfulness all our days!

(3.) God useth us as friends. It is a great honour put upon us that we are invited to this wedding, that we may sit down at his table; this is familiar fellowship. Haman boasted, Esther v. 12, 'The queen did let no man come into the banquet but myself; and to-morrow I am invited also with the king.' But what an honour is it to sit down at the feast of the King of kings! It is a token of our reconciliation with him; for eating together is an act of friendship. Under the law, they were to bring their peace-offerings on the top of their burnt-offerings, and having offered them to the Lord, they were to eat of their part cheerfully among their friends; for then they had, as it were, one dish sent them from God's table. This is the true notion of the Lord's supper; it is a feast upon a sacrifice: Ps. l. 5, 'Gather my saints together, which make a covenant with me by sacrifice.'

2. What is coming to this feast? It is to profess ourselves christians, and using the ordinances which belong thereunto. When you submit to be baptized, hear the word, and frequent the sacraments, you come to the feast of God. Every day is a festival with a christian; for the whole gospel-dispensation is a continual feast. Only some come to the feast—(1.) Ready and spiritually, they have constant cause of rejoicing: 1 Cor. v. 7, 8, 'Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened; for Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.' (2.) Others outwardly profess

faith in Christ, and external obedience to him, but do not thoroughly and fully walk according to Christ's rules; would be judged christians, but retain nothing of the life and power of christianity, are not disciples indeed, John viii. 31. And it is said, John ii. 23, 24, 'Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did; but Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.' Some were so far affected with Christ's miracles as they did profess faith in him, yet Christ would not trust them, because he knoweth the hidden secrets of the heart; that is, not admit them into familiar converse, knowing the temper of their faith.

3. What is the wedding garment? To find out this, let me tell you—(1.) That it is usual in scripture to set forth sin by nakedness, and grace by a garment. That one place which we have in Rev. iii. 17, 18, showeth both: 'Thou art poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked; therefore I counsel thee to buy of me raiment that thou mayest be clothed.' Graces are a beautiful ornament to the soul, as garments are to the body; therefore we are said 'to put on the new man, which is created in holiness and righteousness,' Eph. iv. 24. And again, to 'put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering,' Col. iii. 12. (2.) It is such a garment as becometh the solemnit yof the marriage feast of the king's son. Christ's gospel feast is a royal feast and a spiritual feast, becoming the nature of God's kingdom; therefore the ἔνδυμα γάμου, wedding garment, is that new array which becometh such a solemnity. As it is a royal feast, it must be something more than ordinary excellency that is required of us at a spiritual feast—a spiritual excellency. Therefore the wedding garment is holiness, habitual and actual, which is the glory of God and the beauty of God and his people. Habitual holiness: Rev. xix. 8, 'And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.' Δικαιώματα ἁγίων are those graces which constitute us as saints; as faith, love, hope, meekness, sobriety, purity. And then actual holiness is an holy conversation: Phil. i. 27, 'Only let your conversation be such as becometh the gospel;' Eph. iv. 1, 'Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.' We put on the wedding garment to honour the marriage; therefore those that come to the wedding feast without a wedding garment, who take up a bare profession of the gospel without newness of heart and life, which may be an honour and ornament to it, are a dishonour and disgrace rather to it.

I must now represent the danger of entering upon the profession of the gospel, or coming to this feast without such a wedding garment; and that I shall do in this method—(1.) To show the odiousness of the sin; (2.) The certainty of discovery; (3.) The dreadfulness of the doom and punishment.

First, The odiousness of the sin, in these considerations—

1. Your profession is partial. There is a twofold profession—in word, and deed. In word, when we own Christ, in whom we have believed; in deed, when we walk answerably.

[1.] In word the profession is necessary: Rom. x. 9, 10, 'If thou

shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.' There was much weight laid in those days upon confession with the mouth, or a visible owning of the faith and doctrine of Christ. It was then a free spontaneous thing, without compulsion of outward power; yea, forbidden by those powers; yea, it exposed them to great difficulties and hardships. They ran the hazard of all by submitting to this hated name and profession; and yet this was not enough to submit to the verbal profession of christianity; nay, the visible and real acting of it in the assemblies of christians in prayers, praises, hearing, sacraments, and joining in all the ordinances of the church, was not enough unless there were a life answerable.

[2.] In deed, by walking suitably to the institutions of christianity; and so a christian's life is a confession or hymn to God; for our Lord telleth us, Mat. vii. 21–23, '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, which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess to them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' Not every one that professeth Christ to be his Lord shall be saved. No; the obedience of Christ's doctrine must be taken into the profession, or else it will not be accepted. We must believe in the Son of God, and show forth our faith by an holy conversation and godliness, or else we shall be disclaimed, or not approved for his true disciples. Let an unrenewed wretch preach or pray or cast out devils, yet he is a worker of iniquity. In Luke xiii. 26, it is said, 'We have eaten and drunken in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.' Is not this coming to the gospel feast, to eat and drink in his presence, to be familiar with Christ, to come to him in gospel ordinances? But it is to come without a wedding garment, unless the heart and life be changed. But what if this profession be sealed by sufferings? 1 Cor. xiii. 3, 'Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' Swine's blood was not to be offered to the Lord; nor would a scabby sacrifice be accepted for a burnt-offering. God requireth holiness of life, as well as zeal in suffering for Christ.

2. One part of the profession condemneth the other. If we own a God, a Christ, and a life to come, and do not live answerably in all holy conversation and godliness, our belief condemneth our practice; and if we allow ourselves in those things which we condemn, our judgment is the more just; so that they profess themselves to be christians only for self-condemnation, to be witnesses against themselves; their faith condemneth their practice. They believe as christians, yet live as pagans; as the apostle saith, Titus i. 16, 'Professing to know God, but in their works they deny him.' So while they own Christ they do but mock him. They profess to honour Christ by coming to his feast, but they dishonour him and affront him while they come in their old or ordinary apparel; as it is an high contempt and

scorn of a great man to pretend to honour him by our attendance, but in such an indecent and slovenly manner that our presence is a disgrace to him. Such a contempt of Christ it is while we entitle ourselves christians, and live in such ways as Christ doth condemn: Luke vi. 46, 'And why call you me lord, and do not the things that I say?' *Cui res nomini subjecta negatur.* Surely they that called him king of the Jews intended it for no honour to him, while they spit upon him and buffeted him. *Dicimur christiani in opprobrium.* The ungodly lives of christians are a reproach to christianity. You should adorn, but you disgrace the gospel, Titus ii. 10. Religion, as visibly acted and expressed by you, should be found a beautiful thing. Therefore, while you usurp the name of christians, and join in conjunction with the visible church of Christ without a new heart and life, one part of your profession condemneth the other.

3. One part of your profession is abused to corrupt and destroy the other, and the christian name is only taken on to patronise unchristian practices: Jude 4, 'Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.' They come to the gospel feast that they may the more securely live in their sins, and so make Christ himself the minister of sin, Gal. ii. 17; which is a thought to be abhorred by all christians. The heathens took notice of this. Celsus said, That the christian religion was a sanctuary for flagitious persons. Origen answereth him, That it was not a sanctuary to shelter them, but an hospital to cure them. In the notion of the text, 'Go into the highways; bid them to the marriage; but yet they must come with a wedding garment, in a decent manner. Therefore they live loosely, either pervert the gospel, or at least do not admit the force of it to prevail upon their hearts: 2 Tim. iii. 5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.' If you do really believe salvation by Christ, temptations would be of no force; you would reject the baits of sin with abhorrence and detestation. You could not quiet your consciences with a common, careless course of life; but you pervert its use or deny its force.

Secondly, The certainty of discovery.

1. When you come as guests to the marriage feast, your business lieth not with men but with God. The king cometh to see the guests; you may have a garment to cover you before men, but not before God. But when the Lord looketh to the guests, he is the party with whom you have to do. How will you do to escape his eye and search? Gal. vi. 7, 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked.' You may deceive men, stop the mouths of men, colour your sin, veil and blind their eyes, and, for aught men can discover, may enjoy the pleasure and profit of your sins and yet escape the shame and imputation of them. Men may hold you innocent, know not how to fasten guilt upon you; but the all-seeing eye of God will find you out: you cannot escape his accurate search. There is no casting a mist before the eyes of God: Heb. iv. 13, 'All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.' The prophets in the light of God could discern cheats; certainly God himself much more: 2 Kings v. 26, 'Went not my heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee,' said Elisha to Gehazi. So the

blind prophet could spy out Jereboam's wife under her disguise: 1 Kings xiv. 6, 'Why feignest thou thyself to be another? I am sent unto thee with heavy tidings.' Now, when God seeth things in his own light, surely he will pull the devil out of Samuel's mantle, the heathen out of the christian disguise. The workers of iniquity cannot hide themselves from him: Job xxxiv. 22, 'There is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.'

2. God loveth to uncase hypocrites: Prov. xxvi. 26, 'His wickedness shall be showed before the whole congregation.' His being and attributes are more questioned by them than others, for atheism lieth at the bottom of hypocrites. Tush! he cannot see: Ps. xciv. 7, 'They say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.' They are such a generation of men as crowd into his house out of custom, or to make his service lacquey upon their base ends. God suffereth more by them than by others. They put him off with an outside, as if he did like well enough of their superficial duties; and they dishonour and disgrace religion; therefore God will uncase them, and pull off their disguise, and set them forth in their own appearance. Though but one in the throng, he shall not escape. When Achan had stolen the wedge of gold, God taketh the tribe, the family, the person, Josh. xvii. 17, 18. His anger is more kindled against them because they profess such a nearness to him, and to be that and do that which it never came into their hearts to be and do.

3. Hypocrisy is hateful to God in anything, but especially in coming to the gospel feast; for that is a kind of daring of God, or a putting it to the trial whether he will discover you or no. Ananias and Sapphira's sin is called a lying to the Holy Ghost, Acts v. 3. Why a lie to the Holy Ghost? Because of his presiding in church affairs. All acts of grace are of his operation. And because they pretended to do it by his motions. And afterwards it is said in the 9th verse, 'And how is it that you have agreed to tempt the Holy Ghost?' Namely, by their hypocrisy and dissimulation; putting it to the trial whether he would discover them in their sin, yea or no. They had endeavoured as much as in them lay to deceive the Spirit by keeping back a part of the price, and by that practice would put it to the trial whether the Holy Ghost could find out the cheat and fallacy. So when you obey the call and invitation, and solemnly dedicate yourselves to Christ, that you may partake of his heavenly dainties. Now if all this should be found a lie, surely it will be nothing for your comfort for the present; and for your eternal confusion hereafter.

4. There are certain times when God cometh in a more especial manner to discover those that are unsound in the profession of the gospel. God doth always see their hearts, but there are certain seasons when they shall know that he seeth them.

[1.] By trying judgments. When the tree is shaken the rotten apples fall. Sometimes God cometh to search for hypocrites, to produce and bring them forth in order to discovery or punishment; as when Christ hath his fan in his hand, and cometh thoroughly to purge

his floor, Mat. iii. 12. So Zeph. i. 12, 'I will search Jerusalem with candles;' look into every corner; it is spoken after the manner of man. We light a candle when we would look for anything exactly in the dark; as Luke xv. 8, 'What woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?'

[2.] Sometimes by offences, divisions, scandals, errors: Mat. xviii. 7, 'Woe to the world because of offences, for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh;' 1 Cor. xi. 19, 'For there must be also heresies among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest.' How will light chaff then be discovered from solid grain!

[3.] At death; a man should always be provided for that hour: 2 Cor. v. 3, 'If so be we shall not be found naked.' We carry nothing out of the world but a winding sheet and a wedding garment—the one for the soul, the other for the body. Then men see what a formal profession they have made in their horrors and anguish; when others have comfort in their sincerity: Isa. xxxviii. 3, '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.'

[4.] In the day of judgment. When all the world is arraigned before Christ, and he distinguisheth the sheep from the goats, then will he expostulate with you, Where is your wedding garment? You believed the gospel, but did you obey the gospel? 2 Thes. i. 8, 'He shall come in flaming fire to render vengeance unto all them that know not God, and obey not the gospel.' It standeth us much upon to have confidence in that day, that you may show your faces in the great congregation. Christ will not say to the honourable person, Where are the ensigns of thine honour? to the rich man, Where are thy full barns or bags? to the knowing man, Where are thy parts and expressions? but to all, Where is your wedding garment? When others are disclaimed, he will own them that have not defiled their garments: 'They shall walk with him in white, for they are worthy,' Rev. iii. 3. It will be comfortable then to be found clothed with the garments of grace and salvation.

Thirdly, The doom and punishment.

1. They are not permitted to taste of the feast. God denieth them grace, and so they have but an empty ordinance. Surely this is a great evil. Cain was sensible of this, and afflicted with it; his countenance fell when God testified not of his gifts, Gen. iv. 4, 5. It is threatened, Hosea, v. 6, 'They shall go with their flocks and herds to seek the Lord, but shall not find him; for he hath withdrawn himself from them.' They come to external duties, but God is not found in them: 1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 'When Saul inquired of the Lord, he answered him not.' They have the shell of the gospel, but not the kernel. God will make them see they have no interest in him.

2. They incur eternal wrath, the portion of hypocrites: Mat. xxiv. 51, 'And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with hypocrites.' There is an eternal disappointment. When others go from feast to feast, from the gospel to heaven, the earthly banquet

maketh way for the heavenly; they are excluded the feast, and cast into the dungeon.

Use. To persuade us to get this wedding garment.

1. Then you are welcome and acceptable to God; you are not intruders, but welcome guests; not only invited, but nobly entertained: Ps. xlv. 14, 'She shall be brought to the king in raiment of needle-work; the virgins, her companions, shall be brought with her.' When the church and all the members thereof shine in all the graces of holiness, purity, humility, charity, then they are acceptably brought to God; the whole church, particular congregations, particular saints, all welcome to God; they shall live with him in eternal blessedness.

2. Then you may be bold, and will not be dashed out of countenance: Isa. lxi. 10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.'

3. This showeth you are real friends to the bridegroom; that you mean to honour him with such a conversation as floweth from faith and love to Christ, Gal. v. 6, 2 Thes. i. 10, 11. Faith and love evidencing itself in the fruits of holiness are the true glory of religion; the badge and cognisance of the Lord Jesus, *tessura hospitalis;* not riches, not honours, not parts, not bare profession. Alas! without this we are but as tinkling cymbals; of the faction of christians, rather than of the religion of christians. The question will not be whether you are of this or that party—Presbyterian, Independent, Episcopal—but whether we are really sanctified and do adorn the gospel, and walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called, and do so know and love God in Christ as to live to him. Oh! then look to this.

4. Nothing doth more concern you than that you should not be christians in vain, and profess Christ to your loss. Haman boasted that he was invited to the queen's feast, but from that feast was he taken away to execution; so many pride themselves with the name of christians, and some external duties of christianity, when their danger is the greater because they get so little by their christianity. What if all your prayers and preaching should be in vain, and frequenting holy duties in vain? 'Have you suffered so many things in vain?' saith the apostle, Gal. iii. 4. It is so when you are not changed, but remain still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. Dead faith that is not effectual to godliness, will not save you, James ii. 20. You must be exact, complete christians, if any at all.

What remaineth, then, but that we look after the wedding garment.

Means—

1. Determine what it is. It is that grace which inclineth us to order our whole conversation according to God's will, and for his glory. There are doctrinals in religion, and practicals: now it is not enough to be sound in the faith, but there must be a hearty love to Christ, and

a sober, righteous, and godly life, Titus ii. 12. There are privileges in religion, and duties. Now it is not enough to trust in Christ for privileges, but we must frame our hearts to the duties also: Ps. cxix. 166, 'I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.' We must believe in Christ to bring us to everlasting glory, and must also love God, and live in obedience to him. Heaven must be our hope, and scope, and aim. Love to God is the very constitution, bent, and inclination of our hearts, and thankful obedience the business of our lives. There are externals in religion, and internals. Now to attend upon external duties, and not to look to the internal frame and change of the heart, is not enough. But a holy conversation coming out of a renewed heart, is this wedding garment required of us: Mat. xii. 34, 'A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things.' There are negatives in religion, and positives. Not an adulterer, not an extortioner, this would suit with the light of nature, which remaineth now to guide us in duties of the lower hemisphere, in our commerce with men, but gives us little help in the worship of God. And therefore to do no harm is too low and too little to prove you to be christians. If men be civil and unblamable in their lives, yet destitute of the Spirit of God and his grace, it is not becoming the gospel, Rom. viii. 4. Again, there is a consent given and performed. Where feeble resolutions are not seconded with answerable endeavours, it produceth little effect: Acts xi. 23, 'He exhorteth them to cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart.' Hopeful purposes must be verified and made good in the christian life.

2. Get this wedding garment out of the king's wardrobe; as Esther: chap. xxix., 'Such things as belonged to her and her maids were given her out of the king's house;' and Isa. lxi. 10, 'He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation.' God delights in the graces of his own Spirit; no man is born clothed; we have it from God, therefore go to him for it.

3. Wear your wedding garment. Not only get grace, but exercise it in all duties towards God and man: Rev. xvi. 15, 'Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.'

4. Keep your garments undefiled and unspotted from the world: Rev. iii. 4, 'Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.' Your sins are a great dishonour to Christ, because you are nearer to him, as well as a shame to yourselves, because you profess better.

5. Wash your garments often in the blood of the Lamb: Rev. vii. 14, 'And have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' The garments of the best need washing, and nothing will make them white but the blood of the Lamb. It is his merit and satisfaction hath procured this cleansing grace for us.

A FAST SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT.

Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.—AMOS iv. 12.

THE first word in this scripture is illative, and directeth our thoughts to the context. Therefore why? Three things are especially charged upon them in this chapter.

1. The first is oppression in their great ones: 'Hear this, ye kine of Bashan, which are in the mountains of Samaria, which oppress the poor, and crush the needy, which say to their masters, Come let us drink.' This concerneth the governor and rulers, as his former expostulations were directed to the body of the people. And he calleth them 'kine of Bashan.' Amos the herdsman doth not bespeak them in courtly language, with soft and silken words, but in terms proper to his own function and ancient calling. He giveth them not the title of lords, the style of Your Honour and Excellency; he was not skilled in this kind of language, neither would it consist with the freedom and duty of his office. God's messengers may use a liberty and freedom in slighting sinful greatness. 'Ye kine of Bashan;' men of brutish manners deserve no better compellation. They were impudent, wanton, refractory, impatient of the yoke, therefore he calleth them kine, with the addition of Bashan, which was a fertile hill full of rich pastures, and so apt to fatten cattle. Bulls of Bashan we read of elsewhere, *βόες εὔτροφοι*, so Symmachus, kine full fed. But yet more plainly, lest they should lie hid in the metaphor, 'that are in the mountain of Samaria'—the metropolis and royal city of Israel, as noting the chief of the nation. These are the persons. What is their crime? 'They oppress the poor, and crush the needy;' that is, by burdensome levies and violent extortions to maintain their own greatness and luxury. When men make their lust their law, their will their reason, their belly their god, they are more like cows than men; 'Which say to their masters, Come, and let us drink.' This, I suppose, is spoken to their clients and dependants that encourage them to poll the people to feed their riot and luxury. Now God threateneth that he would make these men like cattle out of their fat pastures, and to leave all their wealth, houses, and stately palaces behind. Well then,

oppression in great persons accompanied with luxury, is a sure forerunner of judgment. When men like ravenous harpies extort from the poor that they may minister to their lusts, and glut themselves and their dependants with the spoils of the poor; and when others languish with want, they are secure, and drunk with worldly wealth and pleasures, God will go an-angling and a-hunting. Take these fishes out of the pond, and drive these beasts out of the pastures: he is the world's guardian, and the great one's judge, higher than the highest; they shall no longer sport in their fish-ponds and fat pastures.

2. The next sin is corruption in worship: ver. 4, 5, 'Come to Bethel and transgress in Gilgal; multiply transgressions, and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years. Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord.' This whole place must be understood as a sarcasm, as appeareth by that clause, 'Go transgress at Gilgal.' The Lord doth not allow sin, much less command it The meaning is, since you love to fill up the measure of your iniquities, go do so, and see what will come of it. At Bethel there was one of Jeroboam's calves, therefore called Bethaven, the house of iniquity, instead of Bethel, the house of God. The pretence was they thought it was better to worship there than at Jerusalem, because there he appeared to Jacob. Gilgal was another place of idolatry: Hosea ix. 15, 'Their wickedness is in Gilgal; for there I hated them, for the wickedness of their doings,' &c. There Joshua renewed the covenant. It was the chief seat of the idolatry of the ten tribes. They were punctual in observing all the ordinances of the temple, and rites of God's instituted worship; as daily sacrifice, God instituted it: Num. xxviii. 4, 'The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb in the evening.' Daily we are to make use of Christ. The tithing, after three years, was instituted: Deut. xiv. 28, 'At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase,' &c. For the peace-offerings, they were to be offered with leavened bread, Lev. vii. 13. In all these formalities they were very precise. Where was the fault then? they had changed the place instituted from Jerusalem to Bethel and Gilgal; they had changed the priesthood from the sons of Levi to the basest and vilest of the people; and they had set up their calves as relative objects of worship. Well then, from the whole we learn that it is a very provoking sin when men set up new ways of worship out of their own brain without an express rule from the word. As these, though they kept the substance of worship, erected another temple, another altar, and another priesthood. Here was altar against altar, and threshold against threshold; therefore God is angry, and giveth them up to do what they would: Go take your swing and course, and go on, and see what will come of it. A nation is not only to look to oppression, but corruption of worship, if they would provide for their own welfare.

3. The next sin is incorrigibleness under judgments. Here the Lord taketh up a long plea against them, from the 6th to the end of the 11th verse. Several judgments are mentioned, as famine, pestilence, drought, blasting, mildew, the fury of war, great fires kindled in

their cities; and still this cometh like a chime at the end of every peal, 'yet ye have not returned unto me, saith the Lord.' To take notice of every expression would spend too much time. From the whole let me note a few things.

[1.] That God hath various judgments wherewith to exercise a sinful land and nation. We have divers lusts, and God hath divers judgments. He cannot want instruments of vengeance, for his artillery is never spent, nor our wickedness. If it be our custom to sin, it is his custom to punish.

[2.] Judgments are not removed, but changed, till we return to the Lord. Every kind of physic doth not work on all humours, therefore God changeth his dispensation. Rich men may wear out a famine, but the pestilence maketh no distinction, and in a war they smart most; as an oak laden with boughs is but fit for lopping.

[3.] The Lord keepeth a catalogue of his dispensations. His book of remembrance standeth charged with all the methods of grace used for the reclaiming of a people: Isa. xi. 11, 'I will arise a second time to visit Israel;' the first is not forgotten. 'These ten times have they provoked me,' Num. xiv. 22. A malefactor that is often in prison, his offences are upon record, and will be aggravated to his condemnation. When a judgment cometh, we look upon it as rain that will dry up of its own accord. But in God's book of remembrance there is a mark set upon every providence.

[4.] Observe, God is very earnest after the creature's repentance. He trieth all kinds of methods, key after key, till he hath tried all the keys in the bunch. He threateneth, that he may not punish, and he punisheth, that he may not punish for ever; and if one punishment worketh not, he trieth another, and all to bring us to return to him.

[5.] Moral means work not without special grace. Here was dispensation upon dispensation, and yet ye returned not unto me. Judgments in themselves do but stupefy, till the plague of the heart be cured. The bad thief had one foot in hell, and yet he scoffeth. It is not physic that worketh the expulsion of the disease, but the internal strength and vigour of nature; physic is but an outward help. So here.

[6.] Multiplied signs of anger should be noted, and make men bethink themselves. It is sad when God spendeth rods in vain; when we are often put into the fire and often pulled out, the next burning will be dreadful. Men cannot endure to have two things slighted, their love or their anger; their love, as David to Nabal; their anger, as Nebuchadnezzar heated the furnace seven times hotter. All this view of the context hath been occasioned by that note of inference, 'Therefore.'

I now come to the words, here is a threatening and an exhortation; or, Israel's danger, and Israel's duty; the one inferred out of the other.

1. The threatening—*Thus will I do unto thee.* 'Thus,'—how? It is not specified what God will do; and in the immediate context there is no threatening, but a charge and expostulation. How shall we expound it then? Some expound it generally; 'Thus,' that is, according to the merit of those actions, as thy sins deserve; that which I will do hath a vengeance and wrath in it, a sour dispensation to be sure, for it is a threatening, though the particular kind be not mentioned.

'Thus;' that is, this kind of dispensations will I continue. He had spoken all along of judicial dispensations, of cleanness of teeth, blasting, mildew, pestilence, stink of the camp, burning of cities. And then 'thus,' that is, after this manner, will I continue till you be destroyed.

'Thus;' the judgment was so great, that the prophet was loath to utter it, and therefore draweth a veil over it, and hideth it in a general expression; as Timanthes drew a veil over Agamemnon's sorrow, concealing that grief which he could not sufficiently express. As if the Lord had said, I am loath to tell you what I will do; but 'thus I will do.' There is terror enough in these words.

The next are more comfortable.

Because I will do thus unto thee. God threateneth evil, that he may not inflict it. To save sinners, mercy itself will speak in the dialect of justice, in a rough strain and rousing language. When the Lord threateneth most sadly and severely, he would still be understood as inviting to repentance: 'I will do thus unto you,' that if it were told, you would not believe it. And because 'I will do thus to you,' what then?

2. The counsel and duty thence inferred—*Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.* Some understand these words as spoken in an irony, Now buckle on your harness, and see if you can meet with God, and grapple with him in the day of his wrath. But rather it is an exhortation, 'Prepare to meet him;' that is, to come to God, and to take up the difference, to prevent and pacify him; God is angry, to give him a day of compromise; for the covenant relation is mentioned: Jer. iii. 22, 'Behold we come to thee, for thou art the Lord our God.' The Septuagint renders it ἑτοιμαζοῦ τοῦ ἐπικαλεῖσθαι τὸν Θεὸν σοῦ, — 'Be prepared to call upon thy God.'

The point is this,—That the great duty of a nation in danger of judgment is to give the Lord a compromise, or to make up the breach, and take up the difference between him and them.

Here he seemeth to have in store such judgments as would make any tremble to think of; yet inviteth to repentance.

Why 'prepare to meet thy God'? Either to reverse the judgment or to mitigate it. To reverse the judgment. We must distinguish between God's sentence and God's decree; *Mutat sententiam, non decretum.* God's threatenings do not always hold forth his irrevocable purpose. Or else a mitigation: Zeph. iii. 7, 'It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's fierce anger.' You put your eternal happiness out of doubt, it may be you shall have temporal mercies. I shall show—

[1.] What it is to give God a day of compromise.

[2.] Why this is the most proper duty for a people in danger.

First, What is it to give God a day of compromise? Look to the wisdom of men in like cases: what kind of meeting they would give those whom they have offended, and whose power they are not able to resist; even so do you deal with God. I shall only allude to such meetings as are described in scripture. And there we shall first take notice of that interview that was between Jacob and Esau, described in Gen xxxii. 33. Jacob was afraid of Esau, coming with four hundred men against him, and therefore taketh the best course to provide for

his safety: he sendeth presents, and an humble submission to him, to pacify him. And when he was come, he boweth to him seven times. 'And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced and fell on his neck and kissed him, and wept.' So when you hear of God's coming against you, put yourselves into a humble posture, and come bow yourselves before the Lord; and in all probability it will be a gracious meeting and interview. Again, another instance is of the king of Assyria, when he was broken in pieces, and fallen under Ahab's power; his trusty counsellors advised him thus, 1 Kings xx. 31, 'Behold now we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings; let us I pray thee, put sackcloth upon our loins, and ropes about our necks, and go out to the king of Israel,' &c. When we are fallen under the displeasure and power of God, let us put ropes about our necks, and humble ourselves. You have not only heard, but know, that the God of Israel is a merciful God; go lie at his feet, acknowledging that in justice he might destroy you; but you are willing to put yourselves into his hands, to do with you as it shall seem good in his sight. One instance more is the king spoken of, Luke xiv. 31, that had but ten thousand, but there was another coming against him with twenty thousand. 'While he is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy, and desireth conditions of peace.' We are no match for God; what can worms do against him that cometh with mighty angels? It is best to take up the matter, in humble way send to him, seek peace in Jesus Christ. Another instance is that of Tyre and Sidon: Acts xii. 20, 'Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon; but they came with one accord to him, and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace, because their country was nourished by the king's country.' The case is the same between us and God. He is highly displeased with a sinful people. Alas! What shall we do? our country is nourished by the king's country; we cannot subsist without him, let us with one accord come and beg peace. Have we never a friend in heaven? Yes, one that doth not forget us in all his exaltation, he that remembereth his alliance still, Heb. viii. 2, λειτουργὸς ἁγίων, Jesus Christ; in his name let us come and beg peace. One instance more, because I will not weary you, and that is of Adonijah: 1 Kings i. 50–52, 'And Adonijah feared concerning Solomon, and went and caught hold of the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to-day that he will not slay his servant with the sword. And Solomon said, Let him show himself a worthy man, and there shall not a hair of his head fall to the earth.' So should we capitulate with God, but at the horns of the altar, holding out Christ as a buckler against the strokes of his justice, till he saith, Go to your houses in peace. Thus you may learn wisdom from men. Only there is a vast difference in the case: God is more mighty to destroy, and yet more merciful to save, than any man is, or possibly can be. The one consideration quickeneth us to humiliation, the other to faith.

1. To humiliation: Isa. xlv. 9, 'Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Woe to him that contendeth with his maker!' Poor man, if he will be contending, let him seek out his match; let him cope with a man like himself. There, sometimes the weaker side

may make their party good; the battle is not always to the strong; but whenever we enter into the lists with God, he will be sure to have the best of it: Ezek. xxii. 14, 'Can thine heart endure, or thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee?'

2. To faith; for God, as he is matchless in point of power, so in point of mercy; none is so able to punish, and yet none so willing to spare: Hosea xi. 9, 'I am God and not man, and therefore Ephraim shall not be destroyed.' It is well for poor Ephraim. Man's pity and mercy may be exhausted, though never so great. Many will not spare upon all the entreaty and submission that we can use. A pardon may be sought from them carefully and with tears, and not obtained; but God's mercy must not be straitened to our size and scantling: Ps. ciii. 11, 'As far as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him.'

By this general view you may guess what this meeting with God imports. More distinctly to give it you, I shall, with respect to the former instances, show you the nature of the work, and the manner of performance.

[1.] The nature of the work. It implieth three things—(1.) Humiliation; (2.) Faith; (3.) Reformation, or a resolution to walk with God in better obedience.

(1.) An address to God in a way of humiliation; we must creep to him upon our knees. Jacob meeteth Esau with soft language and submissive behaviour; and the messengers of the king of Assyria came with ropes about their necks, and sackcloth upon their loins; 'Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee, let me live.' Thus must we lie at God's feet, taking part with his justice against ourselves; though his justice be satisfied by Christ, yet it must be glorified and owned by us. This is the work of the day, to judge ourselves, if we would prevent God's judgment, 1 Cor. xi. 31. Sinners must be condemned in one court or another. In all our addresses to God, there is a use of both covenants. We must acknowledge the tenor of the first covenant just, if God should proceed according to it, though we hold him to the second: Ps. xxx. 2, 3, 'O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me; O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave, thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.' Acknowledge that it is just with God to destroy us; but, Lord, let thy servants live. Every christian must look upon himself under a two-fold notion, as a faulty sinner, and a penitent supplicant. As a faulty sinner, he must receive his doom from the first covenant; as a penitent supplicant, he must lay hold of mercy in the second.

(2.) There is required faith in Jesus Christ. The men of Tyre made Blastus their friend. Look up to Christ's intercession. Adonijah took hold of the horns of the altar, and would not let go his hold till Solomon sware to him articles of peace. Here we come to get an answer of peace from God; hold out Christ as the only means of propitiation. When Themistocles came to Admetus, whom he had formerly offended, he took in his arms τὸν παῖδα, he held up the young prince, and so begged acceptance. Lay hold upon Jesus Christ, keep him in the arms of your faith. When the destroying angel saw the blood of the lamb sprinkled upon the lintel, he forbore. We have no

other security against the destroyer: look upon the blood of Christ, as if it were newly shed, that you may have confidence towards God. This man our peace, Micah v. 5.

(3.) A resolution to walk with God in better obedience. The king of Assyria entered into bonds to restore the cities of Samaria. Resolve that God shall have his honour, and the obedience you have kept from him. Solomon puts Adonijah to the question, will he show himself a worthy man? Such conditions are we to make with God; vows of reformation: Jer. iv. 1, 'If thou wilt return to me, saith the Lord, put away thy abominations out of my sight.' If a man's house be on fire, he will put away the flax and straw, and whatsoever is likely to augment the flame. Our sins are the combustible matter. We all declaim against the evil of the times, but every man continueth the practices. We deceive ourselves with general terms. Will you now give the hand to the Lord? 2 Chron. xxx. 8, 'Now yield yourselves unto the Lord.' Give the hand; is it a bargain? Are you resolved to lay down the bucklers and weapons of defiance? to cast sin out of your hearts, and out of your families and township, wherever you have an interest? to lay aside your vanity, your oppression, your deserting of a godly ministry, and the simplicity of the gospel, your hatred of reformation, your slighting of church order, your heats and animosities? This is matter to be done—

[2.] Now for the manner. This must be done—

(1.) Speedily. It is no time to dally. 'Whilst he is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassy.' We must not tarry till the judgment tread upon our heels, or the storm break out upon us. A man cannot soon enough be in the arms of Christ. They that are in good earnest are in haste: 'who have fled for refuge,' &c. Heb. vi. 18; the avenger of blood being at their heels. Sin and we cannot part soon enough. Many a time a brabble falleth out between a man and his lusts; but he delayeth, and all cometh to nothing. In an heat, we bid the naughty servant be gone; but he lingereth, and before the next morning all is cool and quiet again; we are agreed again as much as ever.

(2.) Seriously; for God will not be mocked. In real danger it is no time to dally with God. The work of humiliation must be serious. God abhorreth mock fasts, hanging the head for a day like a bulrush, Isa. lviii. 5. A little drooping, a few mournful postures for the present, and putting a natural fervency in our prayers, will not serve the turn; it is but howling. Are you indeed sensible of the weight of God's displeasure, so that you make the seeking of his face in Christ to be your great work? 2 Chron. vii. 14, 'If the people that is called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, &c., then will I pardon their sins, and heal their land.' God's favour and reconciliation by Christ, do you seek this above all things? So your coming to God by Christ must be serious: Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart.' Not like Judas, kiss to betray him; or as Joab's embracing of Abner. Come with an unfeigned purpose of doing and being what God would have you to do and be. Your reformation must be serious: Jer. iii. 10, 'Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord.' There was an outward turn, for it was in the days of Josiah, ver. 7; and then the law was recovered, the

worship of God restored, a covenant made with him, 2 Kings xxii. 23; but for all this pretended change the mischiefs continued, all was in pretence, as appeareth by their speedy revolt. Usually, in the changes of the world, the persons are changed, but not things. The men are cast out, but the corruptions live. Or else all is but pretence. In Josiah's time, many nasty corners were unswept: Zeph. i. 1, 'The word of the Lord that came to Zephaniah, in the days of Josiah'—(A man would wonder, that he should come with such a thundering prophecy in the days of a reforming magistrate)—'I will utterly consume all things from the land; I will consume man and beast.' A sad desolation threatened. Why all this in Josiah's time? See in ver. 4, 'I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests.' Some relics of the old superstition, which Josiah could not discover, and the people would not reform. The Chemarims were kept officers of the idols; idolatrous Chemarims, wicked priests. So ver. 6, 'And them that are turned back from the Lord, and those that have not sought the Lord,' &c.

God's anger is increased by mock turns. Hypocrites, if there be any hotter place in hell, it is their portion: Mat. xxiv. 51, 'And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with hypocrites.' The land of darkness is their heritage and fee-simple. So an hypocritical nation: Isa. x. 6, 'I will send him against an hypocritical nation, to take the spoil and take the prey;' the Assyrian, a profane nation, and Judah, an hypocritical nation. They professed reformation, and dallied with God. God doth not stand upon the choice of a rod when his people mock him, as an angry father taketh what cometh next to hand. The basest people may be employed against them that mock God with vain pretences, feigned words, and empty shows. If, in a church, forms of worship be only changed, and not the manners of men; in a state, the instruments, but not the corruptions, the Lord will not be put off so.

(3.) If must be done earnestly, and with affection. Humiliation implieth an afflictive sorrow, and that the heart be melted and broken before the Lord; 'a rending of the heart:' Joel ii. 13, 'Rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord.' Stout hearts must be broken, and affected with the sense of God's displeasure. This is not a work to be lightly passed over. Our looking for mercy in Christ, it must be earnest. The messengers of the king of Assyria waited for the word, *brother*. With such earnestness should you look for the answers of grace. And your resolutions for God must be earnest, loathing our sins, and returning to the Lord with all the heart, seeking his face with diligence and seriousness. It may cost you much wrestling to get and keep his favour and communion with him.

Secondly, Why is this the most seasonable duty?

1. Because the main party with whom we have to do is God. He is at the upper end of causes, and his hand and counsel is in all things; and all the evil that befalleth us is the fruit of God's anger. Then, get his favour, and you stop danger at the fountain-head. If God be reconciled, and made a friend to us in Christ, you need not fear man's enmity. Either it shall be assuaged—(Prov. xvi. 7, 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him.'

God hath the hearts of men in his own hand. When two states are at war, the business is not to seek the favour of common soldiers, but those that do employ them. The next way to get in with men is to get in with God)—or else, if it continue, it can do you no harm: you need not fear the sword when you do not fear him that weareth the sword.

2. It will either prevent the danger, or mitigate it, or get it sanctified. It may prevent the danger. When he is about to strike, he would fain be prevented. He often reverseth his sentence: Jer. xviii. 8, 'If that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.' Or mitigate the danger, especially to your own persons; you may be hid. In temporal things, God leaveth us at an uncertainty, and keepeth us in suspense, that we may use the means more earnestly, referring the event to him. Mourners in Sion have a mark of preservation. Or else get it sanctified, which is a great comfort, either to better our hearts, or hasten our glory. He is at peace with God: Isa. iii. 10, 'Say to the righteous, It shall be well with them,' whatever falleth out in the world: Cant. iv. 16, 'Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou south, and blow upon my garden,' &c. Out of what corner soever the wind bloweth, the cold north or sultry south. If we could make a good company of mourners, the judgment may be prevented: Zeph. ii. 1, 2, 'Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired, before the decree bring forth,' &c. God's decree is not taken for his secret counsel, but his public sentence: if the nation could be got to gather themselves together. Sincere humiliation in secret is not enough in God's account, but there must be a public profession of repentance, that all may concur to quench that fire which their sins have kindled, every one bringing their bucket. If only a few set about it, it will do no good. But if that cannot be, yet the judgment may be mitigated; you may escape common judgment: Ezek. ix. 4, 'Set a mark on them that sigh.' God can make a distinction; it is an art that he is versed in: 2 Peter ii. 9, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.' If not so, yet the judgment may be sanctified to you, however things go, Isa. iii. 10, 'Say you to the righteous, It shall be well with him.' It is possible a green stick may burn for company when the dry are kindled; but it is sanctified to better your hearts, and hasten glory. It is possible they may perish in the common burning, but their eternal happiness is out of danger: Rom. viii. 28, 'All things work together for good to them that love God.'

3. If our mercies be continued to us, they are continued with a curse while God is angry. We may have government in God's anger, and governors and establishment in God's anger, *ἔνδον τὸ κακὸν*. Though we should build walls up to heaven, sin in the bottom, that would undermine all; sin within, as the voice told Phocas, in Cedrenus. Therefore, if we would not have our mercies cursed, let us first make peace with God: Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace, and good shall come unto thee;' then good cometh to thee. God's wrath is sometimes compared to a moth, and sometimes to a lion. The moth noteth the eating of an insensible curse; the lion, open and

destroying judgments. If you would not have your mercies blasted and eaten out by a secret moth, begin with God. Until we flee to God by Christ for the pardon of sin, we cannot expect that the good and peace we have should be continued as a blessing. To have mercies in anger is one of the worst kind of judgments: Micah v. 5, 'Then this man shall be the peace, and when the Assyrian shall come into our land, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds and eight principal men.'

4. Hasting and preparing to make peace with God, and take up the differences between us and him, prevents many sins which are the bane of a nation; as security and creature confidence.

[1.] Security, not fearing of deserved wrath; when we see a judgment in its causes, and a storm while the cloud is but a-gathering. The welfare of a nation is not to be measured by outward probabilities, but the sentence of the word. The face of providence speaketh not the intentions of God so much as the course of his justice according to the covenant: Heb. xi. 7, 'Noah being warned of God of things not seen,' &c. To appearance there was no such thing as a flood coming; all things continued according to the stated course of nature; but of a sudden the mouth of the great deep opened, and the windows of heaven; and the merry world was overtaken and overwhelmed with a flood. And so it is usually in God's judicial proceedings. Men are secure, and feast themselves with hopes of temporal felicity, till God's wrath breaketh in of a sudden. We are not to look to the present face of things, but the word. Now, while God is a great way off, we should labour to make peace with him. As Josiah trembled when the law was read; we do not read of any danger and actual disturbance to the nation.

[2.] Carnal confidence. When our first and chief business is with God, it is a sign we little mind carnal props. Arms, ships, treasures, wise counsels, how soon can God blow upon them! Trusting in the arm of flesh is much talked of in the world, and little understood by many. They have a gross notion of it, and only confine it to praise and idolising of instruments. The true notion of it is, when a people hope, by their own wisdom, power, and strength, to carry on their matters against God or without God. Against God, when they think their power shall bear them out in unjust actions; without God, when they think to establish a nation by their own carnal shifts, and without taking up the controversy between God and them. The case is expressly spoken to in Jer. iv. 14. 'O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved; how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?' Vain thoughts are not taken in their full latitude, as implying all the corruption of the thoughts; but hopes of succour and safety from their force of arms, or the wisdom of their counsels and mutual agreement, without humiliation, repentance, and reformation. So that, if we do not prepare and set ourselves to make all sure with God, we do but deceive ourselves.

Use 1. To press you to consider England's danger, that you may more effectually mind England's duty.

1. England's danger. Possibly you may think that the nation is upon the mending hand, and that we have wrestled out of many difficulties. Now it is comfortable, if any have these hopes, to say as the

prophet in a like case, Jer. xxviii. 5, 'Amen; the Lord do so, the Lord perform thy words which thou hast prophesied.' However if the threatening be unseasonable, the duty is not. But alas! the times do not look upon all with a like face. Surely there is a cause for God to be angry. We have had our judgments and our deliverances; we are but as a brand plucked out of the burning; but is not the Lord's hand stretched out still? Are we not now under the rebukes of his providence, by the Lord's blasting our designs abroad, by our distractions at home, enemies arming against us, and the friends of Sion full of jealousies and fears? Are the foundations so well settled that we have no cause to think of preparing to meet the Lord? Other preparations do well, but this should be regarded in the first place. Have we not many spiritual judgments upon us; which of all are most dreadful? The storm is not broken in upon us indeed, we do not hear the alarm of war, nor see garments rolled in blood; but is not the moth of intestine confusions and dissensions eating out the staff and the stay? Do not these shoals of libertines, that are every day increasing in numbers, power and malice, call upon us to inquire after the reasons of the Lord's wrath? Lord, why art thou angry with thine heritage? Surely to any discerning eye there is enough of danger. God seemeth to say, Thus will I do unto you; though he doth not tell us from what corner the storm shall blow, nor what kind of vengeance he hath in store for us, nor whence it shall arise. We do not know what is in the womb of providence, or how far the prerogative of free grace may interpose in our behalf, whether England shall be made a theatre of mercy, or a field of blood, but though we do not know what God hath decreed, we may soon know what England hath deserved; and that is enough to quicken us to humiliation. Shall I trouble you, I will not say with a few melancholy thoughts, but serious observations, to awaken us out of our security?

[1.] I observe, that after God hath laid in any spiritual comforts, there is a time to lay them out again; and after great receipts we are put to great expenses. The disciples first enjoyed Christ's presence and ministry, and then were exposed to a dreadful persecution. John xi., he biddeth them make use of the light, because the darkness was coming upon them. There never was the gospel powerfully preached but trials came: 1 Thes. i. 5, 6, 'Ye received the word with much assurance and much affliction.' God will try how we can live upon the comforts of the gospel. Castles are first victualled, and then besieged: Heb. x. 32, 'Ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that in heaven ye have a better, and an enduring substance.' The churches of Asia underwent horrible desolation after a powerful ministry. Germany, after a sufficient promulgation of the gospel, hath suffered many sad years.

[2.] After trials and reformations, there come trials and probations, that, after we have submitted to the ways of God, we may honour them with suffering. The ten persecutions were after Christ had set up the ordinances of the gospel; the Marian and bloody days after king Edward's reformation. God will have every truth honoured in its season. When the witnesses had finished the testimony of their prophecy, after a short time they were slain, Rev. xi. 7.

[3.] When reformations stick in the birth, God will promote them by troubles. He taketh his own fan into his hand, Mat. iii. 12. When men cannot or will not effect it, God will purge his floor, and cleanse the church from profane mixtures. Christ came with his whip to cleanse the temple, John ii. 15. Grosthead prophesied that the church should not be reformed, but *ore gladii cruentandi.* God usually tendeth a reformation to the world with a judgment in his hand; and if the reformation be obstructed, the judgment will proceed, Ezek. xxiv. 13. When the pot is put over the fire, if the scum remaineth still, he overturneth all.

[4.] When there are great differences among his own people, the end is bitter. We warp in the sunshine. The dog is let loose that the sheep may run together. A piece of wax when it is broken, put it together never so often, it will not close; but put it into the candle, and the two ends stick close together. Ridley and Hooper could agree in a prison. A little before Dioclesian's persecution, *φιλονεικίαι ἀναφλέγοντο,* the church was rent and torn with intestine broils, pastor against pastor, and people against people. Ease begets pride and wantonness, and that maketh way for contention. God may solder you in your own blood, and effect union by making you objects of the same hatred and persecution. Nazianzen was wont to call the enemies of the church, *κοίνους διαλλήκτας,* the common reconcilers; the turbulent enemies many times prove the best reconcilers, and the wolves bring the sheep together.

[5.] Libertine and fanatical persons, when they increase into power and numbers, become cruel: Jude 11, 'These walked in the way of Cain.' The Donatists are of detestable and accursed memory, because of their insolent cruelties: Hos. v. 5, 'The pride of Israel doth testify to his face,' &c. Revolters are found to make slaughters, viz., men that have cast off the holy faith after some profession; the Lord keep us from their tender mercies! Arians grew bloody. Naz. Orat. xxv., *πῶς δε ἀνθρώπων ἔμελλον φείδεσθαι οἱ τῆς θειοτήτος μὴ φειδόμενοι.* Want of truth is usually made up by a supply of rage; lees and dregs are usually very tart and sour.

[6.] When religion hath received wounds in the house of her friends, and occasion is given to the world by scandals, to think evil of the ways of God, God taketh his scourge in his hand; and when the devil hath an advantage, he stirreth up the malignant world against the children of God as a sort of monsters. The Gnostics, by their impure and libidinous courses, made christianity odious, and then the heathens rose up against them as pests of mankind. *Luminum extinctores.* The devil is first a liar and then a murderer, John viii. 44. He lieth that his murders may carry some pretence. Now, that his lies may carry some pretence, he taketh up the scandals of false christians.

[7.] The decay of the power of godliness, and formality and contempt of the word, which are the usual effects of prosperity. As soon as we come out of miseries, we run into disorders. Therefore God is wont to return us into our old chains again, that we may wanton it no more: Hos. v. 'In their afflictions they will seek me right early.' I will try them by adversity; I will try what my rod will do: to better his people, as also to discover hypocrites. When the ways of God are

a little owned, and the church hath ease, many come and take up a form, and so religion is turned into a fashion and empty pretence. Salvian observeth, that the church, like a river, loseth in depth what it gaineth in breadth—*Multiplicatis quidem populis, fides diminuta est;* and *Frequentibus filiis mater ægrotat*—a woman that hath borne many children is with every birth the weaker. *Tantum copiæ accessit, quantum disciplinæ recessit;* as a large body is less active. Carnal men coming under a profession of religion weaken the power of it.

[8.] When professors grow worldly, this awakeneth worldly rage and God's rods. The men of the world take mammon for God, and the conveniences of this life for their portion. Now, when the children of God put in for a share, and are all for worldly hopes and interests, it stirreth up their enmity. They cannot endure to be discountenanced; it is their generation and sphere: Luke xvi. 8, 'The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light;' full of watchful malice; so God's rod. When the world gets into the church, God whippeth it out again by the world. God will show us the vanity of our aspiring projects. The spirit of the world is breathing in most christians, prowling for greatness, as if they served the god of the world. Many dream now of a carnal pomp and dominion, fit for a worldly hope. The disciples had such a dream, and Christ cureth it by those threatenings: Mat. xxiv. 6, 'Ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars; nation shall rise against nation,' &c.

But enough of England's danger; and to prove that it is in a great measure God's language to us, 'Thus will I do unto you.'

2. England's duty: 'Prepare to meet thy God.' Which let us all set upon.

[1.] We are all concerned. God taketh it ill when we do not meet him in his wrath, and prevent him in his judgments: Ezek. xiii. 5, 'Ye have not gone into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord.' God besiegeth the church with judgments, to try the watchfulness and valour of his people. Our standing in the gap is by humiliation, invocation, and repentance. If you oppose the Lord, it must be with spiritual weapons of his own choosing and appointing. So Ezek. xxii., 30, 'I sought for a man to stand in the gap, and found none.' He threateneth, to prevent the execution.

[2.] You are involved in the common guilt till you take this course: 2 Cor. vii. 11, 'You have approved yourselves clear in this matter.' The whole church was not guilty of incest. We contract a share and fellowship in the common guilt, unless we mourn for it and wrestle with God; you enter your protest and dissent before the Lord. But especially this concerneth you, the representative body of this nation; you that should be the repairers of the breaches, Zech. iii. 3. Joshua, the high priest, the public officer and ruler of the nation, stood before the Lord in filthy garments, as representing the people's iniquity. Magistrates and ministers are most concerned. The measures of the sanctuary were double to other measures: 'Prepare to meet your God.'

(1.) Get the sin stated, and the great cause of the breach between us and God. You had need advise about it. See where the business

sticks; otherwise we shall chop logic with God, as the carnal Jews did: Mal. iii. 7, 'Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them: Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts: but ye said, Wherein shall we return?' Knowledge of a disease is a good step to the cure. It was Cæsar's complaint of the Britons, It is harder to find them out than to vanquish them. There must be a searching and trying before returning: Lam. iii. 40, 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord.' It is a very critical business to us that are blinded with lusts and interests. I observe, in our humiliation either we fling dirt in one another's faces, and one party accuseth another; what one is for, another condemns; or else we take up customary terms and superficial acknowledgments, or pitch upon sins by the by: Amos ii. 4, 'For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because they have despised the law of the Lord.' There be many sins, and yet one main one. The Corinthians were guilty of foul disorders, yet, 'For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep,' 1 Cor. xi. 30. If the right cause of God's displeasure were truly and impartially stated, we should soon see where our business lieth. I doubt it is not the work of a private person; he hath not skill, and his testimony would be more liable to suspicion; if he should alone bear the burden of such a discovery, he would be made a reproach. If many of the most judicious and godly-wise were called together for such a work, it would be very acceptable to the Lord, and comfortable to the nation: Hos. v. 15, 'I will return to my place till they do acknowledge their offence.' Trouble will pursue till this be done, till we plead guilty, and humble ourselves as a people that have such a burden upon them.

(2.) Make your own peace with God; for till then you are never fit to pray or act for the public good of the nation with any hopes of success.

(3.) Promote a sound well-tempered reformation in the land. Promote God's interest, protect his truth and servants against those that malign and hate them, and all endeavours to a thorough reformation.

SEVERAL SERMONS UPON TITUS II. 11-14.

SERMON I.

For 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 that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.—TITUS ii. 11–14.

IN the immediate context the apostle had given direction to servants to walk amiably and faithfully in their relations; and the argument which he urgeth to persuade them is, that by this means they would 'adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things,' ver. 10; that is, represent it with advantage, and render it acceptable to the respects of others. Duties of relations are of so much use to the quiet and welfare of human society, that, when they are faithfully performed, they do much commend any way or doctrine, and induce others to speak well of it; and therefore, saith he, Be faithful in your relations, that you may make the doctrine of God comely, and adorn the gospel. Now, this adorning the gospel, it is not only an act of policy, but duty; it is but a doing right to the gospel, and giving it its proper lustre. Why? Because the same gospel which calls for duty to God as to his worship, doth also enforce the duties of our relations. A man may put a varnish upon an evil way by a plausible carriage; and though his principle have no tendency to such a practice, he may do it because it is comely in the world. But it is otherwise here. The gospel, that hath appeared to all sorts of men, presseth all sorts of duties. Yea, and which is more, it giveth grace to perform them; for the apostle doth not only argue here, but direct; he doth not only show them what they must do, but how they may come to do their duty in this kind; for saith he, 'The grace of God which bringeth salvation,' &c.

In the words you may observe the teacher, the lesson, the encouragement and inducements to learn.

1. The teacher is the grace of God, described, ver. 11.

2. The lesson is the whole duty of our heavenly calling, set forth ver. 12, and there—(1.) Negatively, in departing from evil, 'denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.' (2.) Positively, in cleaving to that

which is good, 'We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' Where you may observe that the duty of the creature is distributed into three ranks and parts, according to the several objects to which it is referred. Soberly we must walk as to ourselves; righteously as to our neighbour; and godly that the Lord himself may not be defrauded of his portion. There are, in a moral consideration, but three things in the world—thyself, thy neighbour, and God; and suitably doth the apostle distribute and parcel out christian offices and duties; soberly as to ourselves, righteously as to our neighbour, and godly as to God.

3. The encouragements to learn, and they are two. If we look forward, there is hope; if we look backward, there is gratitude, or an obligation arising from the death of Christ. In short the two great motives and inducements are the hope of eternal life, and the end of Christ's death. Hope of eternal life: ver. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope,' &c. The end of Christ's death; ver. 14, 'Who gave himself for us,' &c.

The text being long, I shall forbear exposition till I come to handle the several branches.

I shall first begin with the teacher, described ver. 11, 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men.' The grace of God is described by its property; it is χάρις ἡ σωτήριος, a grace bringing salvation, or tending to salvation, as the word signifies; and by a special adjunct, its present manifestation, ἐπεφάνη, 'it hath appeared;' suddenly broken out, like the light of the morning after a dark night; and then there is the extent of that manifestation, it hath appeared to all men. Some indeed refer this extent, not to the word ἐπεφάνη, 'it hath appeared,' but to the word, σωτήριος, 'bringing salvation;' and they read it as we do in the margin; 'The grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared;' there is not much difference. To supersede all doubt and dispute about the matter, *all men* here signifies all sorts of men; for the apostle had spoken of servants and bondmen, that they in their relations should glorify God; and he proves it by this argument: 'The grace of God hath appeared to all men;' that is, to the bondman as well as to the lord and master; therefore they in their places are to discharge their duties as well as others; for the gospel, as I said, hath appeared to all men, and presseth all sorts of duties.

First, I begin with the thing described, 'The grace of God.' It is a term that admits of divers acceptations. Sometimes it is put for God's eternal favour and good-will; sometimes for the effects of this favour, as grace infused and bestowed upon the creature: Eph. iv. 7, 'To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' Sometimes it is put for the gospel, which is the charter by which we hold this grace; and so it is said, Rom. vi. 15, 'You are not under the law, but under grace;' *i. e.*, under the state of the gospel. Here I take it in the first sense, viz., for the gracious will and good pleasure of God to do good to men, or to show mercy to the creature; for God's kindness and bounty to men is expressed by several terms. The most usual are two—grace and mercy. I will show how they agree, and how they differ. They both agree in this, that they are attributes

which merely respect the creature. The love and knowledge of God first falleth upon himself. God knows himself, and loves himself, and then the creature. But now the mercy and grace of God are merely transient, and pass out to and respect the creature only. God cannot be gracious to himself and merciful to himself, as he loves himself and knows himself; and therefore herein they agree. But now in some respects they differ. Grace properly signifies the freeness of God's love; mercy relates to the misery of the creature. God's external motive is our misery, and his internal motive is his own grace. Mercy respects us as we are in ourselves worthy of condemnation: grace respects us as we are compared with others that are not elected. As, for instance, if the question be, Why any are chosen to life? it is out of mercy, because they are lost and undone creatures. But then if the question be, Why these are chosen above others? then the ultimate reason is God's grace. Once more, the angels that never sinned are saved merely out of grace, and not out of mercy. It is not proper to say they are saved out of mercy, for they were never miserable; but men, that were once miserable, are saved, not only out of grace, but also out of mercy. In short, mercy signifies that love of God which helps the miserable, and grace signifies a property in God to give forth things freely and without desert. Grace doth all gratis, freely, and without any merit or precedent obligation or debt. Note then—

Doct. 1. That the original and first moving cause of all the blessings we have from God is grace.

Survey all the blessings of the covenant, and from first to last you will see grace doth all. Election, vocation, justification, sanctification, glorification, all is from grace. There is a clue of scriptures which will lead us through all these steps, and direct us to grace.

1. For election: Rom. xi. 5, 6, 'There is a remnant according to the election of grace.' And then he adds presently (for Paul cannot mention grace, but he must run out into the praise or vindication of it), 'And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.' Mark the context. The apostle's drift in that place is to prove that all Israel are not cast away; that though the nation of Israel were passed by, yet there was a remnant chosen according to the election of grace. Grace is spoken of by the by, but he takes every little occasion to digress into the commendation of grace. And what doth he say? The foundation and ground of salvation is God's election, and the impulsive cause of election is God's grace. Why is there a remnant? There is an election; and why is there election? It is according to grace.

2. Our calling, when election breaketh out in time and becometh actual. Look, as the heirs of salvation are distinguished from others by election in the purpose and bosom of God, so are they actually distinguished from others by effectual calling: 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with an 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.' Why doth God pick and choose, and cull here and there? The only reason is his own grace and his

own purpose. When we come to make choice, we cull and pick out those things that are worthy of our love and respect; and we favour none but for something whereby we may be allured to love them; but God saw nothing lovely in us, but yet calleth us with an holy calling according to his purpose and grace. The same gracious purpose that distinguished them from others before all time, doth in time make an actual choice and distinction between them and others by effectual calling.

3. Justification: Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace.' Mark, the apostle useth two words; it is τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι, 'by his grace;' and it is δωρεὰν, 'freely' by his grace; 'freely,' to note the readiness of his inclination; and 'by his grace,' to exclude the merit of our works; or the mere grace of God, not excited or quickened by any works of ours, but acting of its own accord. The scriptures do with such emphatical and redoubled expressions inculcate it, because there are deep prejudices in the proud heart of man, rooted in his nature, against the grace of God.

4. Sanctification, all the parts whereof are called the graces of the Spirit; because, *Gratiæ gratis datæ;* they are not only wrought by the Spirit, but freely given us of God. Thus faith is said to be God's gift: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' And it is given of mere grace; Phil. i. 29, 'To you it is given to believe;' the word ἐχαρίσθη signifies 'graciously given;' it is the same word that is used, 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?' χαρίσεται. The same grace that giveth Christ, giveth faith to believe in Christ, that we may be possessed of his grace.

5. Glorification, which is the complement of all salvation. So Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.' Not only all the means and all the tendencies of salvation are of grace, but salvation itself; from first to last it is all of grace. So that when we come to heaven, this will be our great work, to sing forth the praises of grace, and to admire and glorify the grace of God to all eternity.

Secondly, To limit the point. Though it is of grace, yet not to exclude Christ, not to exclude the means of salvation.

1. Not to exclude Christ. The merit of Christ stands well enough with the grace of God: Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' Freely! you will say; how so, when it was not without so great a price and satisfaction as the blood of the Lord Jesus? Yet, however, it is freely in respect of us, it is by no work of ours; it was the exceeding grace of God to appoint the merit of Christ, that it might be the greater ground of confidence to us. We do not look for things with such certainty which depend upon mere grace, and favour, and good-will, as we do when a thing is established by merit and desert. Now merit in us there could not be without wrong to grace; and therefore the wisdom and love of God hath found out this way of merit in Christ, that we might be more confident of the standing of our privileges, they being bought at so great a price. There was grace in this, that God gave Christ, that the satisfaction is not required of us; and therefore indeed

there is nothing doth so gloriously discover the grace of God as the free giving up of Jesus Christ. God might require satisfaction from the party offending, or the person that had so sinned might bear the blame and punishment; but the Lord hath so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, and that not to angels, but to us. Well, then, it is grace to find out the merit, and grace by which we are interested in it. Christ's merit is most free, both on the part of God the Father freely sending Christ, and on the part of Christ taking this office upon him. It was grace that moved God to give Christ, and grace that moved Christ to give himself, 'who loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. Nay, after all this, it is grace that gives us faith, that so we may be interested in the merit of Christ, that we which sinned with both hands earnestly, might take hold of God with both hands. And our salvation is carried on in such a way that we may confidently expect his mercy without any violation of his justice and truth. So that it doth not derogate from the grace of God, but much amplify and enlarge it. This is a great part of the grace, that he freely sent Christ to make all sure between us and him.

2. Not to exclude the means of salvation; not faith, nor obedience also, if rightly understood.

Not faith; that may well enough stand with grace: Eph. ii. 8, 'By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.' There is a condition required, and that is faith; but God himself gives the condition that he requireth. Grace cannot stand with anything that is in man, and of man, as the condition of the covenant; yet it stands with faith, because it justifies, not as an inherent quality in us, or as a work done by us, but as it layeth hold of Jesus Christ; and it is not of ourselves, but is the mere gift of grace.

And then for obedience, that is also subordinate to faith, as a necessary fruit and effect of it. As faith is the instrument, so obedience is required as a fruit of faith. Though it come not into justification, yet it is an evidence of our interest in salvation. It is required as a testimony of faith, yet not as a condition, which is a cause of the thing promised. It is required, because though it be not of man, yet it is in man; it is given of God, but it is our work.

The papists, to excuse the grossness of merit, say that our works do not merit but as they come from the grace of God, and as they are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. But mark, it is not enough so to ascribe our works to the grace of God; all self-justiciaries will do so, as the pharisee that pleaded his works: Luke xviii. 11, 'God, I thank thee I am not as other men are.' And you confound the covenants when you think that a man may merit of God by his own grace. Adam under the covenant of works might then be said to be saved by grace. Why? because he could not persevere in the use of his own free-will, unless he had received it of God. Well then, grace doth not exclude faith, nor works; not faith as the instrument of justification and as the condition of the covenant; not works, as the fruit and testimony of faith. There is a concurrence of works, but not by way of causality, but order. God will first justify, then sanctify, then glorify, and all of grace. Obedience is the *conditio sine qua non*—the condition without which we cannot be saved. The grace of God is the first moving cause; Christ is the meritorious procuring cause; faith is the instru-

ment; and obedience is the fruit of faith. These are subordinate, not contrary.

Thirdly, My next work shall be to give you some reasons why it must be so that grace is the original cause of all the blessings we receive from God; because it is most for the glory of God, and most for the comfort of the creature.

1. It is most convenient for the glory of God, to keep up the respects of the creature to him in a way suitable to his majesty. Mark, God would dispense blessings in such a way as might beat down despair and carnal confidence at the same time. Man had need of mercy, but deserveth none. Despair would keep us from returning to God, and carnal confidence from ascribing all to God. Therefore, as the Lord would not have flesh to glory, so neither to be cut off from all hope. It is of grace that we may hope, and keep up our respect to God; for there is nothing that keeps up the devotion and respects of the creature to God so much as grace. The psalmist intimates this: 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared,' Ps. cxxx. 4. Mercy in God makes us fear, love, and respect him. And it is of grace, that flesh may not glory: Eph. ii. 9, 'Not of works, lest any man should boast;' but that God may have all the glory of his grace. If God did not deal with us upon terms of grace, despair would make us let go all sense of duty, and a guilty creature would stand at a distance, and fly from the sight of God. Some think that the only way to gain men to a sense of religion is by rubbing the conscience, and keeping it raw and sore with terror; but the psalmist saith, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' This is the best way to keep up the creature's respects. False worships are merely supported by terror and fear; but God, that hath the best title to the heart, will gain it by love and grace. But as despair standeth in the way of God's glory, so doth carnal confidence. Now grace taketh off all boasting: 1 Cor. i. 31, 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.' Here is nothing of pre-engagement, merit, and hire; yea, it is for the glory of the supreme Majesty that he should act freely, and that his blessings should come to us not as a thing deserved but as a gift; and that he should entertain us as a king, not as a host: 'He that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price,' Isa. lv. 1. Nothing can be more dishonourable to God than the merit of the creature, for it takes off part of his royalty and supremacy.

2. It is most for the comfort of the creature. Grace is the original cause of all the good we expect and receive from God, that we may seek the favour of God with hope, and retain it with certainty.

(1.) That we may seek the favour of God with hope. If we had to do with justice there could be no hope, for justice giveth only what is due, and doth not consider what we need, but what we deserve. Now mark, the apostle, in the behalf of God, makes the challenge, Rom. xi. 35, 'Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?' Come, let me see that man that durst plead desert with God, and claim anything of him by way of merit. Who will enter that plea?—Lord! give me what thou owest; I desire no more than is due to me; let me not have mercy till I deserve it. Merit-mongers are best confuted by experience. Let them use the same plea in their

prayers which they do in their disputes, and plead the merit of their works, and say, Lord, give me not eternal life, and grace, and favour, till I deserve it at thy hand. Let them thus dispute with God or with their own consciences in the agonies of death, and under horrors of the Lord's wrath. Surely those that cry up the merits of works are men of little spiritual experience, and seldom look into their own consciences, Dare they thus plead with God?—Lord, never look upon me in mercy if I do not deserve it. You shall see the best plea that the eminentest of God's children could make is mere grace. The church speaks thus, Hosea xiv. 2, 'Receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips.' It is the form that is prescribed to returning Israel. If you would establish hope with God, this must be your only plea and claim: Grace, Lord! mercy Lord! And David saith, Ps. xiii. 5, 'I have trusted in thy mercy. There is the ground of my confidence. And Chrysostom hath a sweet gloss upon that place, *οἱ μὲν ἄγγοι, ει τοι καὶ ἔχοιεν, λεγέτωσαν; ἔγω δε ἐν οἶδα, ἓν λέλω*, &c.—If others have anything to allege, let them plead it. Ah, Lord! I have but one thing to say and plead, and upon which to cast all my hopes, and that is mercy and grace: 'Lord, I have trusted in thy mercy.' Thus Ambrose, when he was to die, saith, *Etsi non sic vixi ut pudeat inter vos vivere*, &c.—Though I have not so lived as that I should be ashamed to live, I am not afraid to die. Why? not that I have lived well, but *quia bonum habeo Dominum*, because I have a gracious Lord, and have made grace my confidence. So we read in the Life of Bernard, seeming to be cited before the tribunal of God, when Satan had spoken in his conscience, What! thou look for any favour at God's hand? thou art not worthy. He replies, I confess I am not worthy, nor can I by my own deserts obtain the kingdom of heaven; but I have a double right, *Hæreditate patris, et merito passionis*—by the grace of my father, and by the merit of Christ's passion; hereby I can take hold of God with both hands. by grace and merit; not my own, but Christ's. Thus God's best servants, their hopes have been established this way, by casting themselves upon mercy and grace.

(2.) That we may retain the favour of God with certainty: Rom. iv. 16, 'Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed.' We should never else be secured against doubts and fears. Believers, that offend daily, would be left to a sad uncertainty; but now we can the better expect glory when the foundation of it is laid in grace. I remember the great patron of the merit of works, Bellarmine, concludeth out of Bernard, *propter incertitudinem propriæ justitiæ, et periculum inanis gloriæ, tutissimumi est fiduciam totam in solâ Dei misericordia et benignitate reponere*—Because of the uncertainty of our own righteousness, and the danger of vain-glory, I confess it is the safest course to put our trust in the sole mercy and grace of God.

Use 1. To persuade us, if grace be the cause of all the good we enjoy, not to wrong grace. Why? For this is to close and stop up the fountain; yea, to make grace our enemy; and if grace be our enemy, who shall plead for us? Angry justice must needs take up the quarrel of abused grace, and then there is no help; yea, grace itself would complain of the wrong received to God, and will solicit our judgment and

vengeance; the advocate will become an accuser. But how do we wrong grace? I answer—five ways—

1. By neglecting the offers of grace. Such make God speak in vain, and to spend his best arguments to no purpose: 2 Cor. vi. 1, 'We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.' By the grace of God is there meant the offers of grace in the gospel. Now, we receive it in vain when all the wooings and pleadings of grace do not move us to bethink ourselves and look after our salvation. It is a great affront you put upon God to despise him when he speaks in the still voice. Look, as when David had sent a courteous message to Nabal, and he returns a churlish answer, it put him in a fury: 1 Sam. xxv. 34, 'Surely there had not been left by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.' So how angry will the Lord be against those that despise his grace, and all the renewed offers and messages of love, and prefer the profits and pleasures of the world before him! It may be you do not return a rough and churlish answer, and are not scorners and opposers of the word, but you slight God's sweetest message, when he comes in the sweetest and mildest way. The complaint in the gospel was, Mat. xi. 17, 'We have piped unto you, and you have not danced.' It is not, We have thundered unto you, and you were not startled; but, We have piped, and ye have not danced. Not to take notice of these sweet allurements and blandishments of grace, that is very sad: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' The greatness of the benefit aggravates the sin. It is great salvation that is offered; there is an offer of pardon and eternal life, but it worketh not if you neglect it. There is a sort of men that do not openly deny, reject, or persecute the gospel, but they receive it carelessly, and are no more moved with it than with a story of golden mountains, or rubies or diamonds fallen from heaven in a night-dream. You make God spend his best arguments in vain if you neglect this grace. Scourge conscience till it ache. What will you do? 'How will you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?' God sets himself a-work to gain the heart, and grace hath laid open all its treasures, as a man in a shop to draw in custom; now it is grieved and wronged when it doth not meet with a chapman. This is the charge that is laid upon those, Mat. xxii. 6; when they were invited, 'They made light of it;' they did not take it into their care and thoughts, did not seriously think with themselves, Oh, that God should invite us to the marriage of his Son! They do not absolutely deny, but make excuse; they do not say, *non placet*, but *non vacant*—they are not at leisure; and this made the king angry. When all things are ready, and God sets forth the treasures and riches of his grace, and men will not bethink themselves, their hearts are not ready. How will this make God angry? Such kind of neglecters are said to 'judge themselves unworthy of eternal life,' Acts xiii. 46. You will say, Is there any fault in that? Who is worthy? Should we not judge ourselves to be vile forlorn creatures, unworthy of a look from God, much more of eternal life? I answer—It is not spoken of self-humbling, or of a holy self-condemning, but of those that turn their back upon grace. Grace comes to save them, and God makes them an offer as though they were worthy; and they judge themselves un-

worthy, and plainly declare they were altogether not worthy of this grace. All men are unworthy enough of eternal life, and God hath cause enough to condemn them; but they chiefly judge themselves unworthy, that is, in fact declare themselves to be so, that have received the honour and favour of a call. Grace hath spoken unto them, and made them an offer of pardon and salvation, and they turn the back upon it, as if it were not worth the taking up on God's terms; and such are all ignorant sots and deaf worldlings.

2. Another sort of men that wrong grace are those that refuse grace out of legal dejection. Many poor creatures are so vile in their own eyes that they think it impossible they should ever find favour in God's eyes. Oh! but consider, cannot the riches of grace save? When God shall set himself on purpose to glorify grace to the full, cannot it make thee accepted? Wherefore doth God bring creatures to see their unworthiness, but that grace might be the more glorious? Grace would not be so much grace if the creature were not so unworthy; therefore you should be glad you have your hearts at that advantage, to be sensible of your own vileness. It is a wrong to grace if you do not fly to it; you straiten the riches and darken the glory of it. It is as if an emperor's revenue could not discharge a beggar's debt. Our ephah is full, brim-full, but God's mercy is over-full. You can speak of sins, and the scripture speaketh of mercy: 'Hast thou but one blessing, O my father?' saith Esau, Gen. xxvii. 38. So, hath God but one mercy? Grace is a treasure that cannot be spent, an ocean ever full, and ever flowing: 'Where sin hath abounded, grace did much more abound,' Rom. v. 20. There cannot be so much in sin but there is more in grace. The apostle makes new-coined words when he is to speak of the abundance of grace; ἐπλεόνασεν and ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν. The prodigal could say, There is bread enough in my father's house: Luke xv. 17, 'How many hired servants in my father's house have bread enough and to spare!' There is grace enough in God. If we perish, it is not for want of mercy, but for want of faith. Why should we then put away this grace that is revealed to us, yea, offered to us? If it were to be procured by anything in us we might despair. Take heed of slighting the grace of God; it is God's treasure: so far as you lessen grace, you make God a poor God. Mark that expression, Eph. ii. 4, 'God, who is rich in mercy.' God is lord of all things, but he counts nothing to be his treasure but his goodness and mercy. He doth not say, rich in power, though he is able to do beyond what we can ask or think; nor rich in justice, though he be righteous in all his ways and just in all his works; nor doth he say rich in creatures, though his are the cattle of a thousand hills; but rich in mercy. Therefore take heed of straitening mercy, for so far you lessen God's wealth and treasure.

3. Grace is wronged by intercepting the glory of grace. It is the greatest sacrilege that can be to rob God of his glory, especially the glory of his grace. Above all things in the world, God's glory is the most dear to him; he cannot endure to have a partner. Especially is the glory of his grace dear to him; it is the whole aim of all his dispensations to glorify grace: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.' You rob

God of his chiefest honour when you take the crown of glory that is due to grace, and put it upon your own head. As, for instance, when you think he accepts you rather than others for some worth or good qualities that he seeth in you more than in others. Alas! in the light of the gospel such thoughts are not expressed, but they lurk secretly in the heart: Deut. ix. 4, 'Speak not thou in thy heart, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land.' A man's heart is very prone to these thoughts: God seeth that I would bring him more glory than another; it is for my righteousness. Grace is wronged also when you are puffed up with anything you have done for God, as if it were done by your own power and strength. A christian in this case should learn the policy of Joab; when he was in a fair way of taking Rabbah, he sent for David to take the honour of winning it: 2 Sam. xii. 28, 'Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it; lest I take it, and it be called after my name.' So, when we have done anything for the glory of God, let us send for God to take the honour. Thus the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' If there be any excellency, still throw the crown at grace's feet. The industrious servant said, Luke xix. 16, 'Thy pound hath gained ten pounds;' not my industry, but thy pound.

4. Grace is wronged by turning it into wantonness. It is a heavy charge, and a black note is set on them: Jude 4, 'Ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness;' when men sin freely that God may pardon freely; when they presume upon grace, as if that should bear all, and use it as a dung-cart to carry away all their filth; or, like riotous children who have a rich father, therefore spend freely; their father's estate shall pay for all. It is a mighty wrong to grace when we make it pliable to such a vile purpose. You dishonour God and disparage grace when you would make it to father the bastards of your own carnal hearts. You are vile and sinful, and you are so under the encouragements of grace, and the rather because of the abundance of grace; and, like the spider, suck poison out of the flower, and turn it into the nourishment of your lust; or as the salt sea turns the sweet rivers and dews of heaven, and all that falls into it, into salt water; so carnal hearts do assimilate all that they meet with, and turn it into fuel for their lusts. Men would fain sin securely and *cum privilegio*, with licence from heaven; and therefore they take liberty even from the grace of God. This is a vile abuse; a quite contrary way the grace of God teacheth us, 'to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts;' and not to be more secure and careless because they have so much grace. But they hail it, and wrest it from its natural end and purpose, and sin freely, because God pardons freely. Grace giveth no such liberty to sin. This is done grievously by the Antinomians, who say grace gives them freedom from the moral law. It is true, grace makes us free, but to duty, not to sin. There is a sad expression, Rom. vi. 20, 'When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness;' it is a description of the carnal state; duty hath no awe upon his heart. When men think themselves free from the law rather than sin, and when they expect comfort though they walk in the way of their own

heart, they have abused grace, and taken hold of the devil's covenant, and not of God's. There is never any creature freed from the law; God never made a creature to be absolutely *sui juris*, at his own disposal. The angels themselves, though they have many immunities and privileges above us, as being exempted from troubles, diseases, and death, and from the clog of flesh which we carry about us, yet they are not exempted from duty or from a law: 'They do his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his word,' Ps. ciii. 20. Earthly kings may free some of their subjects from their homage; as Saul made a proclamation, He that doth thus and thus, 'his father's house shall be free in Israel,' 1 Sam. xvii. 25. But God never made any creature to be absolutely freed from a law. But if a man be right in doctrine, though he hold the obligation of the moral law on a believer, yet he may be an Antinomian in practice, and abuse and wrong grace; as thus, if a man slacken any part of his duty for grace's sake, or lets loose the reins of vile affections with more freedom, and saith, God will not be so rigorous, he wrongeth grace. If men be not so watchful and so strict, if men grow more careless, secure and negligent, if they be not so constant in duty, if they lessen aught of their humiliation for sin, or strictness and watchfulness in their conversation, they are as a spider that sucks poison out of grace. A man hath never the more carnal liberty for being acquainted with the gospel. This is the great thing which puts us upon duty and watchfulness, and melts the heart for sin, and awes it, and disposeth it to obedience.

5. Grace is wronged by slighting it after a taste, as carnal professors do: 1 Peter 2. 3, 'If so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' A man hath at first a taste, that he may have trial how sweet the ways of God are. Now, if after trial, you are not satisfied, but make choice of the world again, it is a mighty wrong and contempt you put upon grace; for you do as it were declare and pronounce that you have made trial, and upon experience have found the pleasures and profits of the world are better than all the comforts that flowed from the grace of God. The whole aim of the word is to persuade men to make trial of the sweetness of grace: Ps. xxxiv. 8, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good,' and that his grace is good. But now your experience is a flat negative and contradiction to the word, and you do as it were say, I have made trial, and I find no such sweetness in it. None wrong grace so much as they that have tasted of grace, and yet have turned aside to the profits and pleasures of the world again, and grow weary after some strictness of profession.

Use 2. To press you to glorify grace. This is the glory God expects from you: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made you accepted in the beloved.' If an artificer show you a curious piece of workmanship, he expects to be praised for his skill. A wrestler that hath foiled his adversary expects to be praised for his strength, not for his beauty: that is not a proper praise. A king in his royal gifts expects to be praised for his magnificence. So suitably the Lord who doth all things freely, and according to the motion of his own will, expects to be praised for his grace; therefore you should be always echoing out, 'Grace! grace!' Zech. iv. 7, and admiring the dispensations of God's love. It is a sure sign a man hath received no

benefit by grace if his heart be not stirred up to praise grace. Certainly he that is a partaker of it must needs be most affected with it. Let us see a little what cause we have to praise God, above the angels, and above other men.

1. Above the angels. I do not mean the bad angels, with whom God entered not into treaty; he dealeth with them in justice, not in grace; but even the good angels. In some respects we have more cause to bless God than even the good angels. Thankfulness and gratitude looks to the freeness and graciousness of the gift rather than the greatness of it; it looks not to the benefit so much as the good-will of the giver. It is true God hath been exceeding good and bountiful to the angels, in creating them out of nothing, that they are the courtiers of heaven; but mark how good and gracious he is to us above them. The angels never offended him, but he is bountiful and gracious to us, notwithstanding the demerits of our sin; his wronged justice interposed and put in a bar, yet grace breaks out, and is manifested to us unworthy creatures. There was nothing that hindered God from doing good to the angels. A holy God hath a blessed, righteous, holy creature; but justice must be satisfied as to us; we are a generation of sinful men, the wretched children of apostatising Adam. We had forsaken God and cast him off, which the angels never did, that had a long experience of God's goodness and bounty. The very angels wonder at the grace showed to us, especially at that by which justice is satisfied: 1 Peter i. 12, 'Which things the angels desire to look into.'

2. Above other men. There is a common and inferior sort of grace, which is made known to all the world. The whole earth is full of his goodness, but this grace that bringeth salvation, that is peculiar to the elect, to a few poor base creatures in themselves, a little handful whom God hath chosen out of the world: John xiv. 22, 'How is it that thou wouldst manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?' Free grace doth pick and choose; and how? It chooseth out things that are in themselves of no account. Look, as when God chose a sacrifice for himself, the lion was not offered, but the lamb and the dove; so God hath chosen not those that are accounted gods, but a few despicable creatures. Free grace many times chooseth the worst, that all the glory might be of God. If a man might choose trees for building, he would not choose crooked ones, but those that are straight and fittest for his use and purpose. But when God comes to look among the sons of men, many times he chooseth the most crabbed pieces, and calls them with a holy calling, according to the purpose of his grace. It is a wonder sometimes to see how grace makes the difference between two persons involved in the same guilt. Justice can make no separation; when men are in a like case, they must look for the same judgment; but grace makes a great separation. Many of God's elect are as deep in sin as those now in hell, yet God makes a difference. Both the good and bad thief were involved in the same condemnation, yet one is taken into paradise, and the other went unto his own place. Thus praise and glorify grace.

Hath appeared unto all men.—The word ἐπεφάνη, *appeared*, signifies it is broken out of a sudden, like a star, or like a light that was not

seen before; and so it refers to the late manifestation of the gospel in the apostle's days. Now on a sudden it broke out. So Luke i. 78, 79, 'Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.' It is meant of the breaking out of the gospel, as the day doth after a dark night; so here the word ἐπεφάνη implieth the same.

Doct. 2. That grace in the discoveries of the gospel hath shined out in a greater brightness than ever it did before.

This grace appeareth in the gospel; there and there only is it clearly manifested.

In the prosecution of this point I shall show—

1. What darkness there was as to the knowledge of grace before.

2. How much of grace is now discovered.

First, What a darkness there was before the eternal gospel was brought out of the bosom of God. There was a darkness both among Jews and Gentiles. In the greatest part of the world there was utter darkness as to the knowledge of grace, and in the church nothing but shadows and figures.

1. This grace was not known in the world, only a little of it was: Ps. xxxiii. 5, 'The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.' Some inferior grace was made known to them in the creation and in the course of providence, by showers of rain and fruitful seasons, grace on this side heaven; but nothing of the secrets of God's bosom, of the incarnation of God, of the expiation of sin by his death, of salvation by faith in the Mediator. This depends not upon the connection of natural causes, but the free pleasure of God; therefore the angels knew it not till it was revealed in 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.' The gentiles, by looking into the order of causes, could never find it out. They might find a first being, and the chiefest good, but not a Christ, not a saviour; there they sat in the shadows of death, and did not understand nor desire eternal life: 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.' Much of God may be seen in the known courses of nature, rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, but nothing of Christ. The apostle speaks it there to dissuade them from the worship of Jupiter and Mercury, and other of the vanities of the gentiles; he argues from the grace of nature and common benefits which they had received: this were enough to make them acknowledge a divine power. Pray mark, the apostle saith, 'He left not himself without a witness;' yet he suffered them to walk in their own ways, because he did not reveal his gospel nor give them his Spirit: Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, 'He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel: he hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them;' Rom. xvi. 25, 26, 'According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known unto all nations for the obedience of faith;'

Eph. iii. 4, 5, 'Whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ; which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;' Col. i. 26, 27, 'Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles, which is Christ in them the hope of glory.' But God suffered them to serve their own lusts, and to carry on that religion which they had feigned to themselves. But then he left not himself without a witness, for they had many corporal blessings, from whence they might easily collect that they should not worship stocks and stones and dead men, but the living God, by whose providence those blessings were dispensed. Though he gave them not the gospel, yet he gave them the light of nature, and the looking-glass of the creatures. There is much ado whether this were *auxilium sufficiens gratiæ*, a sufficient help to convert them, or to bring them to such a condition that they might gain the grace of God. It was enough to oblige them to seek after God, and to convince them that they did ill in worshipping the creatures, but it was not sufficient to find out the true God and enjoy him. Saving grace is not granted by any promise to the improvement of nature. Well, then, though the whole earth be full of the goodness of the Lord, that is, of the fruits and effects of his common bounty, yet nothing of his saving grace is known, till it appeared and broke out in the gospel.

2. To the Jews this grace began to dawn, but it was veiled in figures and shadows, that they could not see clearly. The substance of their doctrine was the same with ours, but there is a great deal of difference in the manner of dispensation; they had the dark text, and we the exposition. There was grace and shadow by Moses, but 'grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,' John i. 17; because here all the types were revealed, and we have the substance itself. Christ is the light of the world. The sun, the farther off it is from rising, the less light it gives. Christ was not then risen, therefore there was but twilight and full of shadows. Grace is opposed to the condemnation of the moral law, and truth to the shadows of the ceremonial law. Christ's offices, his benefices, his person, were but darkly propounded to them. Take but one place for all. Of all the ministers of the legal dispensation, John Baptist saw the clearest; yet, saith Christ, the least of gospel ministers knows more than he: Mat. xi. 11, 'Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.' John drawing nearer to Christ, had a clearer knowledge of the meaning and application of the types than others had; but now those that have lived after the pouring out of the Spirit upon Christ's ascension under the gospel dispensation, have a clear insight into the doctrine of grace, far more clear than it was in the days of John.

Secondly, What and how much of grace is now discovered? I answer—

1. The wisdom of grace. The gospel is a mere riddle to carnal reason, a great mystery: 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Great is the mystery of god-

liness.' There we read of God and man brought together, and justice and mercy brought together by the contrivance of grace; here only we see this mystery, that is without controversy great, for these things could not come into the heads of any creatures. If angels and men had been put to study, and set down their way of reconciliation to God, how it should be, they could never have thought of such a remedy as the bringing of God and man together in the person of Christ, and justice and mercy together by the blood and satisfaction of Christ; this came out of no breast but God; he brought the secret out of his own bosom. When the question was put in the council of the Trinity, how man that was fallen might be brought again to God, from the depth of misery to the height of happiness, grace interposed, and propounded Christ to be God-man in one person. Oh! the strangeness and wonderfulness of this contrivance! If you consider the weakness and vileness of human nature, the infiniteness and excellency of the divine nature, certainly such a plot could not enter into the head of any creature. Upon what grounds could any creature expect such a condescension, that mortal and immortal, infiniteness and finiteness, should come together? And as the person of Christ is wonderful, so also is his work and business, which was to bring justice and mercy to kiss each other, that justice might have full satisfaction for men's sins, and mercy have full content in procuring their salvation, that grace might be glorified, and yet justice be no loser. When God redeemed the world, he had a greater work to do than to make the world at first. The object of creation was pure nothing, but then, as there was no help, so no hindrance; but now, in redemption, there was sin to be taken away, and that was worse than anything. We deserved ill, his justice and truth had a quarrel against us, and therefore this was the harder work, and needed more of his wisdom, which now is discovered fully to us in the gospel. When God was to make man, though he was to be his noblest creature next the angels, it was nothing to the divine power to make him of the dust of the earth. Now sin makes us worse than earth: Job xxx. 8, 'They were children of fools, children of base men, they were viler than the earth.' Our condition was worse; here God's justice opposed; but grace found out the contrivance, and sent Christ in the form of a servant, who 'was in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God,' Phil. ii. 6, 7.

2. We discern the freeness of grace in the gospel, both in giving and accepting. Whatever God doth is a gift, and what we do, it is accepted of grace. In giving there is a great deal of grace made known there. The Lord doth all freely: John i. 16, 'And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace;' that is, for grace's sake he gives Christ, gives faith, gives pardon; he gives the condition as well as the blessing. Certainly now we have to do with a God of grace, who sits upon a throne of grace, that he might bestow freely to all comers. Out of Christ and in the law, there God is discovered as sitting upon a tribunal of justice, as he is described, Ps. xcvii. 2, 'Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.' But now, saith the apostle, Heb. iv. 16, 'Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and grace to help in a time of need;' that we may have mercy for

pardon and for acceptance of our persons, and grace to help us against our weaknesses. This was figured out in the law. Under the law it was figured out by the mercy-seat between the cherubims, from whence God was giving out answers; but there the high priest could enter but once a year, and the way within the veil was not fully made manifest, Heb. ix. 8. There was a throne of grace then, but more God's tribunal of justice; there was smoke and thundering about his throne; but now let us draw near that we may obtain grace, take all freely out of God's hand. Then there is grace manifested in accepting as well as giving. God accepts of serious repentance for complete innocence, of sincerity for perfection, of the will for the deed, of a person for Christ's sake, and of the works for the person's sake. Thus God doth both give and accept freely. That we do is not brought to the balance, but touchstone. Many times a good work is not full weight. God doth not look to the measure, but to the truth of grace; he requires truth in the reins.

3. The efficacy and power of grace is discovered in the gospel. Christ sendeth his Spirit to apply what he himself hath purchased. One person comes to merit, and the other to accomplish the fruit of his merit. Mark, to stop the course of grace, divine justice did not only put in an impediment, but there was our infidelity that hindered the application of that which Christ was to merit; and therefore, as the second person is to satisfy God, so the third person is to work upon us. There was a double hindrance against the business of our salvation—God's justice, for the glory of God was to be repaired, therefore Christ was to merit; and there was our unbelief, therefore the Spirit must come and apply it. First, Christ suffered, and when he was ascended, then was the Spirit poured out. Had it not been for the gospel, we should never have known the efficacy and power of grace. The apostle puts the question: Gal. iii. 2, 'This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' How did you come to be acquainted with grace? This is the seal which God would put upon the excellency and authority of the gospel, that he will associate and join in assistance with it the operation of the Spirit to accompany it. Look, as it is with the sun, light increaseth with heat; the morning beams are faint and gentle, but at noon the sun shines out, not only with glory, but with strength; so it is here; the more the light of the gospel is increased, the more is the efficacy and power of it conveyed into the sons of men. The dispensation of the law is called the 'oldness of the letter,' and the dispensation of the gospel the 'newness of the spirit:' Rom. vii. 6, 'But now ye are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.' In the mere law dispensation there was only a literal direction, but no strength and ability to perform what is suggested. *Lex jubet, gratia juvat*—The law commands, but all the commands of grace help. There is a Spirit that goeth along with the gospel to qualify us for the duties of it: 2 Cor. iii. 6, 'Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.' With the dispensation of the gospel God joins the virtue and power of the Holy

Ghost. The letter convinceth, and so by consequence obligeth to death, for we cannot perform what it requireth of us; but now there is a spirit goes along with the gospel, and so we are acquainted with the efficacy of grace.

4. We are acquainted with the largeness and bounty of grace. The benefits that come by Christ were not so clearly revealed in the law; there was no type that I know of which figured union with Christ. The blood of Christ was figured by the blood of bulls and goats, justification by the fleeing away of the scape-goat, sanctification by the water of purification. But now eternal life is rarely mentioned in express terms; sometimes it is shadowed out in the promise of inheriting the land of Canaan, as hell is by going into captivity; but otherwise it is seldom mentioned: 2 Tim. i. 10, 'But now it is made manifest' (speaking of the grace of God) 'by the appearing of our Saviour Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' The gentiles had but glimmerings and gross fancies about the future state. Life and immortality was never known to the purpose till Christ came in the flesh; and therefore heaven is as sparingly mentioned in the Old Testament as temporal blessings are in the new. In the New Testament we hear much of the cross, of sufferings, and afflictions. Why? Because there is much of heaven discovered. The eternal reward is strong enough, but temporals are not of consideration. Carnal men are of a temper quite contrary to the gospel; they could be content to be under the old dispensation, to have temporal blessings, and let God keep heaven to himself. But this is the great privilege of the gospel, that life and immortality, the blessed hope, the eternal recompenses are now mentioned so expressly, and propounded to our desires and hopes.

5. In the gospel we learn the sureness of grace. God will no more be disappointed; the whole business lies without us, in other hands. In the first covenant, our salvation was committed to the indeterminate freedom of man's will; but now Christ is both a redeemer and a surety. The former covenant depended upon something in ourselves, upon the mutability of our will; but now it is put into the hands of Christ, not only to reconcile us to God, but to preserve and keep us in such an estate. Therefore, Heb. vii. 22, he is said to be 'the surety of a better testament.' Christ stands engaged to see the covenant kept on both sides. God hath Christ to challenge for obedience, and we to give us grace to perform that which God hath required of us; so that now grace in all its glory is made known. The apostle saith, Rom. iv. 16, 'Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.' This is that which makes it sure to all the elect, because God deals with us upon such gracious and free terms.

SERMON II.

Hath appeared unto all men.—TITUS ii. 11.

USE 1. Let us prize these days of grace. We are not apprehensive enough of the mercy that grace is so clearly revealed. The gospel is the light of the renewed world; we can no more be without the gospel than the world can be without the sun. Ps. xix. David first speaks of the sun, then of the law, which signifies there the general doctrine of the scriptures. People would be in a miserable case, and all things would languish and suffer decay, if the sun were gone; and such blackness there would be upon the new creation if we had not the light of the gospel. Oh! how miserable were they that wanted the light of the sun for a few days, as in Egypt! And how barbarous and miserable should we be, were it not that immortality and life is brought to light by the gospel! Tertullian saith, *Gemmæ a sola raritate gratiam possident*—Jewels are commended for their scarceness and rareness. Oh! we should the more seriously regard the gospel, because God hath been so tender of revealing it. For four thousand years in a great measure the gospel lay hid. God kept it for a long time as a precious secret hid in his own bosom, and did not think the world worthy of it, till the Son of God came out from him to take our nature, then was the gospel discovered. Only as a king reveals his secrets to some of his intimates and privy counsellors, and hides from the rest of his subjects, so God revealed it to some prophets and some holy men, and yet they had but a glimpse, and saw Christ at a distance. As when we see a man afar off, we cannot tell his shape, nor colour of his clothes, nor other circumstances, but only we see the substance and bulk of a man, so they saw Christ, but it was at a distance, they could not tell the particular circumstances of his birth, incarnation, death, and resurrection so clearly as now we can; therefore the prophets are forced to study their own prophecies: 1 Peter i. 10, 'Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.' They saw there was a glorious salvation at hand, but fully what to make of it they could not tell; therefore they studied their own writings and prophecies, that were brought to them by the Spirit of God. The very prophets of God would have thought themselves happy to see the things that we see: Mat. xiii. 16, 17, 'But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.' We have a far more happy estate, since the manifestation of Christ in the flesh and pouring out of the Spirit, than Abraham and David and the prophets and righteous men had, for God hath dealt more mercifully and kindly with us; they had but a glimpse, and how earnestly did they desire to see more! and therefore were inquiring after it more and more. The usefulness, necessity and rarity of the gospel should make it more dear to us, that we should prize these days of grace more than we do.

Use 2. Let it put us upon trial. What are we the better for these days of grace? Have we more knowledge and clearness of faith? Alas! we are far inferior to those that obtained but the shadows; their eagle-eye discerned more of Christ in a ceremony than we can in the substance. It is said, Zech. xii. 8, 'He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.' But we come short, not only of David, but of the meanest believer in the Old Testament, and have little knowledge of the covenant and blessings of it. We lose the benefit of the days of light wherein we live; as good we had never heard of the gospel, nay, in some sense it had been better for us we had never enjoyed these days of plenty, if we do not profit by them. To stumble in the night is more venial and pardonable; but it is dangerous to stumble there where we have the benefit of the light to see our way. The grace of God hath appeared, breaking out like a clear light, yet we come short of grace offered to us. Trees in a fertile soil should be more fruitful, and cattle in better pasture should thrive more; so we that are led forth by the pleasant streams, and refreshed with the tender grass of the earth, should thrive more. Wherefore hath God set up a candle, a light in the church, but that we should work by it? Therefore have you improved these days of grace? What of power have you got to subdue corruption? Alas! to some the gospel is but a dead letter still; it gives them no strength to master their corruptions; at best it is a directive light, not persuasive; it is only as light, not as fire to consume and burn up their lusts; therefore, what of strength can you speak of for subduing of corruption? what of willingness of heart to do duties? 'The love of Christ constraineth us,' 2 Cor. v. 14. You who are not acquainted with God's love and grace have less constraint. It should not be so; yet there is more recorded of the piety, zeal, and devotion of the saints of the Old Testament than we can imitate. And have we a greater measure of comfort to carry us out against discouragement? Have we a more full joy, to bear us up against all the afflictions of this present life, now there is more grace discovered? John xv. 11, 'These things have I spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.' Is there a greater measure of charity in doing good to them that need it, as more of the bounty of God is discovered to us in these days of grace? Under the law all things were set down in so many positive precepts, the exact proportion what they should give and lay out; the tenth part was the Lord's; but under the gospel it may be there was no such precept (though that be a great question whether the tenth be not the Lord's still), but God knows love will not be backward, for it is trusted much in the days of the gospel. In short, are we more acquainted with God's covenant? can we subdue corruptions more, bear afflictions better? and have we a greater ability and willingness to good works?

Which bringeth salvation to all men.—That is, to all that accept of grace, bond or free; and that salvation is taken for our complete happiness, for eternal life and salvation, is clear enough. The point then is—

Doct. 3. That the grace of God revealed in the gospel is the great means of salvation, or a grace that tends to salvation.

The gospel is called the power of God unto salvation: Rom. i. 16, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation;' that is, a powerful instrument which God useth. Therefore it is called the arm of the Lord: Isa. liii. 1, 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' Its force is not in letters and syllables, but it standeth in the co-operation of the Spirit, by which God owneth and honoureth it. It is said to Cornelius, when Peter came to preach the gospel to him, Acts xi. 14, that he should tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved. There is no other way to bring men to God but this; this will teach you how you and your little ones should be saved.

Now the gospel, or the grace of God in the gospel, is a means of salvation, because it hath a moral tendency that way, and because it hath the promise of the Spirit's work and assistance.

1. It hath a moral tendency that way; for there is the history of salvation, what God hath done on his part; there are the counsels of salvation, what we must do on our part; and there are excellent enforcements to encourage us to embrace this salvation.

[1.] There is the history of salvation, what God hath done on his part; there all things are ready; there you hear of the love of God, that he hath given his only Son, and of the free election of those whom he means to save in Christ. There you hear of the person of the Mediator, his mission and sending into the world, his incarnation, his unction, or anointing to his office, his abasement, his obedience, his death, his burial, his satisfaction for sin, his purchase of life; and then his exaltation, with all the fruits and effects of it, to wit, his intercession at the right hand of God, his effusion and pouring out of the Spirit to be his deputy here on earth; and there you read of his collection and manner of gathering of a church by the institutions of the word and sacraments; there we hear of the humiliation of Christ, by which salvation was purchased; and of his exaltation, whereby the graces that accompany salvation are distributed and dispensed, and how Christ by his Spirit applies this salvation.

[2.] There is the counsel of salvation, what man must do on his part that he may partake of the righteousness and Spirit of Christ, according to the good pleasure of God, which Christ purchased by virtue of his humiliation, and dispenseth and distributeth by virtue of his exaltation. I call all this the counsel of God, because thus it is called in scripture: Luke vii. 30, 'The pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves.' If you will be saved, here is God's counsel, thus you must do. It is dangerous for a sick man to alter the physician's method and receipt, to be tampering, to be taking out and putting in; so it is very dangerous to alter the counsel of God which he hath set down how we may be brought to salvation. Do not, as the young man that came to Christ, and said, Mat. xix. 16, 'Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' and yet, when Christ puts him to the trial, it is said he went away sad. So a natural man his heart is raised up to hearken after salvation, but he goes away sorrowful when he cannot win heaven in his own way, to enjoy Christ and the world, Christ and carnal liberty, and Christ and his carnal pleasures; therefore you must not only look to the his-

tory of salvation, what God hath done, but to the counsel of salvation, what you must do. And Peter sums it up, and gives an abridgment of the gospel: Acts ii. 37, 38, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do? and Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' Repentance, that implies true and lively grief because of sin and misery, by which a man feeleth the wrath of God, grieveth because he hath offended God, acknowledgeth that he hath deserved condemnation, hungereth and thirsteth after Christ, and then waiteth till his heart be settled in the comfort of the gospel, and he possessed of the righteousness of Christ. Nay, repentance implies more; you must lay down the weapons of defiance, and study thankfulness to God, and walk in new obedience, and love God, and love your neighbour, and bear the cross quietly, waiting for eternal life. This is the counsel of God to you if you would be saved. And then he saith, 'Be baptized,' by which Peter understands a religious use of the seals, and all the means of salvation in which God is wont to meet us, and give us the supplies of his grace by his Spirit.

[3.] There are excellent enforcements to encourage us to embrace this salvation. God is very impatient of being denied, now he speaks in the gospel, and useth all kinds of methods. As a man who cannot undo a door, and having a bunch of keys in his hand, tries one after another, till the lock doth fly open, so the Lord tries all kind of methods, beseecheth, threateneth, promiseth, that the heart of the sinner might fly open. He beseecheth; God falls a-begging to his own creature, and deals with us as importunately as if the benefit were his own; thus doth he pray us to be reconciled. And then God threatens eternal death, to stir us up to take hold of eternal life; he tells us of a pit without a bottom, and a worm that never dies. Sometimes he seeketh to work upon our hope, and sometimes upon our fear. He not only tells us of the loss of happiness, which is very grievous to an ingenuous spirit: Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;' but he tells us of those eternal torments that are without end and ease, of a worm that never dies, and of a fire that shall never be quenched. Oh! whose heart doth not tremble at the mention of these things? Then, on the other side, we have promises as great as heart can wish for, and more: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.' It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive of these things. Who ever hired a man to be happy, or a thirsty man to drink, or a hungry man to eat? Salvation is so acceptable, and the heavenly and blessed hope so glorious, that we should purchase it at any rate; but God taketh all methods to awaken man. Thus the gospel may well be said to be a powerful instrument of our salvation, because it hath a powerful tendency that way.

2. Because it hath the promise of the Spirit's assistance. Rom. i. 16, the gospel is said to be 'the power of God unto salvation,' not only because it is a powerful instrument which God hath appropriated to this work, but this is the honour God puts upon the gospel, that he will join and associate the operation of his Spirit with no other doctrine but this. And therefore the apostle saith, Gal. iii. 2, 'Received you

the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' How come you to receive the Spirit? Either by endeavouring to get acceptance with God according to the terms of the law, or by the doctrine of the gospel. The assistance of the Spirit is joined with no other doctrine. This is the authentic proof of the excellency of that doctrine, that God hath reserved the power of his grace to go along with it; he will not associate and join his Spirit with any other doctrine. The law, as it is contradistinguished from the gospel, it is called 'the ministration of condemnation,' 2 Cor. iii. 9, and 'the ministration of death' to fallen man, ver. 7. It is the office of the law to condemn a man, not to save him. Not as if preaching of the law did make us guilty, but shows us to be guilty. To him that is guilty of death, it puts the guilt before his eyes, that knowing it, and feeling it, he may be terrified, and despair in himself, and beg for deliverance. To this end the apostle gives us an account of his own experience: Rom. vii. 9, 'I was alive without the law once;' that is, I thought I was alive, and did not know myself, or feel myself guilty of death; I thought myself to be in as good a condition towards God as any man; 'but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died;' then I counted myself to be lost and utterly undone. A sinner, before the law comes, is like a beggar, that dreams he is a king, and that he wallows in ease and plenty; but when he awakes, his soul is empty, and he feeleth his poverty and his hungry belly, and his rags confute all his dreams and false surmises. So we thought ourselves to be alive, in a good condition towards God; but when the law comes, then we see ourselves to be dead and lost. Therefore the law, as it is opposed to the gospel, is not the means of salvation, so it is only the law of sin and death: Rom. viii. 2, 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.'

Object. You will say, These seem to be hard expressions, to call it the law of sin and death; but you must understand it aright. To man fallen the law only convinceth of sin, and bindeth over to death; it is nothing but a killing letter; but the gospel, accompanied by the power of the Spirit, bringeth life. Again, Ps. xix. 7, it is said there, 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;' therefore it seems the law may also be a word of salvation to the creature. I answer—By the law there is not meant only that part of the word which we call the covenant of works, but there it is put for the whole word, for the whole doctrine of the covenant of life and salvation; as Ps. i. 2, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.' And if you take it in that stricter sense, then it converteth the soul but by accident, as it is joined with the gospel, which is the ministry of life and righteousness, but in itself it is the law of sin and death. Look, as a thing taken simply would be poison and deadly in itself, yet mixed with other wholesome medicines it is of great use, is an excellent physical ingredient; so the law is of great use, as joined with the gospel, to awaken and startle the sinner, to show him his duty, to convince him of sin and judgment; but it is the gospel properly that pulls in the heart.

Use. To press you to regard the gospel more, as you would salvation itself, for it bringeth salvation. By way of motive and encouragement—

1. Consider the greatness of the salvation: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' It is not a slight matter. In the gospel God doth not treat with you about trifles; your eternal life lies upon it; we preach to you a doctrine that tends to salvation. That so the argument may be more operative, consider what is salvation. Salvation implieth a deliverance from danger and distress, and a preservation in a condition of safety. Sometimes he is called a saviour, *qui quod semel factum est conservat, ne pereat*, that keepeth a thing in a condition of safety, though it were never lost. In this sense God is said to save man and beast: Ps. xxxvi. 6, 'O Lord, thou preservest man and beast;' as he doth preserve them from decay and ruin; so he is 'the saviour of all men,' 1 Tim. iv. 10. There is not a creature but may call God saviour. But this salvation I speak of is a salvation proper but to a few creatures, not a general preservation or act of providence. Here is not only safety, but glory; it is a translation to a place of happiness. Again, he is said to save that delivers out of danger and destruction, as the shepherd that snatcheth the lamb out of the teeth of the lion saveth him; and in common speech we call him a saviour that delivers from evil. But mark, this salvation is not only privative, but positive. Christ doth not only deliver us from evil, from sin, from the wrath of God, the accusations of the law, and eternal death, but positively he gives us grace, and righteousness, and everlasting life; he is not only a saviour to defend us, but a saviour to bless us, 'a sun and shield,' Ps. lxxxiv. 11; not only a shield to keep from danger, but a sun who is the fountain and cause of vegetation and life; it is not preservation merely, but preferment. If Christ had only delivered us from wrath to come, and been a saviour privatively, it had been more than we could expect; or if he had procured some place where we might have been unacquainted with pain or trouble, yet then he had been a saviour; but here is not only a ransom and deliverance, but an inheritance, an exaltation; heaven and everlasting glory are included in this salvation. Instead of horror and howlings, here are everlasting joys, and we shall ever be with God, praising his grace in the midst of all his saints. The blessing is so excellent, that we cannot neglect it without great danger: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' For what can we expect but that God's mercy and patience abused should be turned into wrath and fury? And we cannot despise it without a great deal of sin and profaneness: Heb. xii. 16, 'Lest there be any profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.' The birthright was a pledge of the blessing, and a right of priesthood and ministration before the Lord depended upon it. This was Esau's by birth; and he is called *βέβηλος*, 'a profane man,' for parting with it at so low a rate, and thinking so meanly of spiritual privileges. Oh! but what profaneness is this, to despise the great salvation that will cause us ever to be before the Lord, and minister in his presence! We count him a profane man that is guilty of murder, theft, adultery, perjury, because those sins bring public shame and contempt, and because these sins are most destructive to human society; but he is a profane man indeed that despiseth the gospel, because it offereth such an excellent salvation; that is profaneness, to slight God's best provision, to scorn his

bowels, and, when the Lord hath made the bait an allurement so strong to gain man's heart, yet to turn his back upon it.

2. Consider the completeness of the Saviour. Jesus Christ is so by merit, and by efficacy and power, and so every way fitted to do us good. He doth something for us, and something in us. Look, as in the gospel there is the history of salvation, and there Christ doth all, he is a saviour by merit; and there is the counsel of salvation, and there he is a saviour by power, he helps us to do the duty on our part. We have the merit of his humiliation and the power of his exaltation; for us he prevails by the merit of his death, and in us by the efficacy of his Spirit. When Christ was to save us, there were several hindrances—one on God's part, and another on ours; there was hindrance put in by God's justice, and a hindrance by our unbelief. Justice requires merit, and unbelief power; Christ was a saviour both ways. Again, there are different enemies to our salvation, which were of several qualities—God and the law, and sin and death, and Satan and the world. Now God and the law are to be considered in a distinct rank from sin and death, from Satan and the world. God was an enemy that could not be overcome, therefore must be reconciled. The law was an enemy that was not to be disannulled and destroyed, but to be satisfied; the precepts of it were not to be relaxed or repealed, but fulfilled; the curses of it were not to fall to the ground; some must be made a curse, that the authority of it might be kept up. Now Jesus Christ he is made a curse for us, and by his merit he satisfies the law and the justice of God. Then, among the other enemies, look to Satan; he is not only a tempter, but an accuser. As he is a tempter, so Christ is to overcome him by his power; as he is an accuser, so Christ is to overcome him by his merit. Certainly so far as Satan is an enemy, so far must Christ be a saviour, that the plaster may be as broad as the sore; and therefore against the accusations of Satan he interposeth as our advocate, by representing his merit, and by bringing his blood unto the mercy-seat. Once again, consider, that our comfort may be full, Christ saves us by merit and by power. By his obedience and merit he gives us *jus ad rem*, a right and title to salvation; but by his efficacy and power he gives us possession, *jus in re*. He was first to buy our peace, our comfort, our grace, our glory of God, and then to see that we be possessed of it; and therefore we are said to be reconciled by his death, and saved by his life. He died that we might rely on his merit, and ransom, and blood, which was a price to reconcile us to God; and he lives that we might wait for his power, and so be saved by his life.

3. Consider, as the greatness of the salvation, and the completeness of the Saviour, so the excellency of the gospel; how it manifests and sets out this saviour, not in shadows and types, but with clear and express explication. God bestowed many benefits upon the old church, which were great enforcements to godliness, but not so powerful and effectual, because they were but shadows of salvation. Things that grow in the shade come not to such perfection as things that grow in the sun. In the Old Testament they had many blessings, but they were typical ones, and lasted but for a while; they had many saviours, that delivered them from the house of bondage, led them through the Red Sea, and through the desert into Canaan; delivered them from their enemies,

destroyed the nations round about them ; but now these were shadows of good things to come. The New Testament shows what is the meaning of all these; that we are delivered from the devil, and led into heaven, and brought to the possession of eternal life by Jesus Christ. The Old Testament speaketh of calling Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, and separating his seed as a people to God. We can speak of election, that we may obtain the adoption of sons. The Old Testament speaks of multiplying the seed of the Jews as the sand of the sea ; the New Testament speaks of the multitude of converts, a great number which none can number. The Old Testament speaks of the bringing out of Egypt; the New, of bringing sinners out of the power of darkness. The Old Testament mentions the Red Sea ; the New, the grace of baptism, or Red Sea of Christ's blood. The Old Testament speaks of God's providence in the wilderness, how the people of Israel were led up and down for forty years, and fed, and clothed, and delivered; the New Testament speaks of God's providence over his church during the whole state of the present world; how he guides us by his counsel, till he brings us to his glory: Ps. lxxiii. 14, 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.' They were led into the land of Canaan by Jordan, and we have entrance into heaven by death ; they could speak of judges and kings that were glorious, and did worthily in their generations, but the New Testament shows all that have an interest in Christ shall judge the world together with Christ at the last day: 2 Cor. vi. 2, 'Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?' and as kings shall reign with Christ for evermore, and be far more glorious than Solomon in all his glory. Their piety was like a plant that grows in the shade ; now the sun is risen, which scattereth his light, heat, and influences.

4. Consider what should be God's aim in the designation of his providence, that he hath brought it and laid it before you: Acts xiii. 26, 'To you is the word of this salvation sent.' The apostle doth not say, We have brought it to you, but, God sent it. God hath a special hand in bringing the gospel. If you accept it, it will be God's token sent to you in love ; for the present it is God's message, sent for your trial. There is a mighty providence that accompanieth the preaching of the gospel. You will find the journeys of the apostles were ordered by the Spirit, as well as their doctrine ; as Acts viii. 26, 'The angel of the Lord said to Philip, Arise, go towards the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.' If they went north or south, it was not by their own good affection, or by the inclination and judgment of their own reason, but by the direction of the Spirit. So Acts xvi. 7, 'They assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.' They were not left to their own guidance and direction, but still they were carried up and down by the Spirit: 'As prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' 2 Peter i. 21. So also the delivery of it, to what people it should be disclosed, was not by the direction of men, but by the Holy Ghost. The apostles had not only their commission what they should do, but where they should preach it. If God send a minister to you to preach this grace that bringeth salvation, do not look upon it as a thing of chance. The

gospel doth not run by chance, and merely according to the intention and designment of men, nor in an orderly stated course as the sun, but by the special direction of God. You would stand admiring, and think it a special benefit in a time of drought if the rain should fall on your garden and upon none else, as it did upon Gideon's fleece; or if the sun should be shut up to others and shine in your horizon, as it did in Goshen. Such a distinction hath God made in sending of the gospel; it is darkness to others, but a sun to you. God hath a special hand in the progress of the gospel; certainly the preaching of it in power, there is much of God in it. The word goes from place to place; if you accept it not, God will go to another. When the Jews refused the salvation of God, it is sent to the gentiles: Acts xxviii. 28, 'The salvation of God is sent unto the gentiles, and they will hear it.' It is not tendered unto you out of necessity, but by way of trial, out of God's choice. God cannot want clients; when you yourselves are thrust out, others may get in. You may want salvation, but God cannot want guests at the feast he hath prepared.

5. Consider of the great judgment that will light upon them that despise an offer of salvation. That which by its natural tendency is a grace bringing salvation, by your neglect may bring certain condemnation and ruin. Observe, God did never utterly cast off the people of the Jews for contempt of the law, but when once they came to despise the gospel, God would have no more to do with them. Indeed for the contempt of the law the Jews were punished; they went into captivity, but still a stock did remain, and it budded again. But when those glorious appearances of grace were discovered to them, and they despised them, then the wrath of God came unto them, εἰς τὸ τέλος, 'to the uttermost,' 1 Thes. ii. 16. When salvation itself cannot save them, condemnation must needs take place; and so persons perish upon a double ground—as guilty sinners, and as despisers of the remedy; as a man that is deadly sick, and will not take physic, perisheth both as he is sick and as he will not take physic; or as a man condemned by the law, and being reprieved for a short time, yet neglects to sue out his pardon.

But you will say, Who are those contemners of this salvation offered in the gospel? The gospel is the remedy, and contemning the gospel may be explained by refusing the counsels of physicians. You know some are utter enemies to physic, and cannot endure anything that is bitter and tart: and so carnal men, given up to pleasure, cannot endure the severities of the gospel, which are God's counsels and receipts for sick souls. If a few good hopes and wishes will carry them to heaven, that is all they mind. Some see that the endeavours of physicians do not always succeed, and that there is great uncertainty in that art, therefore slight all. Thus do men slight the gospel out of pure unbelief. Every one that hears the word is not saved; there are but few to whom it is manifested in power; and so they contemn it, having no such high thoughts of the word of God. Some, out of pride, refuse physic; they know as much as the physician; and so they throw away themselves by depending upon their own counsel. So some, out of mere pride and conceit, slight the gospel; they know as much as can be taught them; they think themselves alive, and need nothing, when they

are stark dead. Others, out of negligence, they are sick, but are not at leisure to take physic, do not mind the condition of their body till it proves deadly. Thus it is in the sickness of the soul; some are slighters: Mat. xxii. 5, 'They made light of it,' ἀμελήσαντες; others distrust, others cannot endure God's terms, others are self-conceited; but all neglect this great salvation, and contemn the greatest gift God ever offered to men; therefore they shall meet with the greatest judgment.

6. Besides the wrong done to God and yourselves, consider the wrong you do to God's messengers. This is the spiritual honour God hath put upon them, that they are instrumental saviours: 1 Tim. iv. 16, 'In doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.' We are employed in a subserviency to his grace, that so we might be saviours unto you. Oh! do not rob us of the honour God hath put upon us, let not our employment be in vain. The apostle urgeth this argument, Phil. ii. 16, 'Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.' Discover that it is a word of salvation in your lives. This would be the minister's crown and rejoicing, to see the fruits of the word of life, now in your conversation, and hereafter in your glorification, when a minister shall present himself and all his converts to God, 'Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me,' Heb. ii. 13. Therefore do not rob us of the honour God hath put upon us to be instrumental saviours.

What shall we do? Take these directions—

1. Get a sense of your dead and lost condition by nature. The killing letter makes way for the word of life; the law shows us that we are dead, and then we inquire after the way of life and salvation: 'The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost,' Luke xix. 10. We must be lost in our own sense and feeling before we can be saved. It is very notable that only those that were pricked in heart said, 'What shall we do to be saved?' Acts ii. 37, 'Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?' So Paul: Acts ix. 6, 'And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' So the jailer: Acts xvi. 29, 'He came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' Till we are pinched in conscience we trouble ourselves with other questions: as the disciples had many superfluous questions: John ix. 2, 'Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' and nice disputes: Acts i. 6, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' they were taken up with terrene expectations. Such a question Peter propounded to Christ: John xxi. 21, 'Lord, and what shall this man do?' But when we are soundly humbled, we say, Lord, what must I do to be saved? I see I am a lost creature; an hunger-bitten beggar will seek relief. Such questions are rare now, because the law has not a kindly work. Men think the gate of heaven wide, and the way easy to find; they never came to see how far off they were. But those that know themselves to be lost are inquisitive after a remedy, and more pliable to God's counsel. Oh! where is the word of salvation? what shall we do? They are ready to submit to any terms God shall prescribe.

Others make dry confessions of sin, and give in a narrative, but are not so solicitous about the remedies and redresses; but poor wounded spirits, that are sensible of their misery by nature, say, Good sir, show us the way; let God write down what articles he pleaseth, we would be glad to subscribe to them. Bonds of iniquity are much more sore than bonds of duty.

2. Let us attend more conscionably both upon the reading and hearing the word of the gospel, for both are instituted. Upon the reading of it; we should often consult with it; it is the counsel of God to poor lost souls, and the charter of our salvation. Do not think reading will be altogether unprofitable. The eunuch was reading, and wanted an interpreter, then God sent Philip, Acts viii. 33. He that sent Philip to the eunuch will send the Spirit to thee. Then attend more upon the hearing of the word of this salvation. Hearing is necessary. He that refuseth God's ordinance refuseth life and salvation. When men think they can get as much good by reading at home as by hearing sermons, they set up their foolish judgment against God's wisdom, as if they could tell a better means of salvation than God himself. God's word read is an ordinance, and God's word taught is an ordinance. Are we so wise as to be above the help of church gifts? yet we are not above God's ordinance. When God hath instituted two things, we should observe both. He hath instituted baptism and the Lord's supper. We must not, because we have been baptized, neglect the supper; so we must not neglect hearing because we have reading. As God hath instituted prophets and apostles to write scripture, so likewise pastors and teachers to open, explain, and apply scripture; and therefore the ministry must not be contemned.

Object. But you will say, God's blessing goeth with the gospel; and when we read the scriptures at home, we are sure of pure gospel; but we cannot say so of the sermons of men, who are liable to miscarriage and error.

Ans. The scripture is pure gospel of itself and by itself, and the sermons of men for the scripture's sake, for they are but comparing one scripture with another; they differ but as the cloth and garment; scripture is the cloth, and sermons make it up into a garment for use; or as corn and bread, the same substance remaineth in both. An apothecary, when he tempers several ingredients to make a medicine, he doth not destroy the nature of the simples, but compounds them, to make the medicine more effectual; so by gifts in the church, the gospel is not destroyed, but ordered and compounded, that it may be more useful. Indeed you must look to it that there be no sophistication in the composition; a spiritual man hath a distinguishing appetite; therefore be much in reading, much in hearing. When the wind is laid, the mill stirs not, and a ship under sail goes the swifter for oars, so the hearing of the word moves the affections; but when we cannot come to hear it, our affections are laid and stir not.

3. In reading and hearing the word, receive all the parts of it: Acts xx. 27, 'I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God. The receipts of a physician must not be altered, neither by the apothecary nor patient; so we must not alter God's receipts, nor you neither; we must not shun to declare, nor you to receive, the whole counsel of God. For instance, there is the history of salva-

tion; the doctrinal and historical part must be kept pure, that is the foundation. You read, in Gen. xxvi. 20, there was a great strife between Isaac's herdsmen and the herdsmen of Gerar about wells. Oh! certainly we should earnestly 'contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints,' Jude 3; these are wells of salvation. Take away one of the natures of Christ, or destroy one of his offices, and you lose a fountain of comfort; there is a well of salvation dammed and stopped up. So the promissory and hortatory part is necessary to quicken us, that we may not look for more than God hath promised, an earthly kingdom without the cross, or imperfect justification that needs our merit, or perfect sanctification without the relics of the flesh. But especially let us have regard to the mandatory part of the gospel; there we are apt to flinch and start aside; but we must hearken not only to what God hath done for us, but what he requires of us, that we may obey the counsels as well as believe the history of the gospel. The covenant is mutual; there is an obligation upon God, and an obligation upon us; therefore we read, Exod. xxiv. 7–9, that half of the blood was sprinkled upon the altar, to note God took upon him his part of the obligation, and half upon the people, to note they must take upon them their part of the obligation. It is true that God in the covenant of grace gives the condition as well as the blessing promised, but our obligation is to be acknowledged; though it be wrought of God, yet it is to be done by us. And there must be a restipulation, 'the answer of a good conscience towards God,' 1 Peter iii. 21. What answer do you make to God's proposals and articles? It is an allusion to the manner of admitting persons to baptism in those days; they were to answer to questions. *Credis?* dost thou believe? The person to be baptized was to answer, *Credo*, I do believe. *Abrenuncias?* dost thou renounce the world? he answered, *Abrenuncio*, I do renounce. *Spondes?* dost thou undertake to obey God? *Spondeo*, I undertake, I promise so to do. We must not only regard what God and Christ have done, but there must be something in us before we can make use of what God and Christ have done for us. There is a mutual consent of both sides; the gospel is as it were an indenture drawn between God and us; therefore, as we look to God for eternal life and salvation, which is made over to us in the promises of the covenant, so God looks for obedience and faithfulness from us, which is required of us in the precepts of the covenant.

To all men.—That is, to all sorts of men, bond or free, to servants as well as others; for in the context he doth discourse of servants. I shall only in brief observe this note—

Doct. 4. That this salvation which the grace of God bringeth is free for all that will accept of it.

God excludes none but those that exclude themselves. It is said to appear to all men—

1. Because it is published to all sorts of men; they all have a like favour in the general offer: John vi. 37, 'All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' There are two things in that description—there is the doctrine of election, and the offer of grace. It is certain the elect shall come; but then, in the offer or tender of grace, they have all alike

favour. Therefore be not discouraged, for whoever comes shall be sure of welcome; by this means the reprobate are left without excuse. The gospel is wisely contrived; it gives no ground of despair to any; one hath as fair ground to believe as the other; there is no monopoly in the offer. God doth not say, Come you, and not others, and I will not cast you out; but, Whosoever comes. The wicked have as fair a ground to believe as others; in the general offer God speaks promiscuously.

2. All that accept have a like privilege; therefore this grace is said to appear to all men. There is no difference of nations, nor of conditions of life, nor of lesser opinions in religion, nor of degrees of grace. See all summed up by the apostle: Col. iii. 11, 'There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.' We are taken with the admiration of outward privileges, and are altogether for empaling and enclosing 'the common salvation,' as it is called, Jude 3. The Lord accepts of all, be they Jew or Greek, &c. To go over these distinctions: The several conditions of life make no difference, bond or free, rich or poor. Servants or bondmen in those times were in a miserable case; they were but *animata instrumenta*, used as living instruments; every master had *potestatem vitæ et necis*, power over the life and death of his servants, as over his cattle. But now free grace doth overlook this distinction; bond or free are all one in Christ. In the account of God there is none poor but he that wants the righteousness of Christ. Then, for other differences in moral excellences, some nations are more civil than others; but, saith he, 'neither Scythian nor barbarian;' that doth not vary the case. He doth not mention only the barbarian, but the Scythian, which were of all people most rude and savage, the very dross and dregs of barbarism itself; they had little knowledge in the arts, letters, and civilities of other nations, yet all these are one in Christ. Then there is no difference of nation, Greek or Jew; some may live in a colder, some in a warmer climate, as they are nearer or further off from the sun; but all are alike near to the Sun of righteousness. God hath broken down the partition wall, and enlarged the pale of the church. Indeed, Rome would fain rear up a new partition wall, and confine God to their own precincts, as if out of their church there was no salvation. Envious nature cannot endure to hear that all nations should stand upon the same level. So again for some lesser differences in religion, that do not destroy the foundation; circumcision and uncircumcision, all is one in Christ, provided they submit to the main duties of christianity. They were the two known parties and factions in those times, but yet such as did not exclude from the benefit of the common salvation. When there was a schism at Corinth, 1 Cor. iii. 4, 'One saith, I am of Paul, another, I am of Apollos;' Christ is only ours, and not yours; Paul writeth to them, 1 Cor. i. 2, 'To all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.' We anathematise one another, and impropriate Christ by sacrilegious censures. It is very natural to us to confine grace within the circuit of our own opinions; and the worst sort of christians for the most part do so, as if none should go to heaven but those of their party. Tertullian, speaking of the times in which he lived, It is holiness enough

with some, saith he, to be of such a party, as if none could be saved but men of their own persuasion. Now, saith the apostle, 'neither circumcision nor uncircumcision;' all have the same common privilege. Once more, though there be a difference in the degrees of grace, yet all have an interest in the common privileges of christians. Some have a stronger, some a weaker faith; but saith the apostle, Rom. iii. 22, 'The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all and upon all that believe; for there is no difference;' they all take hold of the same righteousness. Look, as a jewel held by a man and by a child, though the man holds it more strongly than the child, yet it is the same jewel, and of the same worth and value; so the righteousness of Christ is of the same worth before God; the stronger believer holds it faster than the weaker believer; but though he cannot be so high in faith as Abraham, and as other worthies of God, yet he hath his holdfast upon God. Differences of nations and outward condition do neither help nor hinder salvation, and different degrees of grace, though they occasion some accidental difference in the spiritual life, as some have more comfort than others, yet as to the main, all that accept have a like privilege. The reasons of it are partly because the same grace is the cause of all. Free grace acts for the good of all upon the same terms: Isa. xliii. 25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' God doth not take notice of differences in them whom he forgives. God may pardon the sin of Andrew and Thomas, as well as of Abraham and Paul; grace's motives lie within itself. And partly, because they have the same Redeemer, Jesus Christ, theirs and ours. Under the law you shall find the rich and poor were to give the same ransom: 'The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel,' Exod. xxx. 15, to signify the price of Christ's blood for all souls is equal; they have not a nobler Redeemer, nor a more worthy Christ than thou hast. And partly because your faith is as acceptable to God as theirs: 2 Peter i. 1, 'To them who have obtained like precious faith with us;' that is, for kind, though not for degree. It is of the same nature, worth, and property with the faith of the apostles, though every one cannot believe as strongly as Peter, nor come up to his height.

Use 1. If the grace of God hath appeared to all men, then let us put in for a share. Why should we stand out? Are we excepted and left out of the proclamation of pardon and free grace? If persons be excepted by name when a pardon is offered to rebels, they stand off, and will not come within the verge of such power; but if it be offered to all, why should we stand out? We must not add nor detract. If God hath said, Christ died for sinners, believe him upon his word, and say, I am chief; do not say, I am a reprobate; God hath no favour for me. Will you leave that word and hazard your salvation for a groundless jealousy and scruple? Therefore confute your fears, and put all out of question by a thorough believing.

Use 2. For comfort to weak believers. Though your faith cannot keep time and pace with Abraham's, nor your obedience with the worthies of God, yet you are 'followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises,' Heb. vi. 12. A little faith is faith,

as a drop is water, and a spark is fire; it is free to all that have or will accept. Say, then, as he, Mark ix. 24, 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' The least drachm of gospel faith gives a title and interest. Indeed, you must strive to make it more evident; you cannot have comfort till then, and consider, endeavours of growth do better than idle complaints, therefore follow on still with hope.

SERMON III.

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness, &c.—TITUS ii. 12.

THE next thing to be considered is the lesson that grace teacheth us, 'Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.'

But before I enter upon the discussion of the particular branches, I shall observe some things in the general.

Obs. 1. Grace teacheth us holiness. It teacheth by way of direction, by way of argument, and by way of encouragement.

1. It teacheth by way of direction what duties we ought to perform, and so it maketh use of the moral law as a rule of life. The law is still our direction, otherwise what we do cannot be an act of obedience. Certainly the direction of the law is still in force; for where there is no law there is no transgression, and duty without a rule is but will-worship. If the law were blotted out, the image of God would be blotted out; for the external law is nothing but the copy of God's image, that holiness and righteousness which is impressed on the heart. Now grace doth not blot out the image of God, but perfects it. In the new covenant God promiseth to make the law more legible: Heb. viii. 10, 'This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.' Well, then, we are not freed from the authority and directive power of the law. Grace adopts, it doth not abolish, the law. The commands of the law sway the conscience, and love inclineth the heart, and so it becometh an act of pure obedience. Obedience respects the command, as love doth the kindness and merit of the lawgiver.

2. It teacheth by way of argument; it argueth and reasoneth from the love of God: Gal. ii. 20, 'The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' There is grace's argument; Christ loved me. We should not, then, be so unkind as to deny God his honour or worship, or cherish his enemies: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us.' What will you do for God, that loved you in Christ? The gospel contains melting commands and commanding entreaties. The law and the prophets do not beseech, but only command and threaten; but the grace of God useth a different method in the new testament.

3. It teacheth by way of encouragement, as manifesting both help

and reward. The gospel doth not only teach us what we ought to perform, but whence we may draw strength, and how kindly God will accept us in Christ. The law is a schoolmaster, and the gospel is a schoolmaster, but in the discipline and manner of teaching there is a great deal of difference. The law can only teach and command, but the gospel is a gentle schoolmaster; it pointeth to Christ for help: Phil. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;' and to God for reward and acceptance: Heb. xi. 16, 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' I do but mention these things, because I shall handle the encouragements hereafter.

Use 1. Of information. It showeth us—

1. What is true holiness, such as cometh from the teachings of grace, obliging conscience to the duty of the law, inclining the heart to obey out of the sense of God's love, and encouraging us by faith, drawing strength from Christ, and looking to God for our acceptance from him. Some works of the unregenerate are materially good, but it is not the matter maketh the work good, but the principle. The works of unregenerate men are done by God's enemies, out of the strength of a corrupt will for carnal ends, without any conscience of God's will, or respect to his glory; but ἔχθρων δῶρα ἄδωρα, they are giftless gifts. But now those done by persons in a gracious state are as good fruit growing on a good tree. Grace teacheth; he speaketh not of the external direction of the gospel, but the internal working of grace in the heart; it worketh by faith, love, and obedience. Obedience owneth the obligation, love inclineth to discharge the duty, and faith looketh up to God for help and acceptance, that we may do it in Christ, and for Christ's sake to God's glory. There is a free loving subjection of the whole man, inward and outward, to the whole will of God, with a desire to please him.

2. That grace and corruption draw several inferences and conclusions from the same premises. A bee gathereth honey from whence a spider sucketh poison. Corrupt nature is out in conclusions: Prov. xxvi. 9, 'As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.' Let us do evil that grace may abound, says a corrupt heart. Let us deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, says a gracious person. God doth all, says a corrupt heart, therefore we need but lie upon the bed of ease, and expect his help. No, says a gracious soul, Phil. ii. 12, 13, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.' The epicure says, The time is short; 'Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die,' 1 Cor. xv. 32. The apostle argues otherwise: 1 Cor. vii. 29, 'Brethren, I say unto you, The time is short; it remaineth that they that have wives be as though they had none,' &c. So 2 Sam. vii. 2, 'Then the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains;' compared with Hag. i. 2, 'This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.' Eli said, 1 Sam. iii. 18, 'It is of the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.' The king of Israel said, 2 Kings vi. 33, 'Behold, this evil is of the Lord; why should I wait for the Lord any longer?' We

are apt to stumble in God's plainest ways. Carnal logic is one of our greatest corruptions.

3. That it is the greatest wrong one can do to grace to slacken any part of our duty for grace's sake: Jude 4, 'Ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,' μετατιθεντες; they hale it besides its purpose. There is no such teacher of holiness as grace; it teacheth and giveth a heart to learn. They know not what grace meaneth that grow wanton, vain, and sensual. To make grace sin's lackey, is a vile abuse: Rom. vi. 15, 'What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.' You are under grace, therefore 'yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God,' ver. 13. As Fulvius said to his son when he slew him, I begot thee not for Cataline, but for thy country. God justified us, not that we might live to Satan, but to himself.

Use 2. Of trial. Whether we are made partakers of the grace of God in the gospel? Have we these teachings and arguings? Many can endure to hear that grace bringeth salvation, but that it teacheth us to deny ungodliness, there they flinch. Men would have us offer salvation, and preach promises; but when we press duty, they cry out, This is a hard saying. The cities of refuge under the law were all cities of the Levites and schools of instruction, to note that whoever taketh sanctuary at grace meeteth instruction; it is no benefit to thee else. In the general, doth it persuade you to make a willing resignation of yourselves to God? Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' Every time you think of mercy, do ye find some constraint in this kind? More particularly—

1. Doth it press you to deny lusts? Ezra ix. 13, 14, 'Seeing thou hast given us such deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments?' Doth it recoil upon you? Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Is this your kindness to your friend?

2. Doth it press you to good? 1 John v. 3, 'This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.' When God maketh a motion by his word or the counsels of his Spirit, Well, I cannot deny it; what a small service is this I owe to God? as Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and 'they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her,' Gen. xxix. 20; and Shechem underwent the pain of circumcision for Dinah's sake.

Obs. 2. Grace teacheth us, both to depart from evil, and also to do good: Ps. xxxiv. 15, 'Depart from evil, and do good;' Isa. i. 16, 17, 'Cease to do evil, learn to do well.' We must do both, because God hates evil and delights in good; we must hate what God hates, and love what God loves. That is true friendship, *eadem velle et nolle*, to will and nill the same thing. I durst not sin, God hates it; I durst not omit this duty, God loves it. Again, our obedience must carry a proportion with the divine mercy. Now God's mercy is not only privative, but positive. God not only spares and delivers us from hell, but saves and brings us to heaven: 'The Lord God is a sun and shield,' Ps.

lxxxiv. 11; not only a shield to keep us from danger, but a sun to afford us comfort and blessing. Therefore it is fit our obedience should be both privative and positive; not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well; as the description of a godly man runs, Ps. i. 1, 2, 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsels of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful;' but that is not enough, 'but his delight is in the law of the Lord.' Again, we must have communion with Christ in all his acts, in his death, and in his resurrection; and therefore we must not only mortify sin, but be quickened to holiness of conversation. He that hath communion with Christ in one act hath communion with him in all; and therefore, 'if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection,' Rom. vi. 5. We shall be dead to sin and alive to God. The same divine power that kills the old man quickens the new. Again, I might argue from the word, which is our rule, for there we have not only restraints, but precepts; therefore we must not only escape from sin, but delight in communion with God; we must eschew what God forbids, and practise what God commands.

Use. Let it press us not to rest in abstaining from sin merely. Many are not vicious, but they are not sanctified, they have no feeling of the power of the new life. The pharisee's religion ran upon negatives: Luke xviii. 11, 'God, I thank thee I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.' To enforce this, consider, both are contrary to the new nature; it hates evil and loves good. Where there is regeneration, there is a putting on and a putting off: Eph. iv. 22–24, 'That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' The new nature makes conscience of abstaining from sin and obeying God's precepts. And both are serviceable to the work of grace. Grace is obstructed by sins of omission and commission, for sins increase as well as unfitness for duty. The motions of the Spirit are quenched, and lusts grow prevalent in the soul, and both are odious to God. A barren tree cumbers the ground, and is rooted up as well as the poisonous herb.

Obs. 3. We must first begin with renouncing evil; that is the first thing grace teacheth. Since the fall, the method is analytical, to unravel and undo that which hath been done in the soul. So it is said of Christ, 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' Sin is the first occupant in the soul, and claimeth possession. Six thousand years ago it thrust out grace, which was the right owner; therefore first there must be a writ of ejectment sealed against sin, that grace may take the throne; Dagon must down, ere the ark be set up. It cannot be otherwise, it must not be otherwise; there must be mortifying and subduing of sin by acts of humiliation and godly sorrow before there will be experience of grace.

1. It cannot be otherwise, for the devil hath a right in us as long as we remain in sin; therefore there must be a rescue from his power:

Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.' Christ and Satan cannot reign in the same heart, nor God and the world. Joseph was taken out of prison, and then preferred to Pharaoh. This is the method: Luke i. 73, 'That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our lives.' Deliverance hath the precedence; first the thorns must be rooted out, and then the corn is sowed.

2. It must not be otherwise. God will have nothing to do with us till we have renounced sin. A plausible life is but a counterfeit varnish, like gilding over a rotten post, or a moral integrity, till sin be renounced. The prodigal left his husks, and then returned to his father. This is the method at our first conversion. Indeed afterwards there is some difference; when once grace is once planted in the heart, it hath the advantage of corruption, and worketh first. Thus it is said of Job, chap. i. 1, 'That man was perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil.' First fearing God, then eschewing evil. Grace having taken possession, and being seated in the heart, it works first. Like a man possessed and seated in his house, he seeketh to expel his enemy. So at first way is made for the operation of grace, and then all the work afterwards is the destruction of sin.

Obs. 4. It is not enough to renounce one sin, but we must renounce all; for when the apostle speaks of denying ungodliness, he intends all ungodliness. Compare this with 1 Peter ii. 1, 'Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile and hypocrisies;' and James i. 21, 'Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness.' All sins must be renounced, little sins and great sins. Great sins, as adultery, drunkenness, and the like, are manifest, Gal. v. 19; that is, nature doth abhor them, they stink and smell rank in nature's nostrils, even to a natural conscience. Then for little sins: Mat. v. 19, 'Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so to do, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.' It is spoken of ministers principally; whoever shall give license by the gospel to the least sin, either break it himself, or teach men so to do, shall have no place, no room among gospel ministers. No sin can be little that is committed against the great God. Sins are not to be measured by the smallness of the occasion, or by the suddenness of the act, but by the offence done to God, to an infinite majesty. The less the sin, the greater many times it is. It argues much malice to break with God upon every slight occasion; there is more unkindness in it, and the more contempt of God; and it argues the greater depravation of nature. As a little weight will make a stone move downward, because of its natural inclination, so it is a sign we have an inclination that way when a small matter can draw us from God. Again, secret sins must be eschewed as well as public: Isa. lv. 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;' the thought as well as the way is to be forsaken. By *way* is meant his outward course of life; by his *thoughts* is meant the hidden workings of his spirit. Nothing more transient and sudden than the thought; therefore, as we must not do evil before men, so we must not think evil before God. God

seeth the thought, as well as man the actions, and infinitely more. The thoughts are visible to him, and these fall under a law as well as our actions. Again, sins of temper, to which we are more incident, as well as other sins to which we have less inclination, they must be mortified: Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.' That sin which we call ours should be most watched against, and most hated above all others. As a man should be afraid of the meat of which he hath once surfeited, so the sin that hath once prevailed over us we should be more cautious against. It is nothing for a sordid spirit to be less proud, or a proud man to be less covetous, or a covetous man to be less sensual, or a sensual man to be less passionate; still a christian is tried by the revenge he takes upon his own sin, his master-lust. Again, not only sins which lie at a distance from our interest, but sins that bring us most profit and advantage. In these things God tries us; it is the offering up of our Isaac, our darling. In a corrupt world some things bring credit and profit; but as for the right hand, the right eye, we must pluck out the one and cut off the other: 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.' Cannot we do so much for God and for grace's sake.

I might give you several reasons. One sin is contrary to God as well as another. There is the same aversion from an eternal good in all things, though the manner of conversion to the creature be different. Again, one sin is contrary to the law of God as well as another; there is a contempt of the same authority in all sins. God's command binds, and it is of force in lesser sins as well as greater; and therefore they that bear any respect to the law of God must hate all sin: Ps. cxix. 113, 'I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.' God hath given a law to the thoughts, to the sudden workings of the spirit, as well as to actions that are more deliberate; and therefore, if we love the law, we should hate every lesser contrariety to it, even a vain thought. And all sin proceedeth from the same corruption; therefore, if we would subdue and mortify it, we must renounce all sin. He that hateth any sin as sin hates all sin, for there is the same reason to hate every sin. Hatred, philosophers say, is to the whole kind. A man that hates a toad as a toad hates every one of the kind; with the same kind of hatred must we hate every sin. Again, one sin let alone is very dangerous. One leak in a ship, if unstopped and neglected, may endanger the vessel. One sin let alone, and allowed and indulged, may quite ruin the soul. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. A man may ride right for a long time, but one turn in the end of his journey brings him quite out of the way. If you do many things, yet, if you commit any sin with leave and license from conscience, you are guilty of all sin: James i. 10, 'Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,' as one condition not observed, forfeits the whole lease. There is an indenture drawn between us and God, and every article of this covenant must be observed. If we

willingly give way and allowance to the least breach, we forfeit all the grace of the covenant.

Use 1. Direction what to do in the business of mortification. We must deny all ungodliness, not a hoof must be left in Egypt. Grace will not stand with any allowed sin; and in demolishing the old building, not one stone must be left upon another.

1. In your purpose and resolution, you must make Satan no allowance; he standeth hucking, as Pharaoh did with Moses and Aaron; first he would let them go three days into the wilderness; then he permitted them to take their little ones with them; but they would not go without their cattle, their flocks and their herds also; they would not leave anything, no not a hoof behind them. So the devil would have a part left as a pledge, that in time the whole man may fall to his share: 2 Kings v. 18,' In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon; when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.' We would grant Christ anything, so he would excuse us in our beloved sins. We complain of the times, and set up a toleration in our hearts; some right hand or right eye that we are loath to part with. Something there is wherein we would be excused, and expect an allowance; either outward, as in fashions, customs, ways of profit and advantage; or inward, some passions and carnal affections that we would indulge. Grace will not stand with any allowed sin. Herod did many things, but he kept his Herodias still. He turneth from no sin that doth not in his purpose and resolution turn from all sin; he doth not break off an acquaintance with sin, but rather make choice what sin he will keep, and what he will part with. The apostle speaks, Col. ii. 11, of 'putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.' We must not cut off one member or one joint, but the whole body, *totum corpus, licet non totaliter*, the whole body of sin, though we cannot wholly be rid of it. Dispense not there where Christ hath not dispensed.

2. We should often examine our hearts, lest there lurk some vice whereof we think ourselves free: Lam. iii. 40, 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.' Complete reformation is grounded upon a serious search and trial. As those that kept the passover were not to have a jot of leaven in their houses, and therefore they were to search their houses for leaven, such a narrow search should there be to discover whatever hath been amiss. Commune with yourselves. Is there not a jot of leaven yet left? somewhat that God hateth, some correspondence with God's enemies? Is there nothing left that is displeasing to God? Thus should we often bring our hearts and our ways and the word together.

3. Desire God to show you if there be anything left that is grievous to his Spirit: Job xxxiv. 32, 'That which I see not, teach thou me.' There are many sins I see, but more that I do not see; Lord, show them to me. So David appealeth to God, who must judge and punish conscience: Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24,' Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' Can you thus appeal to God, and say, Lord, I desire not to continue in any known sin?

4. When any sins break out, set upon the mortification of them. Do not neglect the least sins; they are of dangerous consequence; but renew thy peace with God, judging thyself for them, and mourning for them, avoiding temptations, cutting off the provision for the flesh: 1 Cor. ix. 27, 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.' The leper was to shave off his hair, and if it grew again, he was still to keep shaving. Corruption will recoil, but still we must use the razor of mortification, though it be such a sin as the world taketh no notice of, and others would not make conscience of.

Use 2. Of trial. Do we renounce all sin? But you will say, 'Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' Prov. xx. 9. I answer—

1. It must be done in purpose and resolution. In conversion there is an entire surrender of the soul to God. To reserve any sin is to part stakes between him and Satan, not to leave sin, but to choose it. But now in vow and purpose we must forsake every sin: Ps. cxix. 57, 'I have said that I would keep thy word.' And this purpose must be entire, without exception and reservation; so that if they sin, it is beside their purpose.

2. There must be a serious inclination of the will against it. Carnal men will profess a purpose and faint resolution, but there is no principle of grace to bear it, no bent of the will against it: Ps. cxix. 104, 'I hate every false way.' A child of God doth not escape every false way, but he hateth it, the inclination of the new nature is against it, and therefore sin is not committed without resistance; there are dislikes and denials in the renewed part; there is a fear of sin beforehand, and a present striving against it, and an after grief for it: the consent is extorted by the violence of a temptation, and retracted by remorse; for remorse is as the withdrawing of the consent, so that it is besides the inclination of the will.

3. There must be endeavours against it. The case[1] of obedience must be universal, though the success be not answerable; Ps. cxix. 6, 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments;' not when I have kept them, but when I have a respect to them all. We should never be able to look God in the face if our acceptance lay upon keeping all his commandments; but we must respect them all, and endeavour to keep them all, and dispense with ourselves in no known failing, and still the work of denying all sin must be carried on by degrees.

Thus much for the general observations.

Denying ungodliness.—Having observed something from the general view of this verse, I come to handle the particular branches; and here let me first speak of the privative part, 'Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts;' and the first thing to be denied is 'ungodliness.'

First, I shall open the terms of the text; and, secondly, the thing itself.

First, In the explication of the terms, I shall show—(1.) What is meant by 'ungodliness;' (2.) What by 'denying' it.

1. What is meant by 'ungodliness,' a sin much spoken of, but little known. The word ἀσέβεια in its native signification implies a denial of worship. Worship you know is the chiefest and most solemn respect of the creature to God; and therefore, when we deny any part of that

[1] Qu. 'care'?—ED.

service, respect, honour, and obedience which we owe to God, it is called *ἀσέβεια*, want of worship; as *εὐσέβεια*, right worship, is put for the whole subjection and obedience of the creature to God.

[1.] Ungodliness is sometimes applied to pagans, and to men that never acknowledged the true God: 1 Peter iv. 18, 'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?' The ungodly, being there opposed to the righteous and to the house of God, must needs be those that live without the pale, pagans and heathens that were never acquainted with the true God.

[2.] Ungodliness is sometimes put to imply the unjustified estate, or our condition by nature. And thus the apostle, when he speaks of Abraham and David, gives God this title and appellation: Rom. iv. 5, 'God, that justifieth the ungodly;' and Rom. v. 6, 'Christ died for the ungodly.' The reason why ungodliness is put for the natural state before conversion and justification, I suppose is because the Septuagint always renders רשעים by *ἀσεβεῖς*. Now רשע signifies restless, turbulent; but usually it is translated *ungodly:* Ps. i. 1, 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel שעים of the ungodly.' Now, because such kind of persons are usually brought forth to judgment and condemned, therefore it is put for condemned persons; as Ps. cix. 7, 'When he shall be judged, let him be condemned.' In the Hebrew it is יצא רשע, *exeat impius:* let him go out guilty or wicked, as in the margin of our bible. Certainly in that place, Rom. v. 6, 'Christ died for the ungodly,' the apostle, to amplify the love of Christ in dying for us, alludeth to the custom of the Jews, who were wont to divide the people into three parts, חסידים *ὅσιοι*, or *ἀγαθοι*, good and gracious men; צרקים, *δίκαιοι*, just men; and רשעים, *ἀσεβεῖς*, wicked men. For the good men, a man would even dare to die; by which are meant not only the just, but the bountiful soul, that did good in his place, and deserved love and respect. For a just man one would scarcely die: by the just men are meant those of a rigid innocency and strict justice as to matters external. But now, saith the apostle, we were neither good nor righteous men, but were of the other sort, ungodly, wicked, liable to the process of the law, and yet 'Christ died for the ungodly.'

[3.] The word is yet more specially used for the transgressions of the first table: Rom. i. 18, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.' There all sin is distinguished into two branches and kinds—ungodliness and unrighteousness. Ungodliness, that respects their carriage towards God; and unrighteousness, their carriage towards men: and in this sense it is taken here. Ungodliness is put for that part of sin whereby we rob God of his honour, respect, and service established by the first table; and worldly lusts for all those sins by which we wrong ourselves and others. Ungodliness, then, is not giving God his right and due honour; and therefore, that you may conceive of it aright, let me tell you that there are four particular notions ingrafted in the heart of man which are the ground and foundation of all religion—(1.) That God is, and is one; (2.) That God is none of those things which are seen, but something more excellent; (3.) That God hath a care of human affairs, and judgeth with equity; (4.) That this God is the maker of all things

that are without himself. These are grafted in the heart of man by nature, and are the sum and foundation of all religion. Now to these four principles are suited the four commands of the first table. The first principle is, that God is, and is one; and in the first commandment there is God's unity clearly established: 'Thou shalt have no other gods besides me.' The second principle is, that God is none of those things which are seen, but something more excellent; and in the second commandment we have God's invisible nature; for images are forbidden upon that ground, because God cannot be seen: Deut. iv. 12, 'You saw no similitude, only you heard a voice.' The third principle is, that God hath a care of human affairs, and judgeth with equity; and in the third commandment you have the knowledge of human affairs, and even of a man's thoughts ascribed to God, for that is the foundation of an oath, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' The chief intent of that commandment is to forbid perjury; it also forbids rash swearing, and mentioning the name of God without reverence; for in an oath God is invoked as a witness, as one that hath knowledge even of the heart; there his omniscience is acknowledged; and in an oath God is appealed to as a judge and avenger; there his justice and power is acknowledged. For the fourth principle, that this God is the creator and governor of all things that are without himself, that is established in the fourth commandment by the law of the sabbath; for the sabbath at first was instituted for this very purpose, to meditate upon God as a creator; a day on purpose is instituted to keep up the memorial of the creation of the world.

Well, then, you see what is the foundation of godliness. Now out of these speculative notions practicals flow of their own accord, to wit, that God alone is to be worshipped, obeyed, honoured, trusted; and as far as we set up other confidences, or are ignorant of the excellency of the true God, or so far as we deny God his worship and service, or serve him after an unworthy manner, by superstitious or idolatrous worship, or carelessly and hypocritically, or so far as we have gross opinions of his essence, or exclude the dominion of his providence, or cease to call upon his name, so far we are guilty of ungodliness, as will appear more fully hereafter.

2. What it is to deny ungodliness? *Denying* is a word that properly belongs to propositions. We are said to deny when we contradict what is affirmed; but by a metaphor it may be applied to things which the will refuseth; as some are said 'to deny the power of godliness,' 2 Tim. iii. 5, when they check and resist it and will not suffer godliness to work, though they take up a form of it. Now there is a great deal of reason for that phrase, whether we look to the inward workings of the heart, or to the outward profession which they made in those days.

[1.] If you look to the inward workings of the heart, all things are managed in the heart of man by rational debates and suggestions; and we deny when we refuse to give assent to ungodly thoughts, suggestions, and counsels. Before sin be fastened upon the soul, there is some ungodly thought, some counsel, which, when we suppress, and will not hearken to those thoughts which sin stirs up, we are properly said to deny it. Every corruption hath a voice. If envy bids Cain, Go kill thy brother, he hearkens to it. Ambition speaks to Absalom thus, Go,

rise up against thy father; and covetousness speaks to Judas, Go, betray thy Lord. So ungodliness hath a voice. Carnal affection, urged by Satan, bids us neglect God, or serve him in a slight manner, mind thy own business, favour thyself. Corruption awakened by Satan will solicit to evil. Now suppressing and smothering such thoughts and suggestions with hatred and detestation is fitly expressed by refusing to hearken to sin's voice, or 'denying ungodliness.'

[2.] Some ground there is for the expression, if we look to the custom of those times. In making an outward profession, probably here is some allusion to the ancient manner of stipulation. When any came to be admitted into the church, there were questions propounded to him, *Abrenuncias?* dost thou renounce? *Credis?* dost thou believe? *Spondes?* dost thou promise to walk before God in all holy obedience? And the person answered, *Abrenuncio*, I do renounce; *Credo*, I do believe; and, *Spondeo*, I do undertake. This was that which Peter calls, 'the answer of a good conscience towards God,' 2 Peter iii. 21, when in the presence of God they can answer to all these demands.

SERMON IV.

That denying ungodliness, &c.—TITUS ii. 12.

Now let me open the thing itself. In ungodliness there is something negative, and that is denying God his due honour; and something positive, and that is putting actual contempt upon him.

First, For the negative part, when God is denied his honour. Now to find out how this is done, let us a little inquire what is the special and peculiar honour which God challengeth to himself. It stands in four things—to be the first cause, the chiefest good, the supreme authority and truth, and the last end. And therefore, when we do not acknowledge him to be the first cause, the chiefest good, the supreme authority and truth, and the last end, we rob him of the glory of his Godhead, and are guilty of this which the apostle calls ungodliness. I shall go over these branches.

First, God must be honoured as the first cause, which giveth being to all things, and hath his being from none; and so we are bound to know him, to depend upon him, to observe his providence, and to acknowledge his dominion over all events or things which happen in the world; and so far as any of these are neglected, so far are we guilty of ungodliness. Well, then, under this head—

1. Ignorance is a branch of ungodliness; and I name it in the first place because it is the cause of all our disorder in worship and conversation. This is the first cause of all wickedness, to be ignorant of God. The apostle seconds the observation: 3 John 11, 'He that doeth evil hath not seen God.' Certainly he that makes a trade of sin hath not a right sight and sense of God; he knows not God. A true sight

and sense of God keepeth the soul from sin. There is nothing that keeps in the fire of religion, nor maintains respect between man and man, nothing that preserves honesty and piety so much, as right thoughts and apprehensions of God. But now generally people are ignorant of God; they know him as blind men do fire. A man that is born blind can tell there is such a thing as fire, because he feels it warm; but what kind of thing it is he that never saw it cannot tell. So the whole world and conscience proclaim there is a God; the blindest man may see that; but little do they know of his nature and essence, what God is according as he hath revealed himself in the word. Look, as the Athenians built an altar, and the inscription was *Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ*, 'To the unknown God,' Acts xvii. 23, so do most christians worship an unknown God; and as Christ taxed the Samaritans, John iv. 22, 'Ye worship ye know not what,' so generally do people worship they know not what. Ask them what God is and whom they worship, they cannot tell; they are carried on by custom and dark and blind superstition, and they mutter over their prayers to an unknown power; such blind and wild conceits have they of the nature of God till they see him by the light of his own Spirit. This ignorance is sad, because it is a sign of no grace, and it is a pledge of future judgment. In these days of gospel light, it is a sign of no grace: Jer. xxxi. 34, 'They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord.' God hath no child so little but he knows his Father. In the days of the gospel, now it is so clearly preached, it is required of the meanest sort as well as those that have the advantages of better education. And it is a pledge of future judgment: 2 Thes. i. 8, Christ will come 'in flaming fire, to render vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel.' We have low thoughts of the guilt of ignorance, and think God will not be severe against such. Many ignorant creatures are harmless, and do no wrong; but to live and die in ignorance, is a matter of sad consequence. There is vengeance for pagans that know not God by showers of rain and fruitful seasons; and indeed they principally are intended. Divide men into two sorts, those that have only the light of nature, sense, and reason to guide them, and those that have the light of the gospel: there is vengeance for pagans, that have no other apostles sent to them but those natural apostles of sun, moon, and stars. They had light shining to them in God's works, and they had sense and reason, eyes to see the light; and so they were bound to know the first cause, and might see God working and guiding all things in the world; but there is much more vengeance for christians, for those that have God's word, the light of faith, and yet shut their eyes against the light. Usually come and talk with men, they will acknowledge they are poor ignorant creatures, and God that made them will save them, though the scripture speaks quite contrary: Isa. xxvii. 11, 'This is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy upon them, and he that formed them will show them no favour.' God is exceeding angry when all advantages of light are lost. A pagan is ignorant of God, but you are worse, being unteachable. He that hath only sun and moon to teach him shall be damned for his ignorance of God; but if you do not profit by the light of the gospel, to conceive more worthily of the nature and glory of God, your judgment will be greater.

2. We do not honour God as the first cause when we do not depend upon him; that is ungodliness. Trust and dependence is the ground of all commerce between us and God, and it is the greatest homage and respect which we yield to the Creator and first cause. Now, when men can trust any visible creature rather than God, their estates rather than God, they rob him of his peculiar honour. That there is such a sin as trusting in the creature, excluding God, is clear from Job xxxi. 24, 'If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence.' Job, to vindicate himself from hypocrisy, reckons up the usual sins of a hypocrite; among the rest this is one, to make gold his confidence. Men are apt to think it the staff of their lives, and stay of their posterity, and ground of their welfare and happiness; and so their hearts are diverted from God, and their trust is intercepted. It is a usual sin, though little thought of, for men to entrench themselves within a great estate, and then think they are safe and secure against all the changes and chances of the present life, and so God is laid aside. Let God offer to entrench us within the promises, and leave his name in pawn with us, yet we are full of fears and doubts: Prov. xviii. 10, 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe;' but ver. 11, 'The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.' Such as think themselves safe in a great estate do not acknowledge God as the first cause, which gives being, and sustains all things; and therefore covetousness is called idolatry, Col. iii. 5, and a covetous man is called an idolater, Eph. v. 5, not so much because of his love of money, as because of his trust in it. The glutton counteth his belly his god: Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose god is their belly;' he mindeth the gratifications of his appetite, yet he doth not trust in his belly cheer; he thinks not to be protected by it; therefore he is not called an idolater, as the covetous, who robbeth God of his trust. We are all apt to make an idol of the creature, and poor men think if they had wealth this were enough to make them happy; they trust in those that have it, which is idolatry upon idolatry. Therefore it is said, Ps. lxii. 9, 'Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie.' To appearance men of low degree are nothing, and men of high degree are a lie, because we are apt to trust in them. But chiefly it is incident to the rich; they that have riches are apt to trust in riches: Mark x. 23, 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!' compared with ver. 24, 'Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!' Now this is a secret sin. A man doth not think that he makes money his idol, if he doth not pray or offer sacrifices to it, or give it some perceivable worship, and if he use it as familiarly as anything in a house; but this idolatry lies within. Though a man doth not entertain his gold with ceremony, yet there is his trust and confidence that he shall be safe and do well, because he hath such an estate, which he depends upon, and not upon God. We smile at the vanity of the heathens, that worshipped stocks and stones, and idols of gold and silver; and we do worse, but more spiritually, when our trust is terminated in the creature. Though we do not say to gold, Thou art my confidence, or, You shall deliver me, or, I will put my trust in you, or use any such gross language, yet this is the interpretation of our car-

riage. A covetous man may speak as basely of wealth as another; he may say, I know gold is but refined earth; but his heart resteth on it as his only refuge and stay, and he thinks he and his children cannot be happy without it; which is a great sin; it sets up another god, chains the heart to the world, and keeps it from good works.

3. We do not honour God as the first cause when we do not observe his providence, either in good or evil, either in our crosses or blessings. The blind world sets up an idol called chance and fortune, and does not acknowledge God at the other end of causes, as swaying all things by his wisdom and power. If evil come to them, they think it is by chance and ill-luck; as the Philistines said, 1 Sam. vi. 9, 'It is not his hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us.' So profanely do most men judge of providence, and of the evil of the present life, that it is a chance: Isa. xxvi. 11, 'Lord! when thy hand is lifted up they will not see.' Men look to instruments and second causes, and do not regard God. If things go ill, they snarl at the stone, but do not look at the hand of him that throws it; as if all this while God were but an idle spectator and looker-on, and had no hand in all that befalls us. Job doth better: chap. i. 21, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' Chrysostom hath a sweet gloss upon it; he doth not say, ὁ κλέπτης ἀφείλατο, ὁ Χαλδαῖος ἀφείλατο, the thief, the Chaldean, the Sabean, hath taken away, but the Lord. In all afflictions we should look beyond the creature, and not complain of ill-fortune, or chance, or stars, or constellations, or altogether of men, or instruments, or anything on this side God; he is the first cause in any evil that befalls you, therefore see God's hand in it. So also in mercies and blessings, it is ungodliness when we do not see God in them. Wicked men receive blessings and never look up. They live upon God every moment; they have life, breath, motion, health, and hourly maintenance from him, yet God is not in all their thoughts; as swine raven upon the acorns, and never look to the oak from whence they fall, and so they may enjoy the comfort of the creature, they are content, but never look higher than the next hand. The spouse's eyes are compared to dove's eyes, Cant. iv. 1; and some make this gloss upon it (which is pious, though it doth not interpret the place), doves peck, and look upward. When we sip and peck upon every grain of mercy, we should look up and acknowledge God. The Lord complains of this ungodliness in his people: Hosea ii. 8, 'For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold.' There cannot be a greater sign of an ungodly spirit than this unthankful profaneness. We all live upon the mere alms of God, have all our comforts and blessings from him; and all that God expects is but acknowledgment, that we should take notice of him as the author of all the good we enjoy. Other creatures live upon God, but they are not capable of knowing the first cause; but he hath given us a mind to know him, and capacities and abilities, therefore this is the rational worship which he expects from us. God hath leased out the world to the sons of men: Ps. cxv. 16, 'The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men?' But what is the rent God hath reserved to himself? Glory, praise, and acknowledgment. But too usual is that observation

true, *Qui majores terras possident, minores census solvunt*—Those that hold the greatest lands usually pay the least rent; so those that enjoy most mercies seldomest acknowledge God; their hearts are full and at ease, and they forget God. Men are most led by outward enjoyments; they love their bodies best, and the comforts of the body most. Now, that we may not want arguments to love and praise God, God tries us by these worldly enjoyments which concern the body, to see if we will acknowledge him; but usually we raven upon the sweet of comfort, but look not from whence it comes. This was the trial God used to the gentiles, showers of rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness: Acts xiv. 17, 'Nevertheless he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' Every time thou eatest and drinkest thou shouldst think of God. But alas! seldom do we give God the honour of his providence; we forget God when he remembers us. None more unworthy of any good, and more unthankful to God for it, than man.

4. Another piece of ungodliness is when we do not acknowledge his dominion over all events. If he be the first cause, he will have his government to be acknowledged. How so? By using and undertaking nothing in the course of our affairs till we have asked his leave and blessing. The apostle saith, 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5, 'Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer;' that is, by the word we know our liberty, and in prayer we ask God's leave and blessing in all things that we use. To use another man s goods without his leave is robbery; and so it is to use food, physic, or any creature till we have asked God's leave; all should be sanctified by the word and prayer. When we go about any business, or undertake a journey, or fix our abode in the world, we ought to be inquiring of God; for things that seem to be most trivial and casual, God hath the greatest hand in them, therefore we must still inquire at the oracle. It is a piece of religious manners first to inquire of God; and therefore they are taxed: James iv. 13, 'Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; for that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that,' ver. 15. You forget to bid yourselves good-morrow or good-day, or good-speed, when you forget to consult and advise with God in prayer. The heathens would begin nothing weighty but they would still consult with their gods; for their principle was, the gods regarded greater matters, but took no notice of those of a smaller consequence. Now by this means would the Lord preserve a constant remembrance of himself in the heart of the creature. It keeps up the memory of God in the world to acknowledge him as one that hath an overruling hand in all the businesses and affairs of this world: Prov. iii. 6, 'In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' The children of God dare not resolve upon any course till they have asked counsel of God. Thus God will be acknowledged as the first cause; and so men are guilty of ungodliness if they do not know him, depend upon him, observe his providence, and acknowledge his dominion over all events in the world.

Secondly, God will be acknowledged as the chiefest good; and so, if we do not often think of him, and delight in communion with him, fear to offend him, and care to please him, all this is ungodliness.

1. If we do not often think of him; if we did not want hearts, we cannot want objects to put us in mind of God: 'He is not far from every one of us,' Acts xvii. 27. But though God be not far from us, yet we are far from God; and though he be everywhere, where we walk, lie, and sit, yet he is seldom found in our hearts. We are not so near to ourselves as God is to us. Who can keep his breath in his body for a minute if God were not there? But though he be present with us, we are not present with him. There is usually too great a distance between him and our thoughts. God is round about us in the effects of his power and goodness, yet afar off in regard of our hearts and the workings of our spirits: Ps. x. 4, 'God is not in all his thoughts.' Oh! consider how many there are that live upon God, that have daily and hourly maintenance from him, yet regard him not. Wicked men abhor their own thoughts of God, and hate any savoury speech and mention of his name. Look, as the devils believe and tremble, the more they think there is a God, the more is their horror increased, thus do carnal hearts; and therefore they do all they can to drive God out of their mind. How many trifles do occupy our mind! We muse of nothing unless it be of vanity itself; but God can seldom find any room there; we would fain banish God out of our minds. When David beheld God's works, and looked upon the creation, he cried out, Ps. civ. 34, 'My meditation of him shall be sweet.' Oh! it is the spiritual feast and entertainment of a gracious soul to think of God. We cannot put our reason to a better use. None deserves our thoughts more than God, who thought of us before the world was, and still thinks of us. Saith David, Ps. cxxxix. 17, 'How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!' It is a great part therefore of ungodliness and ingratitude not to present God with so reasonable a service as a few thoughts, not to turn the thoughts, and set the mind a-work upon the glory, excellency, and goodness of God, that is everywhere present to our eye.

2. We do not honour him as the chiefest good, if we do not delight in communion with him. Friends love to be often in one another's company; and certainly if we did value and prize God, we would say, 'It is good to draw nigh to God,' Ps. lxxiii. 28. We would preserve a constant acquaintance between him and us. God hath appointed two ordinances to preserve acquaintance between him and the soul, the word and prayer, which are as it were a dialogue and interchangeable discourse between God and the creature. In the word he speaks to us, and in prayer we speak to him. He conveys his mind to us in the word, and we ask his grace in prayer. In prayer we make the request, and in the word we have God's answer. In prayer we come to inform God with our wants, and seek for his grace, and God answers by his word to salvation. Well, then, when men neglect public or private prayer, or fit and meet opportunities of hearing, they are guilty of ungodliness, for so far they break off communion with God. Especially if they neglect prayer; that is a duty to be done at all times, a sweet diversion which the soul enjoys with God in private;

it is that which answers to the daily sacrifice; and therefore it is said, Ps. xiv. 2, 'They seek not God;' and ver. 4, 'They do not call upon the Lord.' When men are loath to come into God's presence, whether it be out of love to ease or carnal pleasure; when men care not though God and they grow strange, and seldom hear from one another, this is ungodliness. Our comfort and peace lies in access to God. So for family-worship; when God is neglected in the family, it is a sign men do not delight in God as the chiefest good. Many families call not upon God's name: Jer. x. 25, 'Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name.' From one end of the week to another there is no prayer or worship in the family; the house that should be a church is made a sty; yea, there is not a swine about the house but is better regarded than God; morning and evening they shall have their attendance, but God is neglected and not worshipped.

3. If we do not fear to offend, God will be served with every affection. Love is of use in the spiritual life, so is fear: 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' They are both of great use. Love sweetens duties, and fear makes us watchful against sin; love is the doing grace, and fear is the conserving or keeping grace; and therefore this is the honour that God constantly expects from us, that we should always walk in his fear. Oh! think of the pure eyes of his glory that are upon us: Eccles. xii. 13, 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man;' that is, the sum of all practical godliness. The internal root of all duty and worship is a holy filial fear and reverent awe of God, when as obedient children we dare not grieve God, nor affront him to his face; as Ahasuerus said concerning Haman, Esther vii. 8, 'Will he force the queen also before me in the house?' God is always a looker-on; and can we grieve our good God when he directly looks upon us? But now, when you are secure and careless, and sin freely in thought and foully in act, and without any remorse, you deny God his fear. Fear is a grace of continual use; we cannot be always praying or praising God, or employed in acts of solemn worship and special communion with him, but we must be always in the fear of God. You have not done with God when you have left your requests with him in the morning; you must fear him all the day long: Prov. xxiii. 17, 'Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.' A man hath done with his devotion in the morning, but he hath not done with God. A man should think of him all the day long, in the shop, in the streets; especially when corruptions arise, and we are tempted to folly and filthiness, or any unworthy act, remember God looks on. Thus must we be in the fear of God continually, rise in fear, walk in fear, feed in fear, and trade in fear; it is a grace never out of season.

4. If we do not care to please him, it is ungodliness. If we make it our work and the drift of our lives to find out what may be pleasing and acceptable to God in order to practice, and value our lives for this end only, that we may serve God, it is a sign grace is planted in the heart. But now ungodly men neither care to know the ways of God, nor to walk in them. They that are willingly ignorant, and do not

search to know how God will be served and pleased, and make this their work, they do not count God their chiefest good; they search not, that they may not practise; they err not in their mind only, but in their hearts: Ps. xcv. 10, 'It is a people that do err in their hearts; they have not known my ways.' To err in the mind may be through invincible ignorance; but a man errs in his heart when he doth not desire to know God, and to know his will, and what he must do in worship and conversation, but saith, I do not desire to know God: Job xxi. 14, 'Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' Therefore he that doth not make it his great work and the business of his life to find out what God would have him do, he is ungodly. Usually this is found in men half convinced; they have not a mind to know that which they have not a mind to do, and so they are willingly ignorant. But now a godly man makes it the business of his life still to follow God foot by foot, to know more of his mind and will: Rom. xii. 2, 'That you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God;' Eph. v. 12, 'Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.' A true christian always practiseth what he knows, and still searcheth that he may know more; he would be always more useful for God, and more according to his heart; that is the study, the great business and project of his life, to find out God's will, and then practise it. What shall I do more for God?

Thirdly, God must be acknowledged as the supreme truth and authority; and there, if we be not moved with his promises, with his threatenings and counsels, as the words of the great God, as if he had spoken from heaven by an audible voice; if we do not yield him reverence in his worship, and subject our hearts and lives unto his laws, it is ungodliness.

1. We must receive the counsels of his word with all reverence and veneration, as if God had spoke to us by a voice from heaven. This is to receive the word as the word of God: 2 Thes. ii. 10, 'They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.' The heathens received the oracles of their gods with great reverence, and were much moved when they had an oracle; but when the word comes with a mighty convincing power upon the heart, and you are not moved and affected, this argues your ungodliness. So when we can drowsily hear of the great things of heaven, and the death of Christ, and the covenant of grace, and the glorious salvation offered, and are no more moved than with a fable, or with a dream of rubies dropping down from heaven in the night, this is ungodliness. That there is a great deal of ungodliness in this kind is clear by our neglect of these precious things. If a man should proffer another a thousand pounds for a trifle, and he should not accept it, you would not say it was because he prized that trifle that is not profitable, but because he did not believe the offer. So when God offers heaven and Christ to us upon such easy terms as to part with nothing but our sins, which are better parted with than kept, we do not honour him as the eternal truth, if we do not accept it, but count him a liar; and this is the greatest affront you can put upon God; for 'he that believeth not, God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son,' 1

John v. 10. He that doth not regard the offer of the gospel, certainly he believes it is not true, and so he dishonours God as the supreme truth.

2. If we would honour God as the supreme Lord of heaven and earth, we must reverence him in his worship. God is not only terrible in the high places of the field, and there where he executes his dreadful judgments; and not only so in the depths of the sea, where the wonders of the Lord are seen; but he is also terrible in his holy places: Ps. lxviii. 35, 'O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places.' Then are the hearts of his people filled with most aweful apprehensions of his glorious majesty and of his excellent holiness, and this makes them tremble. But now, when we do not come with these aweful apprehensions, we do not own God as the supreme majesty; and therefore when they brought him an unbeseeming sacrifice, saith the Lord, Mal. i. 14, 'Cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathens.' This is not becoming my majesty. And the saints of God never feel such self-abhorrency and loathing of themselves as when they are worshipping God. God is even dreadful then when he is most comfortable to his people: Deut. xxviii. 58, 'That thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God.' Thy God! this is the comfortablest name in all the scripture; this is the foundation of our hope, and this puts the saints upon a holy reverence. But now ungodly men come with slight, cold, and careless hearts; their thoughts are upon the shop, and the cart, and the plough, and anywhere else than upon God: 'They draw nigh to him with their lips, but their hearts are removed far from him.' They do not come to him as a great king and supreme majesty and authority of all, and so they dishonour God exceedingly. Our thoughts in worship should be more taken up with his glory.

3. If we would honour God as supreme, there must be a willing subjection of our hearts and lives to his laws. Usually here we stick in a want of conformity thereto. Men that love God as a creator naturally hate him as a lawgiver. Men love him as a giver of blessings, but they would fain live at large. Thoughts that strike at the being of God and doctrines of liberty are welcome to a carnal heart; therefore it is tedious to them to hear of one to call them to account; and it is pleasing to them to think (which is an argument of the highest hatred that can be) that there were no God to call them to a reckoning, that they might let loose the reins to vile affections. We would be absolute, and lords of our own actions. And this subjection must be in heart and life. There must be a subjection of the heart. God's authority is never more undermined than by a mere form of godliness: 2 Tim. iii. 5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.' This is the greatest ungodliness that can be; they will not own his authority in their hearts, nor suffer him to have any dominion in their conscience, nor own him without in their actions before men. The heart is his chair of state and chamber of presence; but hypocrites and wicked men rob God of his dominion over the conscience, therefore hypocrisy is practical blasphemy: Rev. ii. 9, 'I know the blasphemy

of them that say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.' Men pretend to obey God, yet blaspheme him in their heart, and refuse the power of that to which they pretend. And the life must be conformed to God's laws. God will be honoured in our conversation, as well as have his throne set up in the conscience; his laws must be visibly obeyed in the sight of men. It is the glory of a commander to be obeyed: Mat. viii. 9, 'I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.' So God will have all the world know that he hath his servants at a beck. If he bids them deny and abstain the flesh, oh! they durst not meddle with it; or if he bids them practise holiness, they must do it. His honour is much promoted by your lives. God will have all the world see that he hath called you to his foot, and that he hath an absolute authority and power over the sons of men; they are a people formed for his praise; he looks for glory in this kind.

Fourthly, God will be honoured as the last and utmost end, and so in all acts, natural, moral, and spiritual. If we do not aim at God's glory, we are guilty of ungodliness. This is the proper work of godliness, to refer all we do to the glory of God; and this is the distinction between godliness and holiness; holiness minds the law of God, and implies only a conformity to the law; godliness minds the glory of God, and is the aim of the soul to exalt God: 2 Peter iii. 11, 'What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' You see godliness is distinguished from holiness. Godliness refers all we do to God's glory. But more particularly—

1. In natural acts we must have a supernatural aim: 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' If we are to take a meal to sustain the body and refresh nature, it is that we may be more serviceable to God. And he that eats and drinks to himself, to his own pleasure, to satisfy his own appetite, and hath no respect to God, he doth but offer a meat-offering and a drink-offering to an idol. And he that traffics for himself, merely to get wealth, and doth not aim at usefulness and serviceableness to God, he is a priest consecrated to mammon, his eating is idolatry: Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose God is his belly, and his trading is idolatry,' Mat. vi. 24, 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.'

2. In your moral actions, Eph. vi., where all moral duties are reciprocally set down, as duties of husbands and wives, masters and servants, parents and children. The apostle presseth them 'to do all as in and to the Lord;' not merely that they may live together in contentment and peace, but they must walk in their relations so as God may have honour. A christian by an excellent art turns his second-table duties into first-table duties, and makes his civil commerce a kind of religious worship.

3. So in all spiritual acts. The whole ordination of the spiritual life must be to God; 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God,' Gal. ii. 19. All the motions and tendencies of the soul are to advance God and glorify God. In the very spiritual internal actions and reachings forth of the soul after God, why do I desire to have grace and pardon? That God may be glorified, that

must be the last end. Our desires can never be regular in asking grace till they suit with God's end in giving grace. Now what are God's ends in giving grace? Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.' All that God aims at is to make grace glorious, and that grace may carry away all the praise. So in your desires of pardon, heaven, and salvation, you are to desire them that God may be glorified in your salvation, and in the pardon of your sins. So in our external actions, prayer, worship, preaching, whatever we do. In sacred things it is dangerous to look asquint, and to serve ourselves, our own lusts, our covetousness or pride, upon the worship of God; this is to put dung in God's own cup. It were a mighty affront to a king to fill his cup full of excrements. Nothing alienates the heart from God so much as self-respect. God hath given us many things, but he hath reserved the glory of all to himself; as Pharaoh said to Joseph, Gen. xli. 40, 'Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou.' This is the first branch of ungodliness, the negative part, when we deny God his due honour.

Secondly, For the positive part. Positive ungodliness is more gross when we put an actual contempt and scorn upon God. We are guilty of this when we slight his providence and disobey his laws.

1. When we slight his providence: Heb. xii. 5, 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord.' Men harden themselves against corrections, and count light of them. Men cannot endure to have their anger despised. When the three children despised Nebuchadnezzar's threatenings, it is said, Dan. iii. 19, 'Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego; therefore he spake and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.' It is a mighty affront to God and a contempt of him when we provoke him while we are under his afflicting hand, if in despite of God we break out into sin when he hedgeth up our way with thorns: 2 Chron. xxviii. 22, 'And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord; this is that king Ahaz.'

2. When we are disobedient to his laws. Open irreligion is a despite to God, when we cast off his yoke. This is ungodliness in the height, when God is not only neglected, but rejected: Jer. ii. 31, 'We are lords; we will come no more unto thee.' We would be absolute masters of our own wills. This was the first bait: Gen. iii. 5, 'Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' This endeth in open profaneness, which groweth upon men by degrees; as Lactantius said of Lucian, *Nec diis nec hominibus pepercit; ad impietatem in deos in homines adjunxit injuriam*—He spared neither the gods nor men; to his impiety against the gods he added injuries to men; he was both ungodly and unrighteous.

Use. Would we not then be counted ungodly, let us take heed of all these sins, deny them all.

1. How else will you look God in the face at the day of judgment? Ps. i. 5, 'The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.' He shall not be able to lift up his head: 2 Peter iii. 11, 'Seeing then that all these things shall be dis-

solved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' The day of judgment is to take vengeance of ungodliness: Jude 15, 'To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' It is the day wherein God, that is now hidden behind the curtain of the heavens, cometh forth to vindicate his honour.

2. Great judgments shall befall them in this world: 2 Peter ii. 6, 'And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them examples unto those that should live ungodly;' and 1 Peter iv. 18, 'And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?' God's jealousy is great: Isa. lix. 17, 'For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for a clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.' God is not only jealous of his honour, but he will be known and plainly profess himself so to be; the cloak of a man being his outward garment. No such visible providences as against ungodliness. So Exod. xxxiv. 13, 'The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.' That is fit to make the name of a thing which distinguisheth it from all other things of the same kind. This distinguisheth the true God from all gods whatsoever. Others are so far from being jealous gods, that though their worshippers went to never so many gods, yet to them it was all one; they were good-fellow gods, and would admit of partners; when they brought their gifts, like common whores, they received them without more ado. The true God will admit of no partners; this he will severely punish, and do them as much harm as ever he did do them good.

3. It is the great aim of the gospel to promote godliness: 1 Tim. iii. 6, 'And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness;' 1 Tim. vi. 3, 'If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine that is according to godliness.' So far men are christians as they are godly. Men might be ungodly at a cheaper rate when they had not so much means. As the angel said to Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 26, Let me go for the day breaketh.' Now grace appeareth, we should deny ungodliness.

4. Ungodliness is the root of all irregular courses: Gen. xx. 11, 'I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will slay me for my wife's sake.' Godliness is the bulwark of laws and of all honest discipline; there can be no honesty without piety. The first part of the law provideth for respects to God, as being the proper foundation for respects to our neighbour. Without the knowledge of the true God the heart cannot be clean: Prov. xix. 2, 'Also that the soul be without knowledge is not good.'

The means are these—

[1.] Purge the heart from all principles of ungodliness. There are many gross maxims, as, that it is folly to be precise; that they have a good heart towards God; that it were better when there was less knowledge; that it is an easy matter to repent, and have a good heart

towards God; that it is in vain to serve God; that thoughts are free; let us carry it fair before men, and all will be well; when men have done their best, petty sins are not to be stood upon. These are the implicit thoughts and maxims of ungodly men, which are the ground of all sottish practices. Purge your hearts from them.

[2.] Suppress all ungodly thoughts and motions, all gross thoughts of God: Ps. xiv. 1, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' Shame may lay a restraint upon the tongue, but such thoughts and whispers do arise in the heart. Again, that God is not so harsh as he is represented: Ps. l. 21, 'These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.' That God cannot see through the dark cloud: Job xxii. 12, 13, 'Is not God in the height of heaven, and behold the height of the stars how high they are? And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?' These are the thoughts of carnal and ungodly men. Have a care of giving them the least entertainment; suppress them when they first rise in the heart.

[3.] Mortify vile affections. As the air in some countries is seldom clear, but dark and foggy, so it is with the minds of carnal men. Vile affections steaming in the heart cloud the understanding and judgment, and beget ungodly thoughts; as a filthy stomach sends up fumes to the head.

[4.] Keep close to God's institutions; these keep up his honour and preserve his memorial. Divine truths breed godliness. False worship and multitude of ceremonies darken the nature of God. Images beget a gross opinion of God, as if he were a poor senseless thing that could do little good or harm. God knows what is best, and how he will be worshipped; do not presume to be wiser than God; his own institutions keep up the repute of his nature and essence.

[5.] Let us exercise ourselves unto godliness: 1 Tim. iv. 7, 'But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.' Give God the honour due to him; let him have your love, delight, trust, and fear; do all things with an aim to his glory; and worship him not out of custom, but out of conscience. So should we exercise ourselves unto godliness.

SERMON V.

And worldly lusts, &c.—TITUS ii. 12.

GRACE, that teacheth us to deny ungodliness, doth also teach us to deny worldly lusts. These are fitly coupled. Ungodliness feedeth worldly lusts, and worldly lusts increase ungodliness.

1. Ungodliness feedeth worldly lusts, because when we leave God, the chiefest good, then our hearts go a-whoring after every base comfort: Jer. ii. 13, 'My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn them out

cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.' If men are ignorant of God, or do not seek after God, the heart lies open to every object; as when a worthy match is refused upon some groundless dislike, in a fond humour the next suitor is entertained, how base and unworthy soever. It cometh to pass partly by man's wickedness. When God is refused, anything serves the turn instead of God, to put the greater affront and despite upon him. And partly by God's just judgment. To evidence our baseness and folly, God suffereth us to match our affections with anything that comes next to hand.

2. On the other side, worldly lusts cause ungodliness, for they withdraw our hearts from God, and deliver them up to the creature; as a sensual man that loveth his pleasure maketh his belly his god: Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose god is his belly;' and a base-hearted worldling, who suffereth outward profits to intercept his care, his delight, and his trust, makes mammon his god; and therefore he is fitly called 'an idolater,' Eph. v. 5; and a proud man makes himself his god, and so is both idol and idolater; as the sea sendeth forth waves, and then sucketh them into itself. All their esteem, all their restless projects, are to exalt themselves and set up themselves; and so 'they set their heart as the heart of God,' Ezek. xxviii. 2. All that they think, speak, and do, is to set up the idol of self, their own worthiness and esteem. So that if we would deny one, we must deny both; not only ungodliness, but worldly lusts. A man that is given to worldly lusts will surely be ungodly; and a man that is ungodly will be given to worldly lusts.

I shall prosecute this second branch in this method. I shall inquire—

1. What are worldly lusts.
2. How they are to be denied.
3. The difficulty of denying them.
4. The grounds or encouragements so to do, or what course grace teacheth to draw us off from them.

First, What are worldly lusts? Two terms are to be explained *lusts*, and *worldly*.

1. By *lusts* are meant carnal affections, or the risings of corrupt nature, or all sorts of evil desires; for it is usual in the New Testament to express sins by lusts; partly because lusts are more corrupted than the thoughts, or than the counsels are, as appears by constant experience. There is more light left in the heart of man concerning God than there is love to God; and many are convinced of better that do worse; they see more than they are able to perform, because they are overset by their lusts. Reason giveth good counsel, but it is overmastered and disregarded; as in a mutiny the gravest cannot be heard. And we see that, when we give counsel to another in a thing in which we have no interest, we give commonly good counsel; but when the matter concerneth ourselves, we act otherwise, because our desires carry us another way. Therefore the scripture expresseth sin rather by lusts than by counsels and imaginations; partly because lusts are the most vigorous commanding and swaying faculty of the soul. The desiring part of the soul is as the stern to the whole man; it is either the best or the worst part of the man. A man is as his lusts are; for it is desire that draws us to action. We do not act because we

know, but because we desire; as the eye doth not carry the body to a far country, but the feet. All affections have their rise from some inclination and tendency of the desire towards the object. *Amor meus pondus meum*—It is love or desire that poiseth and inclineth the heart. We are directed by the judgment, but pressed and carried to a thing by the heart. So Austin, *Non faciunt bonos vel malos mores, nisi boni vel mali amores*—A man is not good or evil by his thoughts, but by his desires. It is true, before man sinned his desires and appetites were under rule, and did not stir but at the command of reason; but now since the fall desire doth all in the soul, and man consulteth with his desires rather than anything else, and there all action and pursuit beginneth. Thus you see the reasons why the word *lusts* is used in this case.

2. The next term is, 'Worldly lusts.' Sometimes they are called fleshly lusts, and sometimes worldly lusts. Fleshly lusts: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' They are so called because they are most of all manifested in those things that belong to the body or the flesh. But here they are called 'worldly lusts,' and that for three reasons. Partly because they are cherished by the greater sort of men, which greater sort of men is counted by the name of the world: 1 John v. 19, 'The whole world lies in wickedness;' that is, the opposite malignant world. In this sense these lusts are called worldly, because they are most rife in the multitude, or greater part of the world, who only regard the present life. Partly because they are stirred up by worldly objects, by pleasures, honours, and profits: 'Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust,' 2 Peter i. 14. He doth not name the objects, but the lusts, because the world becometh hurtful only by our own lusts. The world affordeth the object, and we find the sin; as the garden yieldeth the flower, and the spider sucketh the poison out of it. Partly because they serve only for a worldly use and purpose, to detain us in the employments of the present life; so that we have no heart, no desire, no leisure to think of any other, or to apply ourselves to better things. Lusts depress the heart, and sink it down to the present world, and the contentments thereof, and therefore called 'worldly lusts.'

You see now what is meant by the terms here used. But that you may conceive a little better of the thing itself, let me give you a distinction or two.

First, These worldly lusts are sometimes carried out, either to things simply unlawful, or else to lawful things in an unknown[1] manner.

1. There are some desires altogether evil, in what sense soever you take them; as a desire of murder, theft, adultery, revenge: 'The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness,' &c., Gal. v. 19; that is, these gross and brutish lusts are easily discerned, not only by grace, but by the light of nature; therefore they must not be regulated, but extinguished, as a venomous plant must be plucked up by the roots. You cannot qualify them; it is a sin to be moderate herein, to be a moderate adulterer, a moderate drunkard; here the least is too much, these lusts must be wholly destroyed.

2. There are other desires, that are natural and necessary for the preservation of mankind, as to eat and drink, lawfully to provide for our families and posterity. Here men do ordinarily sin by excess, by

[1] Qu. 'unlawful'?—ED.

desiring these things otherwise than they should and more than they should, and not for the causes that they should. Now these natural and necessary desires are not to be extinguished, but governed, and to be kept under the coercion of prudence and honesty. Honesty must restrain them, that they may not exceed their bounds, and so degenerate, lest a desire be turned into a lust, and its vehemency withdraw the heart from God. As we know natural heat from unnatural; it is so temperately dispersed that the constitution of nature is not disturbed or oppressed by it, but unnatural heats oppress nature; so desires, as long as they do not disturb the soul, they are not hurtful; but when they exceed their bounds, they are to be under the coercion of reason: 1 Cor. vi. 12, 'All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.' He that will do all that he may will do more than he should. It is good to keep at a distance from the power of sin, not always to walk on the brink, lest we become slaves to lust.

Secondly, Take one distinction more of these lusts. It is intimated by the apostle, 1 John ii. 16, 'All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;' this is the sum and contents of the corrupt world. Let us see the meaning, and then make some observations on the place, 'All that is in the world.'

You will say, How can the apostle speak thus? There are sun, moon, and stars, and glorious creatures in the world; why doth the apostle instance only in the sink and kennel of the world?

I answer—The world is taken for the corrupt world; all that is of price, all that is of account with carnal men, all that takes up their care and thoughts, is lust and vanity; either the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, or the pride of life. He doth not speak of the natural world, which is full of glorious creatures, but of the corrupt world, which is opposite to the kingdom of Christ, that is full of lusts and sins.

But let us see a little particularly what are the contents of this world—(1.) The lust of the flesh; (2.) The lust of the eyes; (3.) The pride of life.

1. 'The lust of the flesh.' *Flesh* is sometimes taken in a large sense for corrupt nature, for the whole dunghill of corruption that we brought with us into the world; and *the lusts of the flesh* for the workings of this corruption, the reeking of this dunghill, whether in the understanding by thoughts or carnal counsel, or in the will by carnal desires; so it is taken at large. But here it is taken more strictly for the corruptions of the sensual appetite, or for the immoderate desire of soft and delicate living, and for sensuality, or the intemperate use of pleasures, meats and drinks, and such things as gratify the flesh.

2. 'The lusts of the eye,' some expound by curiosity, others by wantonness. Indeed the eye is the usual broker of temptations. The eye lets out the lust, and lets in the temptation; all kind of lusts make use of it. But I suppose covetousness is here intended, or an inordinate desire of profit. When we look upon the bravery of the world, or upon money, or anything that pleaseth this kind of corruption, the eye seduceth the heart as soon as we look upon a thing. This is charged upon the eye: Eccles. i. 8, 'All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing;' Prov. xxvii. 20, 'Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never

satisfied.' All strong desires look out by the eye, especially insatiable avarice.

3. The next part of the corrupt world is 'pride of life,' so called because it cannot be kept in, but is manifested in our lives; or rather, because it is a sin of a diffusive nature, that spreads itself throughout the whole life of man. Whereas other sins are confined and limited, he ascribeth a universal and unlimited influence to pride. The lusts of the flesh, they are but for the flesh, to content the body; the lusts of the eye, there he noteth the instrument, the eye purveyeth for the heart; but pride of life, there he ascribes a universal and unlimited influence, and calls it 'pride of life,' because it taints every action, it serves itself of every enjoyment, it mingles with other lusts, the whole life is but sphere enough for pride to discover itself. Other vices destroy only their contraries; covetousness destroys liberality; drunkenness, sobriety; but pride destroyeth all; it runs through all enjoyments, wit, strength, beauty, riches, apparel, learning, grace. There is nothing so low but it yields fuel to pride; the hair, which is but an excrement, is often hung out as a bush and ensign of vanity. And there is nothing so high and sacred but pride can abuse it; like mistletoe, it groweth upon any tree, but most upon the best. Well, then, all worldly lusts are reduced to these three heads, for he says, 'All that is in the world.' Usually we understand by worldliness nothing but covetousness, or an inordinate desire of worldly profit; but the corrupt world is of a larger extent. Pride is a worldly lust, and so is sensuality, or a love of pleasure. For look, as the ocean is but one, yet several parts of it have divers names, so worldliness is but one sin, yet, having divers kinds, it hath several names. Those that mind honours are guilty of worldly lusts, 'Pride of life.' Those that mind riches, are guilty of worldly lusts, 'The lusts of the eye.' Those that are voluptuous, and mind pleasure, are still guilty of worldly lusts, 'The lusts of the flesh.' This is, as one saith, the world's trinity, the roots of all other sins, against which we should bend the main endeavours of our souls. You do nothing in mortification till the axe be laid to the root of these sins, sensuality, covetousness, pride.

[1.] 'The lusts of the flesh,' viz., sensuality, or an inordinate desire of pleasures. It is the happiness of beasts to enjoy pleasure with more liberty than man can, and without remorse of conscience; and therefore a heathen could say, 'He is not worthy the name of a man (*qui unum diem velit esse in voluptate*) that would spend one day in pleasure.' Other sins deprive us of the image of God, but the lusts of the flesh deprive us of our own image; they unman us of all desires. These bring most shame, because it is the lowest, basest act of self-love, and the matter of them is gross and burthensome, and they do emasculate and quench the bravery of the spirit, and embase it, and keep the soul at the greatest distance from God and spiritual employments. How can they look after God and heaven whose hearts are sunk in their bellies? The lusts of the flesh quench the vigour of nature, how much more do they hinder the powerful operations of the Spirit? Jude 19, 'Sensual, not having the Spirit.' The Spirit is divine and active, and raises the soul to higher things; but sensual persons have no radiancy of graces nor vigour of gifts. Nay, in some sense this is at the bottom,

and is the root of every sin; it is the devil's bait, and the sauce of every temptation. Men take a pleasure in their proud thoughts, in their worldly and carnal practices. Other sins are rooted in sensuality and love of pleasure. Again, it is a sin most opposite to the gravity and severity of religion. A garish frothy spirit, that is addicted to carnal delights, is not fit for such a grave thing as religion, which requires a solid grave frame of spirit; and yet, as contrary as it is, it is very natural to us. We had but two common parents, Adam and Noah, and both fell by pleasure, they miscarried by appetite; Adam by eating, and Noah by drinking. And when the apostle gives us a catalogue of the lusts of the flesh, Gal. v. 19–21, it is filled up in a great part with the fruits of sensuality, as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness, revellings. We are mighty prone to this, because pleasures are tasted by the senses, and virtue is found out by searches of reason; therefore we are very apt to be carried away by our senses. You must subdue this, or else you are utterly unfit for religion or any high work. The heart of man is melted and dissolved, and all vigour is quenched, and the soul doth grow gross and dreggy, not fit for the chaste consolations of the gospel, for the flagons of spiritual wine, for the fulness of the Spirit, and for the sweetness of the hidden manna.

[2.] 'The lust of the eyes,' or an inordinate desire of riches, when we can see nothing but we must wish for it; as Ahab falleth sick for Naboth's vineyard. The heart of man naturally is all for a present good, and therefore nothing is more delightful and pleasing to our corruption than the glory and bravery of the world. Heaven, as it is set forth, is a fine place to a carnal heart, but it is to come; so men look upon it but as a dream and notion, they shall have time enough to consider it hereafter; but the world is at hand. This was Demas' bait, the present world: 2 Tim. iv. 10, 'Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world.' Things at a distance, though never so glorious, lose somewhat of their worth and esteem because they are so: 2 Peter i. 9, 'They are blind, and cannot see afar off.' All natural men are troubled with a short sight; they can see nothing but what is before them; they can see no excellency in things to come. Without the perspective of faith we cannot look within the vail, and therefore hunt after present interests with all earnestness and greediness. Covetousness is a radical evil: 1 Tim. vi. 10, 'The love of money is the root of all evil.' A soul is fit for anything that is subdued and captivated with the love of the world. Look, what the root is to the tree, that is covetousness to all sin. All the branches are nourished with the sap which the root sucketh from the ground; so this is that which maintains the carnal state. Covetousness is a sin more dangerous, because all other evils bewray themselves by some foul action, which bringeth shame and remorse of conscience, and therefore they are sooner wrought upon; but this is close and reserved; men are more serious than profane. Oh! but this must be renounced. Lessen your esteem of worldly things; they are not your portion. Christ gave the bag to the worst of the apostles, and it brought him to the halter.

[3.] The next radical evil, or worldly lust, is 'pride of life.' This grows upon anything, gifts, graces, parts, estate. Paul's revelations

were like to puff him up: 2 Cor. xii. 7, '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.' It is a sin that sticks very close to us. It was the main ingredient in Adam's disobedience, and still it runs in the blood. Pride is natural; we suck it in with our milk. There is pride in every sin, a lifting up of the creature against the creator: 'The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,' Rom. viii. 7; and therefore the great work of grace is to subdue the pride of the spirit, not only to sanctify, but to humble us. Look, as sensuality is the great corruption of the brutish part or appetite, so pride is of our understanding or the angelical part. Man is in part an angel and in part a beast; his appetite he hath in common with the beasts, but his understanding in common with angels. Now look, as inordinate love of pleasure is the corruption of the brutish part, so is pride the corruption of the angelical part. By being sensual we sink as low as the beasts; and by being proud we lift up our hearts as the heart of God. Sensual men are called beasts: 2 Peter ii. 12, 'These, as unnatural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.' And the worldly and covetous are called mere men: 1 Cor. iii. 3, 'Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?' But by pride we are made devils: 1 Tim. iii. 6, 'Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil;' when we are puffed up with self-conceit, and do all we do for self-esteem. This is one of the last sins we shake off; we leave it not till we come to heaven; and therefore it is mentioned in the last place. One of the heathens doth compare it to our shirt, which we put off last. In heaven only, when we are most holy, we are most humble. It is a sin that encroacheth upon God's prerogative, therefore mightily hated by God: Prov. vi. 16, 17, 'These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination to him: A proud look,' &c.; Prov. viii. 13, 'Pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate.' Pride is as much hated by God as sensuality by us, and infinitely more.

Secondly, What is it to deny these worldly lusts? or how far they must be denied? There are three degrees in this denial—they must be prevented and kept from rising, suppressed and kept from growth, and, which is an inferior degree, they must not be accomplished, but kept from execution, if they do prevail upon the heart and gain the consent. Suitable to these three degrees there are three duties required of a christian—mortification, that we may prevent them; watchfulness, that we may suppress them; and christian resolution, that we may not accomplish them, and suffer them to break out into act.

1. The top and highest degree of this denial, to deny worldly lusts, is to keep them from rising, and prevent the very workings of lust or pride. The scripture doth press us not only to abstain from the sin, but the lust: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' Many keep themselves free from the acts of sin when their hearts boil with lusts, and carnal desires, and thoughts of envy, and proud imaginations; therefore we must deaden the very root,

prevent the breaking out of the lust: Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.' We are to mortify the inward affections, that, if it be possible, we may not so much as have a temptation or lust stirring; as Luther said he had not a temptation to covetousness. Prevention is the life of policy, and better than deliverance. He deserves great praise that freeth a city from the enemies when they have beleaguered it; but he deserveth greater that so fortifieth a place that the enemies dare not assault it. It is somewhat to keep off lusts, but it is more to keep them down, so to deaden the affections, and exercise ourselves unto godliness, that it cannot have room to work. She is chaste that doth check an unclean solicitation; but she is more worthy of praise whose grave carriage hindereth all assaults. So should we be constantly mortified, and exercise ourselves to godliness, and deaden the root of sin, that the devil may despair of entrance, and be discouraged from making his approaches. It is a step to victory to hope to prevail. *Possunt, quia posse videntur.* Resistance is good, but yet utter abstinence is a duty, and falls under a gospel precept; as much as we can we should prevent the rising of any carnal thought or disobedient desire.

2. The next degree is timely to suppress them, to conquer lusts when we cannot curb and wholly keep them under. We must keep a watchful eye and a hard hand over our lusts, dash Babylon's brats against the wall, take the little foxes, smother sin in the conception, and disturb the birth; as the apostle speaks of the conceiving of sin, James i. 15, 'When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.' Look, as it is a great sin to quench the Spirit's motions, so it is also to be negligent in watching over your hearts, not to take notice of the first thoughts and risings of sin. The little sticks kindle first, and set the great ones a-fire; so lusts kindle first, and then they break out into a flame, and make way for greater sins to come in upon the soul. When a country was infested with hurtful birds, and they consulted the oracle how to destroy them, it was answered, *Nidos eorum ubique destruendos;* their nests were to be destroyed. We must crush the cockatrice's eggs, and not dwell upon sin in our thoughts. If there arise a wanton thought, a lustful glance, a distrustful or revengeful injection, it should be cast out with loathing and detestation. Every lust should have a check from the contrary principle: Gal. v. 17, 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.' We have often experience that the flesh lusteth against the spirit; we should have experience also of the spirit's lusting against the flesh; deny it harbour. We cannot hinder the bird from flying over our heads, but we must not suffer it to rest and nestle. So many times corruption will get the start, though we mortify it never so much; but we must not suffer it to root in the heart, to increase and grow there. If carnal thoughts and desires arise in the heart, they must not rest there; let it be only a motion, let it not gain consent. David chides away his distrustful thoughts: Ps. xi. 1, 'In the Lord put I my trust; how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?' It is a rebuke to his own thoughts and fears; no other speaker is introduced. With such indignation should we rise up against every carnal suggestion, Avaunt evil thoughts, distrustful fears, fleshly counsels. Remember these

very intervening thoughts are sins before God, though no effect should follow; therefore do not give them harbour and entertainment. For a man to have thoughts to betray his country, or to have communication with the enemy, is a crime punishable with death, though it come not to execution. It is done in God's sight, if it be resolved on; as God accounted Abraham to have offered up Isaac because he intended it: Heb. xi. 17, 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac.'

3. Let not worldly lusts be put in execution. If thou hast neglected mortification and deadening thy affections, if sin hath got the start of thee, and gained the consent of thy soul, yet at least restrain the practice. If the conception be not disturbed the birth will follow: James i. 15, 'Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.' There are the works of the flesh that follow the lusts of the flesh: Gal. v. 19, 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest,' &c. Therefore it is good to put a stop, at least not to suffer lusts to break out: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' We should mortify the lusts of the soul, but if that cannot be, then prevent the deeds of the body. Though lust grieves the Spirit of God, yet the work besides the grief brings dishonour to God, gives an ill example, brings scandal to religion, makes way for an habit and proneness to sin; therefore to act it is the worst of all. See what the prophet saith: Micah ii. 1, 'Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds; when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.' Mark, it is naught to harbour the motion, to plot, to devise evil, to muse upon sin; but it is worse to practise, because every act strengtheneth the inclination, as a brand that hath been once in the fire is more ready to burn again; and we know not how far lust may carry us when we give it scope and leave to work. Therefore it is good to interpose by a strong resolution, and to cry out for strength, and to continue fighting, that we may not be utterly foiled.

Thirdly, To show the difficulty of this denial of deadening, suppressing, and hindering the execution of worldly lusts. There are many things which will solicit for lusts, and plead hard, so that we have need of a great deal of grace to give them the denial; there is nature, custom, example, and Satan.

1. Nature, that is strongly inclined to close with worldly lusts. A carnal and worldly disposition is very natural to us, as for a stone to move downward, or fire to move upward. Now the course of nature is not easily broken and diverted; if it be hindered a while, it will return again. That these worldly lusts are rooted in our nature is clear from many scriptures. Ever since Adam turned from the creator to the creature, he hath left this disposition in all his children that come of his loins, that their hearts hang off from God towards the creature. The nature we have from Adam is a carnal nature, which favours and affects things that are here below; and therefore it is the great work of grace to cure this disposition, to take us from the world; first our hearts, then our bodies. It is made an effect of the new birth: 1 John v. 4, 'Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world;' and 2 Peter i. 4, 'By which we are made partakers of the divine nature, having

escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' Heavenliness follows grace; there is something divine, a higher birth than that we receive from Adam, else we should live as other men do. There is the spirit of the world, and the Spirit of God. Now natural men are endowed with the spirit of the world; they use their souls only as a purveyor for the body, to turn and wind in the world, to feed high, to shine in worldly pomp, to affect honours and great places; these things we learn without a master; we bring these dispositions into the world with us. Therefore to deny worldly lusts is to row against the stream, to roll the stone upward, to go quite contrary to the course and current of nature. When the apostle speaks of the new nature, he calls it 'a putting off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,' Eph. iv. 22.

2. Custom, which is another nature. Carnal affections are not only born with us, but bred up with us; we are acquainted with them from our infancy, and so they plead prescription. Religion comes afterward, and therefore very hard it must needs be to renounce our lusts, because they have the start of grace. The first years of human life are merely governed by the senses, which judge of what is sweet, and not of what is good; whence it cometh to pass that when a man is come to that age wherein he beginneth to have the use of reason, he can hardly change his custom and alter his course of life, and therefore continueth to live as he hath begun; still the senses act in the first place. Earthly contentments are present to our sense, the other only to our faith; these are before our eyes, and we still see the need and use of them. We know how hard it is to break a custom, especially if it yield any pleasure or profit: Jer. xiii. 23, 'How can ye do good that are accustomed to do evil?'

3. Example increaseth sin, though it doth not cause it. At first sin is natural; it is not caused by imitation, but yet imitation doth much increase sin: Isa. vi. 5, 'I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;' that is a snare certainly. So we are born worldly, and the greatest part of those men with whom we do converse they are all for present satisfaction: 'There are many that say, Who will show to us any good?' Ps. iv. 6. The multitude are for worldly wealth and profit. A mortified man is rare; one that renounces interests and contentments is a wonder in the world: 1 Peter iv. 4, 'They think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot.' Therefore this is a great snare to the soul; we are in danger to miscarry by example as well as by lust; for men will say, Why should not we do as others do? There are but a few that are otherwise given, and the world thinks them to be mopish, precise, and singular. The greatest part seek worldly good. We easily contract contagion and taint one from another, and learn to be carnal and worldly. There are few heavenly and mortified christians, and men think these do thus and thus, and hope to be saved. We that have the same nature learn the same manners. Surely there is somewhat in the world, or else these wise men would not follow it so earnestly.

4. Satan, he joins issue with our lusts, and makes them more violent; he finds the fire in us, and then blows up the flames. Therefore carnal men are said to walk after the prince of the power of the air, in

fulfilling the will of the flesh and the mind: Eph. ii. 3, 'Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.' Satan hath a hand in it; he presents objects, poisons the fancy, and stirs up those corrupt and carnal motions; therefore the apostle saith, 1 Cor. vii. 5, 'Lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency.' He marks our temper, and to what we are flexible and pliable, what is our sin, and then he joins issue with it; when Satan seeth our carnal affections run that way, he makes an advantage of it. As when the matter of a tempest is prepared, the devil joins and makes it more terrible and violent, so he doth deal here with our corruptions; when he seeth our hearts strongly carried out either to the delights, pleasures, or honours of the world, he blows up the fire he finds in us into a flame. Well, then, to deal with nature, custom, example, Satan, this is hard; all these plead for worldly lusts.

Fourthly, Upon what grounds and encouragements are we to deny worldly lusts? How doth grace teach us to deny them? Partly by way of diversion, partly by way of opposition; and partly by way of argument, discourse, and persuasion.

1. By diversion, acquainting us with a better portion in Christ. The mind of man must have some oblectation and delight. Love is a strong affection, and cannot remain idle in the soul; it must run out one way or another. Look, as water in a pipe must have a vent, therefore, it runs out at the next leak, so we take up with the world because it is next at hand, and we know no better things. Well, then, grace for cure goes to work by diversion. Why should we look after these things when better are showed to us in Christ? Grace acquainteth us with pardon of sin, with the sweetness of God's love in Christ, with the comfort of forgiveness, with the spiritual delight that is in communion with God, with the hopes of glory. And look, as the woman of Samaria, John iv. 28, when she was acquainted with Christ, left her pitcher, so when grace acquainteth us with Christ, and draws out the stream of our affections that way, the course of them is diverted and turned from the world. Why should you look after these things, when you have a better portion? Rom. xiii. 14, there the apostle describes this diversion, or turning the stream another way: 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' If Christ be put on and take up the heart, if he be delighted in as the treasure of the soul, lusts will not engross so much of our care and esteem. Get Christ as near the heart as you can; for those that are acquainted with him and his sweetness, with pardon, peace, and grace, they will lose their savour and relish of these things. It is an ill sign when we have not lost our savour and taste of carnal things; it is a sign we are not much acquainted with Christ. It is no wonder for a man that knows no better fare to love coarse diet; and so it is no wonder that one that never tasted of the sweetness of hidden manna should long for the garlic and flesh-pots of Egypt.

2. Grace goes to work by way of opposition; it planteth opposite principles in the heart and maketh use of an opposite power. It

planteth opposite principles: we have a new divine nature, and so escape the corruptions of the world through lust: 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, having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust.' Lusts follow the nature; as the nature is, so are the desires. The old man is full of deceitful and carnal lusts, and the new man is full of spiritual and heavenly desires. Then it makes use of an opposite power, of the help and supply of the Spirit of God: Gal. v. 16, 'Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' There are two principles, flesh and spirit, that are always warring one upon another, and that weaken one another. The Spirit, as a never-failing spring of holy thoughts, desires, and endeavours, doth dry up the contrary issue and spring of corruption. So Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' The mortifying of the body of sin must be done through the Spirit. A natural man may see better, but without the Spirit's help he can do nothing. All the reason in the world will not tame lust. We may declaim against it, but nothing in heaven or earth will change our dispositions, or work out our corruptions, but only the Spirit of God. We have by the Spirit not only direction, but a continued influence and supply of power.

3. Grace goes to work by way of argument and persuasion. Grace out-reasons and out-pleads lust, and so it cannot obtain a grant from the soul, but is denied. The chief argument which grace urgeth is the unsuitableness of lust to our condition, that so it may shame the soul. Those things that become us while we are children, as toys and rattles, will not become us when we are men; so certainly those things that suited well enough with us while we were mere men, become us not when we are christians: 1 Peter iv. 1–3, 'He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God: for the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries;' Rom. xiii. 11, 'And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.' It is high time to leave worldly lusts. For a man after grace to be addicted to lusts, it is a relapse into a spiritual disease; and in all diseases, relapses you know are dangerous; as a man that falls into a distempered heat, after he is recovered out of a fever: 1 Peter i. 14, 'As obedient children not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.' These were your former lusts, when you were under spiritual distempers, and were only fit for you then.

But how are they unseemly and unsuitable to our condition?

[1.] They are unsuitable to our privileges, and to our interest in the death of Christ: Rom. vi. 2, 'How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' He argues not *ab impossibili*, but *ab incongruo*; it is an unfit thing for such to live in sin. We disparage the death of Christ when we are not the better but the worse for it. Hath he redeemed us from sin that we might yet serve it? Did he humble himself for our sakes that we should be proud? Did he put such contempt on the world that we should loosen the reins to worldly lusts?

Was he at all this pains to make us worse? You hereby put a contumely and reproach upon Christ's death, and disparage his purchase.

[2.] It is contrary to the example of his life. We do not worship the god of this world, nor mammon, but Christ. Christ by his own choice hath put a disgrace on the world. He chose a mean estate, not out of necessity, but design. He came not in worldly pomp: Mat. viii. 20, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head;' John xviii. 36, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' Who is more able to judge what is best, we or Christ? John xvii. 14, 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.' Who is fitter to choose, or wiser to choose, Christ or we? Who is in an error, Christ or we? If there was so much in the world as we fancy, Christ was in an error to despise it.

[3.] It is contrary to our hopes; we look for better things. It is a most lamentable thing to see a christian, that professeth the assurance of a better life, to lie digging like a mole in the earth: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against the soul.' Worldly men are fastened to things present, but the children of God do bend and tend to things to come. Worldly men do not look for better things, and therefore they are more to be excused. We have cause to blush every time we think of our condition. What are you? whence came you? whither are you going? You are passengers to heaven; why do you stick and linger by the way? Something we may take for our refreshment as men that pass through a field of corn rub the ears as they go; as the angel roused Elijah: 1 Kings xix. 7, 'Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for thee.' You that affect to tarry in a foreign country, have you a Father in heaven? Would a traveller hang his room in an inn? Will he buy such things as he cannot carry with him? Such things as we can carry with us to heaven should take up our time and thoughts. Piety outlives the grave, but honour and wealth must be left behind us.

[4.] It is contrary to our vows. We renounced them in baptism. In baptism there is ἐπερώτημα, an answer to God's questions. Believest thou with all thy heart? renouncest thou with all thy heart? 1 Peter iii. 21, 'Baptism saves, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.' You break your baptismal vows if you do not deny worldly lusts. Christ doth not only call us off from sin, but from the world; for he is to be accepted not only as our Lord and lawgiver, but as our chiefest good, as an all-sufficient saviour. You are under a vow, and alienate things once consecrated when you withdraw your affections after you have once given them up to Christ. What have lusts to do in an heart that is once dedicated to God?

Use 1. Information. It informeth us—

1. How little interest in Christ they have who are still under the power of worldly lusts. The apostle giveth us this note, Gal. v. 24, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.' He doth not say that they are Christ's that *believe* that he was crucified, or that he died for sinners; but they are Christ's that *feel* that he was crucified; that by the virtue of his cross do crucify their own lusts

and sinful affections. What! a christian, and yet worldly; a christian, and yet sensual; a christian, and yet proud! You that are given to pleasures, do you believe in Christ, that was a man of sorrows? You that are carried out after the pomp and vanity of the world, do you believe in Christ, whose kingdom was not of this world? You that are proud and lofty, do you profess an interest in the humble Christ? It is in vain for those to talk of his dying for sinners, and boast of the excellency of his cross, that never felt the virtue of it: 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.' Your affections to the world are still strong; how can you glory in his cross? What experience have you of the goodness of it? Have you gotten anything by the cross? Are you planted into the efficacy of it? Rom. vi. 5, 'For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.' Do you feel any weakening of lusts and decay of sin? at least, doth it put you upon endeavours in this kind? The roots of sin are in all, but do you seek to mortify them? Do you deny them in the way prescribed? do you seek to prevent them with diligence, to suppress them with watchfulness, to resist them with strength and resolution? When there is not a constant course of mortification set up, but lust is let alone to reign without control, you have no interest in Christ. Mark, it is said, 'They crucify the flesh:' there is a work on your part; man is not wholly passive.

2. It informeth us that true mortification is proper to grace. Grace teacheth us to deny worldly lusts; mere reason cannot. Reason may sometimes convince us of lusts, but it cannot reform them; in many things it is blind, but in all weak. The sublimest philosophy that ever was could never teach a man to go out of himself, to deny his lusts, to despise the world. Many of the heathens were to appearance temperate, just, sober, and liberal, but still the lusts remained; and therefore some in despair have pulled out their eyes, because they could not prevail over a naughty heart. *Sapientia eorum abscondit vitia, non abscindit;* they hid their sins, but did not cut them off. As an oven stopped up is the hotter within, so the excess and execution of lusts being prevented, they grew more outrageous. The heart of man will not be kept in order by anything but by the power of grace. We may argue, fast, vow, pray, promise, and watch against sin; these are good means, but not to be rested in, for they are too weak to master sin. God hath reserved this honour for his grace in Jesus Christ: Rom. vii. 24, 25, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' We can have deliverance nowhere else. Are not counsels of reason able to help me? No, they cannot. Is not a moral course of mortification able to help me, as fasting, watching, prayer? No; these may restrain it somewhat, and lessen the violence of it. Satan may be ousted for a time, but yet he returneth with more violence; as the jailer hangeth more irons on him that is caught again after an escape. It is only the grace of God that mortifies sin.

Use 2. Of reproof of those that do not deny worldly lusts, but feed and serve them; they act for their sins rather than against them.

Nature is bad of itself, and we need not make it worse; these tempt temptations, and cater and purvey for sin. Therefore the apostle useth that phrase: Rom. xiii. 14, 'Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' Men make it their business to satisfy their boundless desires, forecast to fulfil their sinful desires and affections. We must provide for the body, but not to fulfil every wanton lust and loose desire. This may be done by outward provocations, when men feed their distempers, and make nature more lustful and more wrathful: James v. 5, 'Ye have lived in pleasure on earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.' The heart is the seat of desires; they reared up their concupiscence by excess and dainty morsels, and all those courses by which lust seemeth to be satisfied but is indeed inflamed. As salt water wets the palate but inflames the stomach, so they nourished lust by voluntary casting themselves on occasions of sin. He who truly desireth to shun sin will shun the occasions of it. Who would bring fire to a barrel of gunpowder? Gen. xxxix. 10, 'And it came to pass as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.' As he would not yield to the sin, so not to the occasion. Or else it may be done by meditation and thoughts. By thoughts the heart and the temptation are brought together, as a match is first propounded before it is closed with. Thoughts are sin's spokesmen, and fasten the temptation on the heart, as worldly thoughts, admiring outward excellences: Ps. cxliv. 15, 'Happy is the people that is in such a case!' Wrathful thoughts debase men; every circumstance aggravates the injury and offence, and so inflames their spirits. Or else by a free and uncontrolled use of the senses: Mat. v. 28, 'Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' Death getteth in by the windows. Eve saw the fruit: Gen. iii. 6, 'And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.' David saw Bathsheba: 2 Sam. xi. 3, 'From the roof he saw a woman washing herself, and the woman was very beautiful to look upon;' and this inflamed his heart. Solomon bids us, Prov. xxiii. 31, 'Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.' The senses must be bridled. Job made a covenant with his eyes, chap. xxxi. 1, 'I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?' No man is above these rules. The eyes transmit the object to the fancy, the fancy to the mind, the mind to the heart.

SERMON VI.

And worldly lusts, &c.—TITUS ii. 12.

USE 3. Exhortation. Let us deny these worldly lusts. I shall urge arguments both on grace's part, and then on the part of worldly lusts.

1. On grace's part. Grace hath denied us nothing; it hath given us Christ, and all things with him; and shall we stick at our lusts, that are not worth the keeping? Certainly God loved Christ with an inexpressible affection; it was infinitely more than we can love the world. Though nature be much addicted to these lusts, and though we be carried out with great strength of affection to the world, yet we cannot love the world as much as God loved Christ, for his love to Christ is infinite and unlimited, like his essence; and God found a full complacency and satisfaction in Christ, yet God gave up the Son of his love. Grace counteth nothing too dear for us, not the blood of Christ, not the joys of heaven; and shall we count anything too dear for grace? A right eye or a right hand cannot be so dear to us as Christ was dear to God. At what cost is grace to redeem and save us? And shall grace be at all this cost for nothing? If God had commanded us a greater thing, ought we not to have done it? If God had commanded thee to give thy body to be burnt, or to offer thy first-born for the sin of thy soul; considering his absolute right over the creature, he might have required thy life, and thy children's lives; but he only requires thy lusts, things not worth the keeping, things that will prove the bane of thy soul, and things that we are bound to part with to preserve the integrity and perfection of our natures. If God had never dealt with us in a way of grace, we should have parted with our lusts; and shall grace plead in vain when it presseth to deny lusts? It will be the shame and horror of the damned to all eternity that they have stood with God for a trifle, and that they would not part with dung for gold, with a stable for a palace, especially being so deeply pre-engaged by God's mercy in Christ.

2. On the part of worldly lusts. There let me speak of them in general, then in particular.

First, In general they are lusts, and they are worldly lusts; both will yield us arguments why we should deny them.

1. They are lusts, and therefore lusts should be checked, because it is lust. That we may see what victory we have over ourselves, it is a fit occasion to express our self-denial, and to show what we can do for God. There can be no considerable self-denial there but where the lust is great, and there we show how we can renounce our bosom desires for God's sake. Mat. vii. 13, it is said, 'Strait is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life.' If we desire to go to heaven, we must look to cross ourselves in those things we most affect and desire, and pass through a strait gate; and therefore if you let lust have its scope, you mistake the way. Without self-denial there can be no good done in religion. Again, lust is the disease of the soul. Natural desire is like the *calor vitalis*, the vital heat which preserves nature; but lust is like the

feverish heat that oppresseth nature. We should get rid of our immoderate desire as we would of a disease. Nature's desires are temperate and soon satisfied, but lust's are immoderate and ravenous. Contentation is the soul's health, as lust is her sickness. If after much eating and drinking a man is unsatisfied, it is a sign he is sick, and hath more need of physic than of meat and drink, and to be purged rather than filled; so when we are not contented with God's allowance in a moderate supply of nature, we need to be cured rather than satisfied. Drink is sweet to a man in a feverish distemper, but it is better to be without the appetite than to enjoy the pleasure of satisfaction. Who would desire a burning fever to relish his drink? Better mortify the lust than satisfy it; in the issue it will be sweeter; for it is the disease of the soul though it seem sweet. I am sure the pains of mortification will not be half so bitter as the horrors of everlasting darkness. And lust let alone begins our hell; it is the burning heat that at length breaks out into an everlasting flame. Again, lust is the disorder of nature; and reason, that should be monarch and king in the soul, is enslaved, and under a base bondage by strength of desires; and it is the greatest slavery for a man to be a slave to his own desires, and the truest freedom to command them. Consider what an odd sight it were if the feet should be there where the head is, and earth there where heaven should be: there is as great a monstrousness and disorder within when the soul is under the power of a ruling lust. All should be in subjection to the law of the mind, God made reason to have the sovereignty and dominion, and we give it to appetite and lust. A man is drawn away by his lusts: James i. 14, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed.' The affections are like wild horses in a coach that have cast their driver; they draw away the soul by violence, and reason hath no command. Again, lusts make us not only brutish like beasts, for beasts are led by appetite and man by reason, but worse than beasts; for beasts can do no more, and ought to do no more; they have not a higher rule; appetite is made judge. Yea, and which is more, we exceed them in lusts. Beasts, which are wholly led by appetite, desire things only nigh at hand, and which are easy to be gotten; but man's lusts rummage throughout the whole course of nature; sometimes they desire things impossible. The lust of beasts is less inordinate than the lust of men; for the beasts only desire to satisfy nature, which is contented with a little. You cannot force a beast to take more when nature hath its fill; but our desires know no bounds; and we desire not only necessary things, but superfluous, such as are burdensome and cumbersome to the soul; lust only maketh them necessary. A horse, when he hath taken his measure, will take no more. Every other creature naturally is carried only to that which is helpful to its nature, and shuns that which is hurtful and offensive; only man is in love with his own bane, and fights for those lusts that fight against the soul. Again, it is lust that makes our abode in the world dangerous; and it would be a safe place were it not for lust: 2 Peter i. 4, 'The corruption that is in the world through lust.' The fault is not in the object, in gold, in wine, but in the heart of man; not in the creature, whom we abuse to this excess, but in our own lusts. God made them to be creatures for our help,

and lust turns them into snares for our ruin. As when a vessel is filled with filthy liquor, and it runs dreggy, the fault is not in the piercer that broacheth it and giveth it vent, but in the liquor itself. Lust is the cause of all the hurt that is done us in the world: the creature doth only broach the barrel, gives vent to our desires, and we run dreggy and filthy. Were it not for lust, nothing in the world could harm us. All other things are conquered with ease if a man could subdue his own affections; and all temptations are so far under us as we are above ourselves. Again, it is lust that doth hinder our peace. How quietly and happily would men live if they were more mortified! Men desire more than they have, and so are made poor, not by want, but by desire. He that expects little is soon satisfied; and certainly he will never storm at injuries that have overcome his own passion; whereas a froward man is at the command of others, because he hath not the command of himself; he doth not storm at disgrace that hath not set too high a price upon himself. If a man be vile and little in his own eyes, when others contemn and slight him they do but ratify his private opinion of himself; and who is angry with another because he is of the same judgment with himself? But usually this is the cause of discontent and trouble; we set too high a price upon ourselves; and when others will not come up to it, we are troubled. Take away the lust, and trouble ceaseth. No man is hurt but by himself. It is a man's own affection and feeling that makes the misery; always the fuller of lust, the fuller of discontent. What need Haman be troubled that Mordecai would not bow the knee, but that he looked for it, and set a value and esteem upon it. The inordinateness of affection causeth the greatness of the affliction; and because lust is not mortified, the life is full of trouble. We would have more than God allows us, and so our trouble doth increase. Again, as lusts deny them, for lusts will end in gross sins, and gross sins in public shame; and therefore, as Elisha cast salt into the spring to cure the brackishness of the water, so look to lusts; they are the spring and rise of evil actions. Let any lust alone, either pride, or envy, or worldliness, if you do not destroy it, it will prove a bitter root to some gross sin, and it may be of final apostasy and desperation. A man that is given to worldly lust, one time or other is put upon the trial; if we find the sin, providence will find the occasion, and then he comes off with visible shame and dishonour. There is the root within; and to what an excess doth sin grow in those that deny themselves nothing, and will not be denied in anything! Lusts grow licentious and unruly; and because they usurp God's place in the heart, therefore God suffers it; always it ends ill, in shame and judgment. Judas at first was but a little worldly; he allowed his covetousness, and it brought him to betray his master, and that brought him to the halter. Gehazi was first blasted with covetousness and then with leprosy. Ananias and Sapphira were taken off with sudden judgment. Nay, God sometimes arms their own hands and thoughts against themselves. Covetousness begins with inordinate desire, and ends in injustice; and then that injustice must be professed and veiled with hypocrisy, as in Judas; and that hypocrisy breeds hardness of heart, and then God bringeth them to shame, and that shame leads on to despair and ruin. And so I may instance in other lusts. Sensuality

begins with daintiness, and ends in adultery or some shameful act, or else with beggary or some shameful punishment, and both end with despair; as Sodom began with fulness of bread, then went on to foulness of lust, and that brought hell out of heaven. The lust of the flesh can also boast of its trophies and spoils; it drowned the old world, burned Sodom, slew three thousand of God's own people in one day, Num. xxiii. compared with 1 Cor. x. Pride is not behindhand; proud men have their falls, and usually they are the more shameful, because God's honour is most sensibly usurped by pride. The great work of providence for these six thousand years hath been to pour shame and contempt upon pride. The first act of God's judicial providences was the casting the angels out of heaven, then Adam out of paradise. What! shall I tell you of Nebuchadnezzar turned a-grazing, and Herod eaten up with lice? Thus you see we had need to beware. Sin is an ill guest, that always sets its lodging on fire. Once more, why we are to deny these lusts. It is lust that blasts all your duties and services; it either hinders or poisons them; it either draws away the heart from duty or in duty: Gal. v. 17, 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these two are contrary one to the other; so that you cannot do the things that you would;' and Rom. vii. 19, 'For the good that I would, I do not; and the evil that I would not, that I do.' Lust will not suffer God to have his due. The love of pleasures cannot brook constant exercise in religion, and the world is a great encroacher; and pride is all for the public where it may be seen; in private duties it is slight or nothing. As a mill stands still when the wind blows not, so, when the wind of popular applause ceaseth, a proud man cannot spread his sails, or do anything for God and conscience. Thus it draweth away the heart from duty. Then it draws away the heart in duty. Observe it, and you will find it by constant experience. The main lust will surely be discovered by the working of the thoughts. When you come to pray, or in your solemn duties, that which your thought is most taken up with discovers the main lust: Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 'They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people; and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.' The devil loveth to affront Christ to his face, and therefore takes advantage of the chief lust which occupies and possesses the heart to cast up mire and dirt even in God's presence; therefore lust hinders, poisons or perverts duty. All that men do in religion, if lusts remain in force, is either to promote lusts or to conceal a lust; to hide other sins, or to feed a lust; and therefore we had need to deny it as it is lust.

2. You should deny them as worldly lusts; so you must abstain from them, not serve them. As they are stirred up by worldly objects, they keep us from better employment; and therefore grace teacheth us to deny them, as they tend only to such a vile purpose.

Many arguments there are—

[1.] Whatever is for this world must be left on this side the grave. Pomp, pleasure, and estate must be left behind us: Job i. 21, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked must I return thither.' There is no carnal pomp and pleasure in the next world. Here we

bustle for greatness, but death ends the quarrel. Like foolish birds, we seek to build strong nests, when to-morrow we must begone. Open the grave, and look upon the relics of man's mortality; thou canst not discern between the rich and the poor, the king and the peasant; all are alike obnoxious to stench and rottenness. Those desires that carry you out to the world must be mortified. A mill-wheel runs round all the day, and at night it is in the same place. So whatever we gain and purchase in the world it must be left at night when we go to bed, when death finds us, and in the same place; at death we are as naked as we came into the world: 1 Tim. vi. 7, 'For we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.' A man's wealth doth not follow him, but his sins do; his iniquity will find him out. Consider, at birth a man is contented with a cradle, and at death with a grave; yet here we join house to house, and field to field, Isa. v. 8, as if the whole world could not contain us.

[2.] As they are only for this world, so our abode here is but short and uncertain; and therefore, if it be worldly lust, it should be less prized, for it lasts but for a time. Within a very little while those that are most potent, powerful, and shining in the splendour of the world shall be turned to dust and ashes. God hath made life short, for many wise and merciful reasons, that the time of our labour might not last too long. He hath made us to enjoy himself; and because he loveth the saints, he would have them the sooner with himself, and would not be long without their company; and that we might love eternal life, therefore this life is short; and that he might gratify the saints (for he that hath a journey to go would pass it over as soon as he can) God makes their journey as short as is convenient for his glory; and to shame wicked men, because they delight in that which is but of a short continuance, but their torment is eternal. The pleasure of sin is but for a season, but the torments of sin are for ever and ever; therefore this should put a check to your desires; it is only for a world that passeth away. Nay, the lusts of this world pass away: 1 John ii. 17, 'The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof.' The time will come when we shall have no lusts to these things. It begins at sickness, but at the day of judgment we shall have no relish of these things; and when the whole world is burnt up, it will be our torment that we have prostituted our affections to such low and unbeseeming things; we shall see the vanity when it is too late; men will have little love to the world then.

[3.] If they be but worldly lusts, they should not be cherished were they never so durable. Why? Because this is not our happiness and our rest. Carnal men have more of the world. Christ committed his purse to the worst of his disciples. Of the others he saith, 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world,' John xvii. 16. In this world God is most liberal to the worst, therefore here we should not set up our rest. Look, as it is said of Abraham, Gen. xxv. 6, that he gave gifts to Ishmael and to the sons of Keturah, but he gave the inheritance to Isaac; wicked men have their portion, but not the inheritance. God will not be in their debt, therefore they have gifts. Therefore saith a christian, Why should I cherish these worldly lusts? this is not my portion, but the portion of others: 'From men of the

world, which have their portion in this life,' Ps. xvii. 14. The world is Satan's circuit, he compasseth the earth. It is the saints' slaughter-house; they shed the blood of saints and prophets, Rev. xvi. 6. It is the place where God is dishonoured. They are favoured and loved most by the world whom Christ hath rejected and passed by.

[4.] Worldly lusts do hinder us from our work. We were made for another world, and this life is lent us for a while to look after heaven. We cannot drive on those two cares at once, for the world and heaven too; as a man cannot look with one eye to heaven and with another to the earth; therefore why should we indulge worldly lusts? Who would lose a crown to be owner of a dunghill? And will you forfeit heaven and the joys of God's presence for worldly conveniences? Lust hinders your care of heaven. It is true a temperate and religious use of the world furthereth it, but worldly lust doth take off your heart from God and heaven, and unfits it for it, so that your heavenly desires are hindered.

[5.] In a sense, worldly lusts do hinder us of the comfort of this world. Want increaseth with enjoyment as the fire increaseth by laying on more fuel. The more we enjoy the more we desire, so we do not enjoy what we do possess. The more we have the more we want, so that a covetous man neither enjoys this world nor the world to come.

[6.] If it be worldly lust, then take heed of it, for thou art as thy love is. If thou lovest this world, thou art a worldly man; if thou lovest God, thou art a godly man; if thou lovest heaven, thou art a heavenly man. A man is not as his opinion is, but as his affections are. A bad man may be of a good opinion, but a bad man can never have good affections. The soul, as wax, receives the impression from the object. Thou art a person of the world if thou lovest the world. Take a looking-glass and put it towards heaven, there you shall see the figure of heaven, the clouds and things above; put it downward towards the earth, you shall see the figure of the earth, trees, meadows, fruits. So doth the soul receive a figure from the things to which it is set; if the heart be set towards heaven, that puts thee into a heavenly frame; if thou appliest it to earthly objects, thou art a man of the earth.

[7.] The more we mortify these worldly lusts the more we prevent affliction. We might prevent the bitterness of the cross if we would subdue our own lusts; but because we are negligent of that work. God is forced to lay on heavy crosses.

Secondly, Let me now deal with these lusts in particular—pride, sensuality, and covetousness; these are immediate issues of corrupt nature; the apostle calls them lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eye, and pride of life.

1. Sensuality, or the lusts of the flesh. Let me begin there, because we live first by sense before we live by reason. These lusts are deeply rooted in the heart of man. Other sins defile a part; covetousness and pride defile the soul, but sensual lusts defile soul and body too; they leave guilt upon the soul, and dishonour upon the body. By gluttony and drunkenness, the body, which is God's temple, is only made a strainer for meats and drinks to pass through, and by adultery it is made the sink and channel of lust. In short, that you may know what these lusts of the flesh are, sensuality is an inordinate desire of soft and

delicate living, an intemperate use of pleasures, of what kind or sort soever, an undue liberty of diet, sports, and other appurtenances of life. There is allowed a due care of the body, to keep it serviceable, and there is allowed a delight in the creature; for he that created water for our necessity created wine for our comfort. The body must not be used too hardly, that it may be serviceable to the purposes of grace.

But then, what is this inordinate desire, this intemperate use, this undue liberty? How shall we trace and find out the sin? Different natures and tempers make rules uncertain; but the two general bounds which God hath set to our liberty in this kind are the health of our body and the welfare of the soul; but when bodily health is overturned, and the soul clogged and perverted, then your lusts have carried you too far.

[1.] When bodily health is overturned. Too much care for the body destroys it; as the Romans were wont to have their funerals at the gates of Venus's temple, to show that lusts shorten life. When health is destroyed, or the vigour of nature is abated (as too much oil puts out the lamp), then you sin. Hosea iv. 11, it is said, 'Whoredom, and wine, and new wine, take away the heart.' The heart, that is the generousness and sprightliness of man. When gallant and active spirits are effeminated, and brave hopes are drowned and quenched in excess of pleasures, and we lose our masculine agility and vivacity, all is melted away; then we sin against the bounds and limits God hath set us. Thus there is a restraint that ariseth from the body.

[2.] When the soul is clogged or unfitted for duty or disposed for sin. (1.) Then we are unfitted for duty when there is less aptitude for God's service. The matter of carnal pleasure is burdensome and gross; it oppresseth the soul, that it cannot lift up itself to God and divine things, because it is bowed down and humbled to pleasures, and the heart is overcharged: Luke xxi. 34, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life.' Men drive on heavily, and duty grows burthensome and irksome. By turning out our affections to present contentments and delights we cannot pray with that readiness. The strength of our delight should be reserved for communion with God, and for those chaste pleasures that flow in his house and are to be had in his presence. (2.) When there is more aptitude for sin: Titus iii. 3, 'We ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures.' Lusts and pleasures are fitly coupled and put together. The soul waxeth wanton when natural desires are too far indulged. If we do not watch over our senses, but the heart grows wanton and libidinous, and restraints of grace grow weaker, and carnal motions are more urgent, then pleasure becomes a snare, grace is disturbed, and nature is distempered, and the heart is more free for sin.

Deny these lusts of the flesh, do not indulge them, suffer them not to grow wanton.

By way of argument consider—

(1.) Sensual men have little of God's Spirit: Jude 19, 'Sensual, having not the Spirit.' The Spirit is a free Spirit, and they are slaves to their lusts; the Spirit is a pure Spirit, and their desires are unclean and

gross; the Spirit is active, and they are heavy and muddy, and of a nature dull and slow. Sensual men quench the vigour of nature, much more the efficacy and radiancy of the graces of the Spirit. The Spirit works intellectual delights, and they are all for sensual. They love pleasures more than God: 2 Tim. iii. 4, 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;' those dreggy delights. Whereas the comforts and consolations of the Spirit are masculine, and they are got by exercise. Look, as the manly heat gotten by exercise is better than that which is gotten by hovering over the fire, so the comforts of the Spirit, gained by much communion with God, by being instant and earnest in prayer, is better than that delight which is gotten by hovering over the creature. Well, then, which will you choose? Will you live at large and ease, and wallow in earthly delights and contentments? or would you be stirred up by the active motion of the Spirit of God? Would you dissolve your precious hours and spirits in ease and pleasure, or else be employed in the solemn and grave exercises of religion? Frogs delight in fens, and the worst natures are most sensual; they are not fit for any worthy action or any great exploit.

(2.) It is the first thing you must do, if you mean to do anything in religion, to renounce pleasure; and therefore it is put in the first place, 'The lusts of the flesh.' It is below reason to live in pleasure, therefore much more below grace. Alas! you will do nothing if this be not done, but will lie open to every temptation. If a carnal motion arise that bids you neglect duty or practise sin, you lie open to it; therefore it is said, Prov. xxv. 28, 'He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls.' He that bridles not his appetite is like a city whose wall is broken down. When a town is dismantled, it lies open for every comer; so where the appetite is unruly there is no room for the Spirit, but for every temptation: Ezek. xlvii. 11, 'But the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.' The waters of the sanctuary could not heal the miry places, which is an emblem of a sensual heart. Pleasure brings a brawn and deadness upon the conscience, a cloud upon the understanding, and a damp upon the affections. Daniel, that had the high visions of God, lived by pulse; he was a man temperate. Those that mortify pleasure are of the clearest understanding; and John the Baptist, which had most eminent revelations of the mysteries of the gospel (of all the prophets, there was not a greater than John the Baptist), he was fed with locusts and wild honey. Therefore mortify pleasure.

(3.) By custom this sin is rooted, and so hardly left; because it doth not only pervert the constitution of the soul, but the constitution of the body. Now, when the body is unruly as well as the affections, grace hath more to struggle with. A man that hath habituated himself to carnal pleasure, because his body is distempered and perverted, is not so soon healed. That is the reason that when the apostle speaks of meats and drinks, 1 Cor. vi. 12, he saith, 'He will not be brought under the power of any.' So again, when men are given to wine, it is their custom and rooted disposition; therefore avoid not only the gross act, but the very beginning, that it may not be a settled distemper. Whenever you take pleasures, they should be used with fear. It is

the charge of the Spirit of God commenceth against those, Jude 12, 'Feeding themselves without fear.' Mark, it is not enough for your acquitment that you do not drink to drunkenness, or feed to actual excess and distemper, but suffer it not to be a rooted disposition in your hearts, for then it will be hardly left. Austin speaks of his own experience in this kind, *Ebrietas longe a me est, crapula autem nonnunquam subrepit servo tuo*—Lord, I was never a drunkard, it is far from me; but gluttony creeps upon me unawares, and so hinders me from the duties of the spiritual life. The throat is a slippery place, and needs to be guarded with much watchfulness and care, lest this distemper be rooted in the heart. Job sacrificed while his sons were feasting: Job i. 5, 'For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.' In all these things should we use much caution.

2. The next particular the apostle mentions is the lusts of the eye, or covetousness. This is an evil very natural to us, and we cannot be watchful enough against the encroachments of the world. We need it in part, and we love it more than we need it. Worldliness is a branch of original sin; it is a disease we are born with. The tenth commandment, that forbids original sin, saith, 'Thou shalt not covet.' The best find temptations this way. We are daily conversant about the things of the world, and we receive a taint from those things with which usually we converse; we find by experience that long converse is a bewitching thing. Again, the world is a thing of present enjoyment; we have the world in hand, and heaven in hope. The judgment of carnal men is quite different from the judgment of the word. The word of God counts the world to be but a fancy, and an apparition, and heaven to be the only substance: Prov. xxiii. 5, 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?' It is not in comparison of better things: 'And the fashion of this world passeth away,' 2 Cor. vii. 31; but, Prov. viii. 21, 'That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance.' Heaven is the durable substance; this is the judgment of the word, but wicked men think quite otherwise. We have sensible experience of the profits of the world, and therefore we judge thus perversely, and call it durable riches, and heaven but a mere fancy to make fools fond withal. Besides, worldliness is a serious thing; it doth not break out into any foul act, therefore it is applauded by men: Ps. x. 3, 'The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.' We think well of it, at least we stroke it with a gentle censure. A drunkard is more liable to reproach and shame than a worldling. Worldliness is consistent with the gravity and strictness of profession; and therefore above all corruptions it is usually found amongst them that profess religion; but dissoluteness of luxury will not stand with that external gravity and strictness which the profession of religion requires. Licentious persons procure shame to themselves, and are publicly odious; but now, this being a serious sin, and possibly it may win the soul from other vices, therefore we indulge it the more. Again, it is a cloaked sin; the apostle speaks of 'the cloak of covetousness,' 1 Thes. ii. 5. It is a hard matter to discover and find it out, there are so many evasions; necessary providence, and provision for our families is a duty, and it is a duty enforced by

nature and grace. Here men evade the charge of covetousness; they think their carking is justified, as being no more than the prudent management of their affairs. But consider, it is an evil which the Lord hates. Covetousness bewrays itself by an immoderate care after the things of this life, immoderate desire, and immoderate delight.

[1.] By an immoderate care after worldly comforts. When we are so solicitous about outward supports, what we shall do, and what will become of us, that is a sure sign of a worldly heart. We dare not trust God's providence, but cark ourselves: Luke xii. 29, 'And seek ye not what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.' The word μὴ μετεωρίζεσθε signifies Do not hang like a meteor in the air, hovering between heaven and earth, between doubts and fears. This is to take God's work out of his hands, as the care of the son is a reproach of the father. It is a sign we dare not trust God's providence, but will be our own carvers; we reprove and tax his providence as if he were not solicitous enough for us.

Object. But must we not be careful and provident? I answer—

(1.) Do your present work, and for the future leave it to God. God would have us look no further than the present day, provided we do not embezzle our estate by idle projects, or in carnal pleasures, or wasteful profusion, and provided we be not negligent in our calling; let us do our work, and let God alone for future times. It is a mercy God would have our care look no further than the present day: Mat. vi. 34, 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' God is very careful of man's welfare; he hath made carking a sin, he might have left it as a punishment. Every day hath trouble enough for our exercise, and that is as much as God hath required.

(2.) It is bewrayed by an immoderate desire. The temper of the heart is very much discovered by the current and stream of the desires. As the temper of the body is known by the beating of the pulses, so is the temper of the soul by the course of the desires; or, as physicians judge of the patient by his appetite, so may you judge of your spirits by your desires, how they are carried out, whether to heavenly things and the enjoyment of God, or to the world. A carnal frame of spirit will be known by an unsatisfied thirst, and the ravenousness of the desires, when they still increase with the enjoyment, and men crave more and more. Such a dropsy as this is argues a distempered soul, especially when the desires are transported beyond all bounds of modesty and contentment: Isa. v. 8, 'Woe unto them that join house to house, and field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.' The inordinate inclinations still increaseth, and men never have enough, as if they would grasp all, that they might be blessed alone. Alas! those that have a heavenly frame will stand wondering that God hath given them so much in their pilgrimage; nay, that God hath given them anything. But more especially doth this bewray lust when these desires bring the soul to that determinate resolution that this shall be the project of their lives. He that is rich hath many temptations, however wealth be gotten, or given by God; but he that will be rich is sure to miscarry: 1 Tim. vi. 9, '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.' The bent and resolution of the soul argues the heart is naught; he hath drowned himself already; he falls into a snare, and into many temptations.

(3.) By an immoderate delight in worldly comforts. A man may be worldly, that is, not carking and ravenous. Esau saith, 'I have enough, my brother,' Gen. xxxiii. 9. Your complacency in outward enjoyments is a great sin. When men are satiated with their present portion of the world, it is as great, if not a greater sin, than to desire more. When Christ would represent a covetous man, he doth it not by one that grasps at more, but by one that found a greater complacency in what he had; he blesseth himself as if he had happiness enough: Luke xii. 19, 'I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' It is a question which is worse, a ravenous desire after more, or a carnal complacency in what we do enjoy. This last is worst; there is discontent and distrust in the former, but God is robbed and wholly laid aside by the latter. Our delight, which is the choicest affection, is intercepted. Many will say, I desire no more; but thy heart is set upon what thou hast, and so God is robbed, who is to be the soul's treasure; and the poor are robbed; they are loath to part with what they delight in; and the soul is robbed of eternal happiness, which it should look after, and of present comfort, in case God should blast all by his providence; for a contented worldly man will be soonest discontented. It is a breach of the matrimonial contract: James iv. 4, 'Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?' There is a matrimonial contract between God and the soul, wherein God propoundeth himself as God all-sufficient. Now, as if God were not good enough, men seek delight elsewhere. Well, then, deny these lusts of the eyes. To this purpose consider—

(1*st.*) Your happiness doth not lie in these things: Luke xii. 15, 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' You may be happy without them. The saints have a candle that shall never be blown out. Neither your safety nor comfort lies in the world. Your safety doth not lie in it; you do not live by ordinary supplies, but by God's providence. Your comfort doth not lie in it, it should be in God. We cannot see how we can be well without friends, wealth, present supports; but consider, a man lives not by visible means, but by the providence of God.

(2*d.*) A little serves the turn to bring us to heaven. He is not poor that hath little; but he that desires more, he is the poor man. Enlarged affections make us want more than the necessities of nature. We are not contented with God's allowance, but pitch upon such a state of life, and cannot live without such splendour and pomp, or without such an estate. It is not want of estate that makes a man poor, but an unsatisfied mind. He that doth not submit to God's allowance is poor.

(3*d.*) God will provide for us if we do our duty. He that hath given us life will give us food that is less than life; it is Christ's argument: Mat. vi. 25, 'Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?' Nay, he that hath given us Christ, 'will he not with him

also freely give us all things?' Rom. viii. 32. So a man may argue, God hath given me life, and that is better than food and raiment, as the body is better than the garment. Is any man so illogical, and of so little reason, as to argue thus, God hath given me Christ, and will he not give me support? [1]I have trusted him with my soul, shall I not trust him with my estate? God never sets any one to work but he gives them maintenance. He feeds the ravens, and will he not feed his children? Certainly a father will not be more kind to a raven than to a child, to a flower than to a son, Mat. vi. 26–29.

(*4th.*) Wealth doth not make us more acceptable with God. Grace puts the rich and the poor upon the same level: 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; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.' The rich man is not too high for God if his heart be kept humble with his estate, and the poor man is not too low for God if he be preferred by grace; so that grace still is the ground of acceptation: 'Riches profit not in the day of wrath,' Prov. xi. 4; 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God takes away his soul?' Job xxvii. 8. These things will stand you in no stead.

(*5th.*) The more estate you have, the more danger and the more trouble. A pirate doth not set upon empty vessels. None are so liable to such snares as those that have wealth and greatness. You can hardly discharge what you have already. If you had more, you would have the greater trust; for 'to whom much is given, of them much shall be required,' Luke xii. 48. You must give account for more time, for more opportunities to do good, for more acts of mercy. A greater estate is incident to more cares and more duties.

3. The third lust is pride of life. The most natural affection is self-love, and pride is nothing else but the excess of self-love. We suck it in with our milk. Our first parents fell by pride; they soon catched at that bait, 'You shall be as gods,' Gen. iii. 5; and we see it takes with us, and surpriseth us upon every small occasion; a fine garment, a lock of hair, a good horse, or a serviceable creature. There is nothing so high and nothing so low but pride can make use of it; if we go back any degrees, it is to rise the higher. Yea, rather than not be proud, we can be proud of sin. The apostle speaks of some 'that glory in their shame,' Phil. iii. 19, as their revenge and glutting themselves with their unchaste pleasures. It is a sin that will put us upon much self-denial. How can men rack their spirits to promote their own praise and exaltation? How can they pinch themselves of the conveniences of life to feed pride and to supply pomp and state? Nay, a man may be proud after his death in funeral-pomp and in the glory of the sepulchre. Now pride is twofold—in mind, and in desire. Pride in the mind is self-conceit, and pride in the desire is an inordinate affection of glory or high place. Pride in mind is when we ascribe to ourselves what we have not, or transfer upon ourselves the praise of what we have. To boast of what we have not is folly; to boast of what we have is sacrilege, and we rob God; this is like a man deeply in debt, who boasts of an estate he has borrowed. Pride in the desire is an inordinate affectation of our own glory: all that men do is to set up themselves.

[1.] Against pride in the mind. Consider what little reason we have

[1] This appears to be the opposite of what the author designs to say.—ED.

to be proud. Poor men! in whose birth there is sin, in whose life there is misery, and in whose death there is sorrow and perplexity. What should we be proud of? Not of strength, which is inferior to many beasts. Not of beauty; many flowers are decked with a more glorious paintry. Beauty it is but skin-deep; it is blasted with every sickness, it is the laughing-stock of every disease. And then he that is proud of his clothes is but proud of his rags wherewith his wounds are bound up. Clothes you know were occasioned by sin; in innocency holiness was a garment for man, and men might have conversed naked without shame. And so for birth; we have no reason to be proud of that. *Omnis sanguis concolor*—all blood is of a colour: 'He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth,' Acts xvii. 26. Not of estates; they are but as trappings to a horse, things without us. We do not value a horse for his trappings, but by his courage, mettle, and strength. Not of learning; there is none so learned but he hath ignorance enough to humble him. To be proud of learning shows our ignorance. A little river seems deep when it runs between narrow banks, but when there is a broad channel it is very shallow; so men seem to be profound till their thoughts run out into the breadth of learning. Nor should we glory in preferment and in being advanced. When men are put into great places, they grow proud, but it is their folly: thy preferment may be in judgment; God many times chooseth wicked men to rule. He gives kingdoms to the basest of men, Dan. iv. 17. God's providence is not only seen in preferring wise and godly governors, but in setting up the base for a judgment to the nation. Nebuchadnezzar is called God's servant, Jer. xxv. 9. The sins of Egypt and Judah did require such a servant. A devout man complained of a bloody prince, Lord! why hast thou made him emperor? He did seem to hear this answer, Because I could not find a worse for such a wicked people. So when such an one was chosen bishop, he grew proud upon it, and there was a voice heard, Thou art lifted up, not because thou art worthy of the priesthood, but because the city is worthy of no better a bishop. Some may be preferred, not because they are worthy, but because the sins of the nation deserved no better governors. So in any good actions, when they are done commendable before men, remember, God makes another judgment: 'All the ways of man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirits,' Prov. xvi. 2. Man hath but a partial hatred of sin, but God hath an exact balance, and he weighs the spirits: Luke xvi. 15, 'Ye are they that justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.' When men praise you, say, These men cannot see my heart. Usually after some eminency there afterward comes a blasting. Jacob wrestled with God, and then his thigh was broken. Paul was rapt up into the third heaven, then presently there was sent him a thorn in the flesh. Sometimes God blasts the creature before the work, as Moses's hand was made leprous before he wrought the miracle, Exod. iv. 6. Sometimes after the work, to show we are but vile instruments; there is something left to remember the creature of his own vileness. Then be not proud of thy holiness, for what is this to God's? Ps. cxxx. 3, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark

iniquities, O Lord, who should stand?' And God hates this sin so much that he lets men fall into many scandalous sins when they grow proud of their holiness. The ornament of a high and honourable estate in the world is not outward splendour, but the humble mind; James i. 10, 'Let the rich rejoice in that he is made low.' This is true nobleness and eminency, and an argument of a great mind, to be like a spire, least and low in our own account when most exalted by God.

[2.] Against the other, pride in desires and inordinate affectation of greatness. Consider what God hath done for you already, and prize the opportunity of a private life, and improve it to frequency of duty and converse with God. It is better to be like a violet, known by our own smell rather than our greatness. The mountains are exposed to blasts and winds, and they are generally barren; but the low valleys are watered and fruitful; therefore men know not what they do when they seek great things. The true ambition is to seek the great things of heaven and the great things of Christ, and for other things, to refer ourselves to the fair invitation and allowance of God's providence. A vainglorious man is nothing in christianity. Paul can count a man's judgment but a small thing: 1 Cor. iv. 3, 'With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment.' God is our judge, and the business of our lives is to approve ourselves to God; man's judgment must not be valued. And besides, it is a vain thing to affect that in which we may be soon crossed. One man's opinion may disturb our quiet; one Mordecai can cross Haman in all his pomp. To doat upon that which is in the power of those whose humours are as inconstant as the waves, or their breath, or the wind, is a very great folly; where one word may deject us and cast us into sorrow. And lastly; consider, this is nothing to eternal glory.

SERMON VII.

We might live soberly, &c.—TITUS ii. 12.

THE lesson which grace teacheth was propounded privatively and positively. Privatively, wherein I have showed what we must eschew and avoid, viz., 'Ungodliness and worldly lusts.'

I now come to the positive part, where the duty of man is distributed into three kinds. Look, as in a moral consideration, there are but three beings, God, neighbours, and self, so here the apostle makes three parts and branches of our duty—that we should live soberly as to ourselves; righteously as to our neighbour; godly, that the Lord may not be defrauded of his portion. Sobriety respects the duties of our personal capacity; righteousness the duties of our relation to others; and piety the duties of immediate intercourse with God.

I begin with the first of the apostle's adverbs, that we should live soberly. Sobriety is a grace very necessary; we can neither be righteous

nor pious without it; for he that is not sober, he takes to himself more than is due, and so can neither give God nor man their portion. If he be unsober, he will be unjust; he robs the church of his parts which are quenched in pleasure, the commonwealth of his service, the family of their maintenance and necessary provision; and then the poor are robbed, because that which should be spent in their relief is wasted in luxury. And then he that is unsober cannot be godly, for he doth not give God his portion; he robs God of his time, and, which is worse, of his heart; for that, being carried out to pleasure, it is deprived of the fruition of God, and transported from better delights. So that if we would discharge our duty to God or man, if we would live righteously and piously, we must live soberly. Once more, that you may a little conceive of the weight and consequence of this discourse, sobriety is a part of virtue's armour: so much is intimated by the apostle, 2 Peter i. 5, 6, 'Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience.' Virtue or strictness of life is rooted in faith, directed by knowledge, defended and maintained by temperance and patience; by temperance on the right hand, and patience on the left. As fortitude or patience is necessary to arm grace against dangers, so is temperance or sobriety to arm it against pleasures and worldly comforts. It is hard to say which we need most, temperance or patience. We must expect hardships, and still we live among snares, but only snares are more frequent than troubles; as more birds are ensnared by the net than killed by the birding-piece. Persecution hath slain its thousands; but pleasures their ten thousands. Therefore you see sobriety is of great use in the spiritual life. As we need to press faith as the root of virtue, and knowledge as the guide of virtue, so we need to press temperance and patience as the guard and defence of virtue; patience against the troubles and hardships that we meet with, and sobriety against the comforts and allurements of the present world.

Before I enter upon the discussion of the present argument, let me first remove some prejudices.

1. Some men think that to discourse of sobriety will be to give you a moral lecture, not an evangelical discourse; they would have us to preach Christ, as if pressing the duties of religion were not a preaching Christ. Certainly we may preach that which grace teacheth; now grace teacheth to live soberly. The truth is, men would be honeyed and oiled with grace, and cannot endure the strictness of moral duties. Here conviction is easy, and conscience maketh guilt fly in the face, and therefore men cannot endure this kind of preaching. I tell you, to preach sobriety and temperance is to preach Christ. It is said, Acts xxiv. 24, 'After certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.' Paul, let us hear somewhat of Christ. Now what doth Paul preach of? ver. 25, 'And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.' There is his preaching Christ. To preach Christ is to press whatever the christian religion requireth, and in that manner and upon those terms. And when Paul saith, 1 Cor. ii. 2, 'I have determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified,' it was because that

was the controverted truth, the truth then in question, and most opposed; for the doctrine of the cross was 'to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness,' 1 Cor. i. 23. Now saith the apostle, as foolish a doctrine as it is, 'I have determined to know nothing else among you.' Not to prescribe in other cases, and to confine our meditations to the doctrine of the cross, there are other arguments necessary, and must take their turn and place.

2. Some men think that they are above these directions, to be taught how to eat and drink, and that every man hath prudence enough to govern his appetite. But consider, Christ thought meet to warn his own disciples: Luke xxi. 34, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life.' A man would think it a needless direction to such holy men; yet saith Christ, 'Take heed,' and certainly sin is not grown less dangerous, nor we more holy than the apostles. Besides, now if ever is there need of such kind of preaching. Some men profess to live to the height of the creature, and so make lust a wanton, as it is dangerous always to go near the pit's brink; and he that doth all that he may will soon do more than he should. It is a character of profane men, Jude 12, 'Feeding themselves without fear.' The throat is a slippery place, and had need be watched and kept with fear. We find that an over-spiritual preaching hath made men loose and careless, and that moral duties need to be pressed.

3. Another prejudice there is against this doctrine; men shift it off to others. We conceive of gluttony, drunkenness and covetousness otherwise than Christ did, and therefore do not judge such discourses necessary. We conceive drunkenness and gluttony to be an outrageous excess; when we hear of gluttons and drunkards, we think of them vomiting, staggering, reeling, not being able to speak, or able to go, faltering in speech and language; but the scripture sets out other manner of drunkards; these are the effects, the punishment, rather than the fault. And so, when we hear of covetousness, then we think of some sordid wretch, or else of some oppressor that gets wealth by rapine and extortion, or the apparent use of unlawful means; and so we wipe our lips, and think we are clean. But now that which is counted surfeiting and drunkenness and covetousness before God is the overcharging the heart: Luke xxi. 34, 'Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be overcharged,' &c. A man's heart may be overcharged, though his stomach is not, when he cannot freely meditate upon heavenly things, though he doth not vomit and give up his luxurious morsels in loathsome ejections. And that is covetousness before God when the care of earthly things hinders us from heavenly-mindedness and heavenly desires; the heart is then overcharged, and loseth the sense of spiritual things.

These things premised, I come now to the doctrine.

Doct. One of the lessons which grace teacheth us is sobriety.

(1.) I shall show you what sobriety is in the general; (2.) I shall open the particular branches of it.

First, I shall show what sobriety is in the general. Sobriety is the moderation of our affections in the pursuit and use of all earthly things.

To explain the description, it is *the moderation.* Grace doth not take away the affection, but governs it; it bridles the excess, and then reduceth the affection itself to a just stint and temper. Now the rule according to which this moderation must be made must be either the word, or, where the word interposeth not, then spiritual prudence and conveniency is to be a judge. How the word judgeth I shall show in the branches; but in matter of conveniency, what is most convenient for ourselves, that we be not brought under the power of any creature, spiritual prudence must be the rule: 1 Cor. vi. 12, 'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.' A christian is to see, while he makes use of one part of his liberty, that he doth not forfeit and lose another, yea, the better part. As men go to law for trifles, and spend a real and solid estate, so by an intemperate use of christian liberty we forfeit that which is the best part, freedom from lusts, and from the bondage of sin. As, for instance, a promiscuous use of meats and drinks is a part of christian liberty, but freedom from lusts is another part; and therefore, while a man useth this liberty in the creature, and hereby brings himself in bondage to his lusts, or is enslaved to such a creature, how inconvenient soever the use of it be, he cannot leave it; he disappoints the main end of Christ's blood, and forfeits the fairest part of that liberty Christ hath purchased for him. God hath given us a large liberty in Christ; let us not go too far, lest we forfeit the spiritual part of it. Therefore it is a part of sobriety, if it be likely to prove a snare, to moderate and bridle the affections. Yea, in another case, which concerneth others, that may be lawful to one which is not lawful to another. If the thing affected be lawful, yet if it be likely to give offence, or to procure a blot upon ourselves, it is a part of sobriety to moderate ourselves, and abstain from it. In such a case we owe so much to one another's weakness, and to our own credit, which should be preferred before the satisfaction of any appetite whatsoever: Phil. iv. 8, 'Finally, brethren, 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;' and again, 1 Cor. viii. 13, 'Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.' Rather wholly abstain from this liberty than give offence. So that this moderation is a reducing the affections to the limits of the word, and the rules of conveniency and charity.

Of the affections. I mean such as are accompanied with pleasure in the exercise; these are under the command of sobriety. There is a moderation of our passions that belongeth to fortitude and patience, as sorrow and anger, the moderation of these belongeth to other graces. But now such affections as are accompanied with pleasure in the exercise, as delight and desire; desire in the pursuit, and delight in the use of worldly things; these belong to sobriety. It is indeed a question which is worst, not to bridle anger or not to restrain pleasures? Anger is unruly and violent, but lusts work both ways; ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος, James i. 14, 'Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.' The most generous natures

are subject to anger, and the basest to pleasures. Anger is stirred up by reason, though it runneth away without deliberation; but lust prescribeth to reason; there is more of plot and counsel in lust than in anger. Reason sooner cleareth up when the storm of passion is over, and then men repent; but in lust and pleasure there is a long bondage. So that not to restrain lust, or those affections that carry us out to corporal delights, seemeth worst. But then, again, it may be inquired which is harder, to endure griefs or renounce pleasures? I shall answer —To renounce pleasures, and sobriety is more put to it than fortitude. Many that have borne griefs with a stubborn mind yet have yielded to their own carnal affections; as Sampson, that broke so many cords and bands, yet could not break the bonds of his own lusts. It is true nature flieth from grief, and therefore it is hard to take up our cross; but nature flieth from grief because it is addicted to pleasures, and it is our lusts that make the cross so burdensome. Renounce the desire and the delight, and the lust will be more easily overcome.

In the pursuit and use. I name both, because as we must use worldly things moderately, so we must desire them moderately. The sin is first in the affection, and there may be an immoderation in the desire when the practice is restrained by fear, or by difficulty, or by danger of compassing our lusts; and therefore the great work of sobriety is to moderate the lust. As a bird when its wing is broken is eager to fly, so a man that may abstain from excessive practice, yet he may have much inordinate affection: Col. iii. 5, 'Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection.'

Of all earthly things. Profits, pleasures, pomps, meats, drinks, apparel, recreations; sobriety reacheth all those affections that are carried out to any of the good things of this natural life. There is a dry drunkenness, as the prophet saith in another case: Isa. xxix. 9, 'They are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.' The cares of this world have an inebriating power, as well as voluptuous living; and therefore Christ couples them together: 'Surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life,' Luke xxi. 34. Look, as wine disturbeth reason and oppresseth the senses, so do these worldly cares besot the mind and deprive us of the sense of spiritual things; and therefore sobriety is necessary to moderate our cares, as well as to govern the use of meats and drinks.

Secondly, I shall handle sobriety in these four branches—

1. As to pleasures and recreation, sleep and pastime.
2. In meats and drinks, and the necessary supports of human life.
3. In pomp and apparel.
4. In the cares of this world.

First branch, sobriety in recreation.

The first branch of sobriety, in recreation, in sleep and pastime, and other delights of human life.

For sleep I need say but little; it is a soft enemy, that steals away half our time, and should be reckoned among our burdens, and not our pleasures, as a thing to be borne with patience rather than to be taken with delight. It is our unhappiness that so much of our lives should be spent, and not one act of love and kindness should be shown to God.

The angels, that are wholly spiritual, are exempted from this necessity. Night and day they are always praising God, doing his will, and hearkening to the voice of his word. Yea, we may see many other creatures are restless in their motions, and obey the law of their creation without weariness. The sun in a constant unwearied course moves from east to west and from west to east, and never ceaseth. When thou liest upon thy bed in the morning, thou mayest think of it, how many thousand miles the sun hath travelled since thou went to rest the last night, that he might come again this morning to give thee light to go about thy labour and exercise, and yet thou liest snorting upon thy bed, and turning hither and thither, as Solomon saith, like a door upon the hinges. David contended with the sun who should be up first; as the sun to represent God to the world, so he to acknowledge God in his prayers and supplications: Ps. cxix. 147, 'I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried.' But of this I will speak no more. Common prudence and the light of nature will give us sufficient direction.

But now for sports, and the other delights of human life. Accept of God's indulgence with thankfulness, and use it with moderation. Adam in innocency was placed in a garden of delight; and since the fall God hath provided not only for necessity but pleasure. Certainly in Christ we have a great liberty, but we should not use it as an occasion to the flesh: 'To the pure all things are pure,' Titus i. 15. Only let us take heed that we are pure in the use of these outward comforts and refreshments. Now we need not fear the uncleanness of meats and sports, but let us fear the uncleanness of lusts. There is a double exercise of sobriety in our sports and recreations and the delights of the human life—to direct us in the choice of them, and in the use of them.

1. In the choice of them, that they be lawful, not 'the pleasures of sin,' Heb. xi. 25. There is a strange perverseness in man's nature; those pleasures relish best that are seasoned with sin, as if we could not do nature right without wrong to God, and putting an affront upon his laws: 'He that breaks the hedge, a serpent shall bite him,' Eccles. x. 8. Now, to prevent danger of this kind, and that we may not break through the hedge and the restraints which God hath set us, and so find remorse upon our deathbeds, conscience must be informed. Generally we may observe, that we offend God more in our recreations than in any other affairs of life, and are more guilty of unlawful recreations than of unlawful ways of gain and traffic; and therefore it is good to be wary, and keep at a distance from sin. And because recreations are not among things absolutely necessary, but only convenient, if they be questionable, or of ill fame, it is better to forbear: Phil. iv. 8, 'Whatsoever things are of good report, &c., think of these things;' that we may be sure not to be guilty of any contempt of God, and that we may not give offence to others. As, for instance, a lusory lot in cards or dice is very questionable, therefore better to be forborne than used, especially where they give offence. And again, because 'everything is sanctified by the word of God and prayer,' 1 Tim. iv. 4, therefore we should seek to understand our liberty by the word, and venture upon nothing in this kind but what we can commend to God in prayer, and upon which we can ask a blessing. Thus sobriety directs you in the choice of recreations.

2. In the use. Usually we offend in such things as are for the matter lawful; there the soul is more secure: as in the Gospel, the excuse is put in the handsomest terms: Luke xiv. 20, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' For the understanding of it, note, Christ's parables do put the dispositions of men's hearts into words. Now the sensualist, or the man that is addicted to pleasures, is there represented; and mark, he doth not urge dalliance with harlots, but 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come;' implying that excess in lawful pleasures keepeth many from Christ and from the things of grace; and therefore here is the work of sobriety, to set bounds and limits to the use and exercise of our liberty, that it may not degenerate into licentiousness.

Well, but what rules shall we observe? In short, then, we offend in sports when they waste our estate, rob us of our time, cheat us of opportunity of privacy and retirement with God, and when they unfit the heart for the duties of religion.

[1.] When they waste their estates. You may not do with your estates as you please; you are stewards, and are to be accountable to God at the last day for every penny. Why should a prodigal have a greater liberty and dominion over his estate than a covetous man? I will tell you for what reason I speak it; prodigals that 'waste their substance with riotous living,' as he described in Luke xv. 13, when they are taxed for this, they say, It is my own, and I may do with my own as I please. We are not content to take such an answer from a rich and covetous man when you press him to charity; if he should say, It is my own, and I shall give what I please, as Nabal said, 1 Sam. xxv. 11, 'Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh, that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not?' The truth is, it is a mistake on both sides; it is not theirs, but God's; he is the great owner. Therefore when recreations are costly, and waste your estates, you cannot give an account of it to God at the great day; you rob your families, at least the poor. Lust starves charity, and makes it a beggar. It is sad when a lust can command thee to do more than the love of God can. When you can lavish away thus much upon your pleasures, and account nothing too dear for them, and every penny be begrudged that is for a use truly good, you are guilty of sacrilege to God, you rob him of his tribute, and you rob the poor of their support, who are God's receivers.

[2.] When they engross your time, which is the most precious commodity that can be, for it cannot be bought with gold and silver, and, when once lost, can never be repaired. God hath appointed pleasures after labour, and when we are grown dull with exercise; but then they should be moderate, that as little time be wasted as may be. But now, when men make a calling of their recreation, and their life is nothing else but a diversion from one pleasure to another, and they spend more time than will serve to quicken them to their work, certainly this is a sin; for then they alter the nature of them, and make it a work, and not a sport. They that spend their whole time in eating, drinking, and sporting, live like beasts rather than men; for it is the beasts' happiness to take pleasure without remorse. Nay, they live rather like plants, which are a less noble sort of beings than beasts. Beasts have their labour, but plants have only life, and time given them

that they may grow bulky; for it is the perfection of plants to grow bulky and increase in stature. And yet this is the life of many gallants and idle gentlemen, who live as if they were not born for business but recreation. Nay, though you do not make a trade of it, yet too much time is not to be spent for the measure; only so much time as will serve to quicken you again to the labours of your general and particular calling. An eminent divine gives this rule concerning recreations, It is not lawful for a man in an ordinary course to spend more time in the day upon any pastime than in religious exercises. He means private religious exercises; he limits him only thus, not constantly. Now, if we be tried by this rule, how many of us would be taken tardy and guilty of sin? As one said, when he read Mat. v., *Aut hoc non est evangelium, aut nos non sumus evangelici*—Either this is not scripture, or we not christians. So let us look upon this rule; either it is not true, or we do not act aright. Therefore let us debate it a little, and see whether is defective. Either we come short of strictness and circumspection, or the rule comes short of truth and weight. Think of it. Certainly it is most equal that the most needful duties should have most time bestowed upon them. To get assurance and enjoy communion with God, this should be first in your care: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added to you.' It is true we cannot spend so much time in private communion with God as in business, because of the urgency of bodily necessities; yet this is but equal, that we should spend as much time in duties of religion as we do in recreation. Consider, the soul hath its delights, and repasts, and recreations, as well as the body, and needs it as much; and therefore, if our first care should be for the soul, it is but equal that at least as much recreation as we bestow upon the body, so much also should we allow to the soul. Especially when we consider this, that it is some refreshment to the body to go aside from manual labour and converse with God. Once more, that you may think charitably upon this rule, there is a sad character in scripture given of that sort of men, 2 Tim. iii. 4, that 'are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.' Now consider, will not this too much describe the temper of our hearts? Will not this text stare in the face of conscience, when we are loath to give an equal time to God and to religion as to our carnal sports and delights? If your expenses of time were written in your debt-books, you would blush to look over the accounts; so much for pleasure, so much for sports, so much for business, and so little for duty and private converse with God. The rule is too true; let conscience be judge. Certainly if we did prize heavenly comforts as much as carnal, we should not complain of the rule as too strict. What shall we think of them who grudge no time spent in pleasure, and yet grudge all time spent in God's service?

[3.] When they unfit the heart for any serious work, by putting the affections out of joint, then they become a snare, and it is high time to think of setting a restraint. All things are to be measured by their end. Now the end of pleasure is only this, to quicken the mind and revive the body, and fit it for work and service. The end of pleasure is not for pleasure, but work and service. Well, then, a thing is no longer good than it conduceth to its end. Now, when the heart is set back, and unfitted more for duty, and less able to pray and meditate,

and labour in our callings, by reason of our sports and recreations, it is a sign we have too much let loose the reins to pleasure; for pleasure was appointed to make us better, not worse, more cheerful in the duties of our callings; but now it proveth a clog and a snare.

[4.] Then is sobriety to interpose when our pleasure doth cheat us of opportunity of retirement and religious privacy with God and ourselves. Certainly it is a duty to maintain a constant converse with God: Job xxii. 21, 'Acquaint thyself with him, and be at peace.' He delights to speak with his creatures, and be familiar with them. This is that which is called communion with God, a constant correspondency that is kept up between God and the soul. Now, will a man rob God? This is strange and monstrous. Well, then, when ease and pleasure will not give way for communion with God, and stops the voice of conscience when it pleads for God, then it is naught. And so for privacy with ourselves; it is a duty to commune with our own hearts: Ps. iv. 4, 'Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.' We and our hearts should be often together. Now carnal men give themselves up to pleasure because they cannot endure solitariness and self-conversing; they are loath to look into themselves; like a mill, when it wants corn, it will grind upon itself; they shall be forced to speak to themselves, which they cannot endure. Now pleasures are unlawful when they use them against holy soliloquies, and as a remedy against conscience; as Saul would drive away his evil spirit by David's music. This is a great sin: Amos vi. 3, 'They put far from them the evil day;' and ver. 6, 'They drink wine in bowls, but remember not the afflictions of Joseph.' Men beguile their consciences by turning from pleasure to pleasure, and so put off suing out a pardon, the sense of their sins, and humbling themselves before God, and making their peace with God. This is the work of your lives. Therefore when business, entertainments, sports, and pleasures take up your time, and will not allow you to be solitary, and you and your hearts be together, you sin against God: Job xxi. 13, 'They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.' It is dangerous to employ your whole time in mirth, and in visits, and in company, that should be spent in examining your hearts, humbling your souls and seeking the face of God; so that your hearts grow dead and barren.

Helps to sobriety are two—to consider the preciousness of time, and the vileness and danger of pleasure.

First, The preciousness of time; that will appear in sundry considerations.

1. Time is short. We have a great deal of work to do, and but little time; therefore we should redeem it from pleasure, and rather encroach upon our recreation, and spend it in matters that most concern us. All complain of the shortness of time, and yet every one hath more time than he useth well. We should rather complain of the loss of time than of the shortness of time; as Seneca said, *Non accepimus brevem vitam, sed fecimus; nec inopes temporis, sed prodigi sumus*—We make our lives far more short than otherwise they would be; and we do not want time, but waste it. We spend it freely upon mirth and vain pleasures, as if we had more than we could well tell

what to do withal. Life is short, and yet we throw it away, as if we had not such great work to do as to mortify corruptions and to make our peace with God; as if that eternity which cannot be exhausted in our thoughts did not depend upon this moment. When men are writing of a sermon, and have but little paper left, they write close. Oh! consider, our work lies upon our hands, and therefore the acts of duty should be more close and thick. The sun is even going down; we know not how soon day may be over.

2. Too much time hath been spent already; so will all the godly-wise judge: 1 Peter iv. 3, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles;' Rom. xiii. 12, 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand;' and there is but little left to express your love and thankfulness in glorifying God. Our infancy was spent in ease, and youth in sin, and age in business. Certainly that part of your lives was merely lost which was spent in an unregenerate condition. Saith Austin, *Perdit quod vivit, qui te non diligit*—He loseth that time which he lives that doth not love the Lord. Properly we are not said to live till we live in Christ. A man may be long at sea, tossed to and fro upon the waves, and yet be but little from his port, and cannot be said to have made a long voyage; so a man may abide long in the world, but cannot be said to live long, if he doth not live in Christ. Reflect this truth upon thy heart. Alas! my life hitherto hath been a death rather than a life, useless, and lost to all spiritual purposes; and shall I still waste my time, and spend my days in ease and idleness? Travellers that have tarried long in their inn mend their pace, and ride as much in an hour as before they did in many: so we have staid too long; oh! let us now mend our pace. Say, I have lived thus long vainly, sinfully, carnally, in an earthly manner; I have little thought of God, and treasuring up for heaven, or providing for my latter end. Oh! how rich might I have been if I had been a good merchant for my soul! How am I now outstripped by many my equals, my youngers in age, but seniors in grace! They are in Christ before me. Oh! why doth God spare me, but to recover that which is lost?

3. Consider, it is uncertain how long thou shalt enjoy the season. The present time is always best, and shall we waste it vainly? We have not a lease of our lives. Ludovicus Capellus tells of a rabbin that, being asked when was the fittest time for a man to repent, he answered him, One day before he dies, meaning presently, for this may be your last day. We know not how soon God may call us to himself. In an orchard some fruits are plucked green, few are left to rot upon the tree. Mariners, that have not the wind in a bottle, are ready to tackle the first gale. We shall never have a better opportunity to consider our ways. In youth we want wisdom and zeal, and in age strength; in the midst of business we want leisure, and in the midst of leisure we want a heart. There is not more efficacy in the latter season than in the former. Do not think that sickness and old age will help you more in the work of repentance than youth. Moral arguments work not without evangelical grace. The bad thief had one foot in hell, and yet he blasphemed. There will be more difficulty in old age, but no help. Sickness and age needs a cordial, and not work; and therefore no season like the present.

4. They that have lost time know the worth of it. Oh! if they might have the happiness to live again that are now in hell, would they waste their precious hours so wantonly and lavishly as you do? Dying men that are affrighted in conscience, discover to us the passions of the damned; they would give all the world for one year or one month to repent. He that so passionately begged for a drop to cool his tongue, how would he have indented with God for a year's respite from torment? In the day of death, all the wealth of the world will not purchase one day longer. We never know what we lose in losing time, till it be too late. It is better to be sensible of the worth of time in earth than in hell. Knowledge of things that are evil and bitter is more easily gained by teaching than by experience and feeling; but we do not lay these things to heart. Christ mourned over Jerusalem because she lost her day: Luke xix. 42, 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes.'

5. We must give an account for time, and therefore let not pleasure engross and take up too much of it. Whenever God comes to reckon with his people, the great thing for which he calls them to an account is their time. He keeps an exact reckoning of the years of his patience: Ps. xcv. 10, 'Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.' I have given them thirty, forty, fifty years respite to think of their sins, and apply their hearts to be wise for eternity. So of the times and seasons of grace, and methods and dispensations of mercy: Luke xiii. 7, 'Behold, these three years came I seeking fruit of this fig-tree, and find none;' by which is meant the three years of Christ's ministry with the Jews, for he was then entering on his last half-year. When the scripture speaks in a round number, there is no mystery in it; but when the numbers are uneven and odd, there is something to be noted; these three years Christ had been labouring with them. And Jer. xxv. 3, 'From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah (that is the three-and-twentieth year), the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early, and speaking,' &c. Such passages are but pledges of the great process of the day of judgment. God will call to account then for the time of his patience, and the means and mercies you have had. Oh! then, reflect this truth upon your hearts, and say, I must die and give an account for time, and alas! I cannot give an account of one day among a thousand. My time hath been spent in foolish mirth, in troublesome cares, in idle company, in vain sports and revellings; and how shall I be able to look God in the face, and answer him? Do but pass the account with yourselves, and if you cannot answer conscience, you will never be able to answer God. So much time spent in meals and banquets, so much in visits, so much in sports, so much in sleep, so much in worldly employments, and then think how little a remainder there is for God! Oh! if we did but now and then cast up our accounts, it would extremely shame us. If you hire a labourer for the day, and he should come at night and demand pay, and the master should say, What hast thou done for me? would he not be ashamed to say, Thus much time have I spent in meals, thus much in loitering and sporting with my companions, thus much in mending my own apparel, and an hour or half an hour in your work and service. Can this man expect a day's wages? Christians,

do you believe that there is a God of recompenses, and that there will be a day of account, that you dare loiter thus, and waste away your time that should be spent in God's service?

Secondly, Consider the baseness and the danger of pleasures, in four considerations—

1. The baser a man is the more he affects carnal delights and is addicted this way: Eccles. vii. 4, 'The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.' That which wise men prefer certainly is better than that which fools make choice of. Now this is the choice of fools. Wise men know there is more to be gained by grave exercises and by spectacles of sorrow than in the places of carnal rejoicing; they know there is nothing to be seen or heard there but snares or baits; little wisdom to be gained, and little improvement of grace and reason to be made.

2. All carnal pleasures are mixed with grief, and leave a sting and bitterness in the issue. You never came away from your sports with such a merry heart as you do from the throne of grace. If men would but consider their experiences after duty and after recreation; there is a calm and serenity in the conscience after the saddest duties when they are ended. Who ever repented of his repentance? They yield some cheering and reviving to the soul. As it is said of Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 18, that she 'went away, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.' Prayer gives ease, as the opening of a vein in a fever. If all come not away alike cheerful from the throne of grace, and this be not a general rule, yet it is no addition to their grief that they have been with God; rather it is some lessening of their trouble. As the pouring out of a complaint into a friend's bosom, though it do not help, it is some ease to the mind; so though God do not come in with a high tide of comfort to the soul, yet it is some ease we have been with God, and presented the case to his pity; there is some spiritual mirth and delight kindled, at least some lessening of grief. But now, not to speak of wicked men, when they come from their pleasures, even the children of God, to whom all things are pure, yet because of the tenderness of their hearts there is always some remorse after their pleasures; and therefore Solomon propounds it as a general rule, Prov. xiv. 13, 'Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.' It is an allusion to outward laughter, which causeth pain by the too much dilation of the spirits and straining the body, which is a figure of that remorse which accompanies all worldly joy. All worldly joy begets a sudden damp upon the spirit in the departure. God will still remember us, that we are in our pilgrimage, and complete joy is not to be had here; that every rose in the world grows with a thorn, would teach us to look after more solid comforts.

3. Pleasures, if they be not watched, will soon make us unfit for communion with God and for any solemn duty: Eccles. ii. 2, 'I have said of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What doth it?' Solomon in the former verse was resolved to make an experiment, and to let loose his heart to carnal pleasures, that he might see what would come of it; to loosen the reins, and turn his heart loose to carnal pleasures; and what was the issue? 'Oh! it is mad!' It soon transports the mind, and puts reason out of frame; it makes a wise man to be like a

madman; as madmen in their freaks of mirth have little use of reason. And of laughter it is said, 'What doth it?' that is, whither hast thou carried me? whither art thou now going and carrying my soul? Satan hath a greater advantage upon you in your sports than in your business; therefore to affect them is but playing with the baits, and as the bird sings in the fowler's snare, so do we in the midst of temptation. If christians would but consult with their experience, how often have we smarted when we fall into it. A poor beast fallen into a hole will not fall into the same hole again. Though we see the inconveniency of it, yet our hearts are addicted.

4. It is a sign men have not received the power of grace when they are immoderately addicted to pleasures. It is a description of the carnal state: Titus iii. 3, 'We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures.' So much grace as you have, so much victory and command over yourselves; and therefore, when men are wholly led by sense, they are at a great distance from the life of grace. Therefore, as we would not be accounted carnal, we should be more sober in this kind. We may use pleasures, but should not serve pleasures; but rejoice as if we rejoiced not. If we use a thing, it is for some other end; we enjoy the end, and use the means. You may use pleasure to quicken the mind and revive the body, that it may be quick in the service of God, and not unfit the heart for duties of religion.

SERMON VIII.

We might live soberly, &c.—TITUS ii. 12.

SECOND branch, sobriety in meats and drinks. If you ask which is worst, excess in meat or drink, gluttony or drunkenness? I answer—Drunkenness is more odious, and doth more sensibly deprive a man of the use of reason, and put him upon actions unseemly, and is the cause of more diseases and disorders in the body. But then gluttony is very dangerous, partly because it is not of such a great disreputation among men as drunkenness, and shame is one of the restraints of sin; partly because it insensibly creeps upon us, as Austin complained, *Ebrietas longe a me est, crapula autem nonnunquam surrepit servo tuo*—Lord, I abhor drunkenness, but gluttony creeps unawares upon me. If it be inquired again, which sin is worst, he that is immoderate in the use of pleasure, or he that is immoderate in worldly cares? I answer—Gross intemperance brings more dishonour to God, and worldly cares more spiritual disadvantage to our souls. A worldling doth not dishonour God openly so much as a drunkard, but then he is more incapable of conviction and of heavenly things; and by distracting his heart with cares he shrewdly endangereth his salvation. As for drunkards and sensualists, their face declareth their shame, and their crime is written in their foreheads;

and so they have less of defence against the strokes of the word; therefore our Saviour saith, Mat. xxi. 31, that 'the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.'

These things premised, I come to speak of sobriety in the use of meats and drinks. I join them both together, because grace is exercised in the restraint of both. Christians, as we are your remembrancers to God, so we must be God's remembrancers to you, and every part of conversation falls under some rule of religion. The apostle saith, 1 Peter i. 15, 'As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;' in every point, and every affair of life; and therefore eating and drinking being one part of human conversation, it is necessary to give you some directions. It is very familiar with men to miscarry by appetite, more familiar with man than with beasts. There is no beast but swine will overeat themselves; they know their stint and measure. But, Lord, how far is man fallen! Nature is not only blind in point of worship, but weak in point of appetite. The relics of inordinancy are in the regenerate. The holiest men had need of caution, as Christ saith to his disciples, 'Take heed and beware that your hearts be not over-charged with surfeiting and drunkenness,' Luke xxi. 34. And the apostle bids Timothy to flee youthful lusts, to be chaste and pure as he was: 2 Tim. ii. 22, 'Flee also youthful lusts, but follow after righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord with a pure heart.' Yea, those that are wisest and most accomplished many times are swallowed up in this gulf. Who would have thought that Adam and Eve, endowed with the image of God, should have miscarried by appetite, by eating? or that Solomon, who had such large gifts and knowledge, from the cedar to the hyssop, should miscarry by women? and that persons of excellent abilities are many times of a riotous conversation? Certainly we are weakest where we think ourselves strong. When the upper part of the soul is sufficiently fortified with counsel and knowledge, the devil dare not assault us in point of error, but then he draws us away by appetite, and the baits of the flesh; and therefore we had need speak of sobriety in meats and drinks.

Now sobriety becomes all persons, especially magistrates, ministers, women, and youth. Magistrates and ministers, because of the dignity of their office; women, because of the imbecility of their sex; and youth, because of the slipperiness of their age.

1. For magistrates: Prov. xxxi. 4, 5, 'It is not for kings, O Lemue, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink. Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish.' It is an allusion to the custom among the Jews; if a man were condemned to die, it was their courtesy to give him spiced wine to attenuate and thin the blood, that it might sooner pass out of the body, and to inebriate the senses that he might be less sensible of his pain. Now 'it is not for kings to drink wine,' not for the judge, but for the condemned person. So Eccles. x. 16, 17, 'Woe unto thee, O land, when thy princes eat in the morning. Blessed art thou, O land, when thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness.' Magistrates cannot be good or bad alone; when they are given to sensual delights, it is more odious in them, for it unfits and diverts them from public business; when they spend their time in excess, they are totally indisposed for counsel and wise

debates, and weighty affairs; therefore the Carthaginians forbade wine to magistrates during the time of their magistracy; and by Solon's law a drunken prince was to be slain.

2. For ministers, their work lies with God, therefore they had need live in constant sobriety. Under pain of death, neither Aaron nor his sons the priests were to drink wine or strong drink, when they went into the tabernacle of the congregation. Lev. x. 9, 'Do not drink wine or strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die. It shall be a statute for ever, throughout your generations.' It is probable Nadab and Abihu's miscarriage in offering strange fire was occasioned by fumes of strong drink; for presently God makes that law for Aaron and his sons. So the apostle: 1 Tim. iii. 3, 'A bishop must be sober, not given to wine,' because of the excellency of his ministration, which requires meditation, and freedom of contemplation, which is hindered by the fumes of wine and strong drink.

3. For women, because of the weakness and modesty of their sex. In some nations it was death for women to be intemperate, because by this means they make shipwreck of that modesty which is the ornament of that feeble sex; and therefore excess in them is more filthy and shameful.

4. For youth, they need chiefly to be pressed to this sobriety, because of the slipperiness of their age. Their judgments are weak and green, and their affections are violent. Nature is strong in them, and Satan is diligent to seduce them; he prizeth young affections; and they are but newly come to the use of their reason, from living the life of sense; and the natural heat of the stomach that is found in youth is a great provocation. Though all need to be fortified, yet especially these.

But what is this sobriety that is required? I answer—You may know it by the sin that is contrary to it; and we sin against sobriety when we offend by quantity, quality, and in the manner of usage.

1. There must not be offence in quantity. Fulness of bread was one of Sodom's sins, Ezek. xvi. 49; that is, excess in the use of the creature. Now, how shall we state this excess? Not merely by the custom of nations, for sins may be authorised by general practice, as Sodom's sin was fulness of bread. Not merely by the greatness of the estate; plenty doth not warrant excess. If a man have never so much cloth, yet he would not make his garment too big for him. If the meat be too salt, it is no excuse to the cook to say he had good store of salt by him; so will it be no plea that God hath given you plenty and a great estate to warrant you in your excess. The heart may be overcharged when the purse is not. Neither must it be measured by the capacity of the stomach. Christ doth not say, Take heed you do not overcharge your stomach with surfeiting and drunkenness, but your heart, Luke xxi. 34. Some men are strong to drink wine; they are tubs and hogsheads, as Ambrose calls them, rather than men. But it is not when the stomach is overcharged, but the conscience, when it grows secure and carnal; or the heart, when it is not fit for duties, less apt to be lifted up to God in prayers and thanksgivings, and the mind cannot be lifted up to heavenly things. So that the measure in this kind must be our fitness to perform the duties of our general and particular calling; and when that is exceeded, then we sin.

2. For the quality. We must not hanker after quails, and desire dainty food; that is a sign lust is made wanton; and nature, being perverted, is grown delicate, which otherwise aimeth but at necessaries. Indeed it is God's great indulgence to us to give such things as are refreshments to nature, not only for support but delight. The substance of our food might suffice to nourish, but God hath created them with smell, taste and colours, for our greater delight. But we must not be too curious; this is 'nourishing your hearts as in a day of slaughter,' James v. 5. And still the disposition increaseth; therefore it is good to check curiosity at first. Curiosity in diet God takes notice of: Deut. xiv. 21, 'Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk;' affecting excessively the pleasing of the palate with too much curiosity. It is said of the rich glutton, 'He fared sumptuously every day,' Luke xvi. 19. I know feasts are allowed, and sometimes a more liberal use of the creature; Christ honoured a feast with a miracle of changing water into wine. But a constant delicacy brings a brawn upon the heart, and a wantonness upon the appetite. When men do nothing else but knit pleasure to pleasure, they nourish their hearts, that is, rear up their lusts, and are fond of the flesh. We are still to maintain and carry on the spiritual conflict, and therefore this curiosity and hunting after novelties is contrary to the intent of the christian life, which is a war with the flesh, not to make it wanton.

3. The manner of enjoying the creature; it must be with caution and with piety.

[1.] With caution. Job sacrificed while his sons feasted, Job i. 5. We are apt to forget God most when he is best to us; and when our hearts are warmed and inflamed with high and good cheer, we are apt to sin; therefore your heart should not be let loose to the fruition of outward comforts. It is ill to trust appetite without a guard, as it is to trust a child among a company of poisons: Prov. xxiii. 1, 2, 'When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee; and put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite;' that is Solomon's advice; 'And rejoice as if you rejoiced not,' 1 Cor. vii. 31. Consider you are in the midst of dangers and temptations. When these baits are before you, self-denial is put to the exercise; and here you are tried to see what command you have over yourselves. Men lay aside all care when they go to festival meetings. It were well to lay aside worldly cares, that you might not eat the bread of sorrow; but take heed of a secret snare; you should not lay aside spiritual care.

[2.] You must use them with piety. God must not be banished from our delights and refreshments; we must receive them from God, enjoy them in God, and refer them to God. We must receive them from God, who is the author, the giver, the allower, and the sanctifier of them. You must take all your comforts out of God's hands with thanksgiving, then your table will not so easily be made a snare. How sweet is this when you can say in good conscience, Lord, thou hast provided this for me, this is the comfort thou hast allowed me. The apostle saith, 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5, 'Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' In the word God hath declared the use to be lawful; there we understand our liberty and right by Christ; and in prayer we ask

God's leave and blessing, that so we may act faith upon his providence; for man doth not live by bread alone, he must receive his strength and nourishment from God. All the creatures since the fall are armed with a curse, and therefore we had need take them as blessings out of God's hand in and through Jesus Christ; and we must enjoy them in God; God must not be forgotten when he remembers us. As you refresh the body with food, let the soul be refreshed too by meditation; that is the soul's refreshment. Consider his liberality; how many things doth God give at a feast? It is God that gives wealth to furnish our table, health to use them, peace to meet together; and Christ hath purchased liberty that we may make use of all these blessings. The soul must have its refreshment; and so may we meditate upon Christ's sweetness, the fatness of God's house. In Luke xiv., when Christ was eating bread in the pharisee's house, then he discoursed of the spiritual wedding supper, and of eating bread in his Father's kingdom. Then you must use them to God, as the end and scope: 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' No pleasure should be its own end. The immediate end is the sustentation of the body, but the remote end should be service and God's glory. We do not eat to eat, but eat to live. Pleasure is the handmaid of nature, but not the guide. The end of eating is to repair the strength which hath been weakened in duty, and fit us to attend upon duty again: Eccles. x. 17, 'Thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness;' not for mere delight, but for service. Thus you see what it is to be sober in the use of meats and drinks.

Third branch, sobriety in apparel.

The third branch of sobriety is in apparel. That this is a part of sobriety appears by that scripture, 1 Tim. ii. 9, 'That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety.' We must be moderate as to apparel, as well as to other delights and comforts of life.

In managing this part of the discourse, I shall first give you some rules, and then some helps.

First, For the rules. The work of sobriety is to moderate the affection, and then the use.

1. To moderate the affection to vain and immodest apparel; there the disease begins: Col. iii. 5, 'Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection.' There may be even in those that are poor a desire and an envy at the bravery of others (which is grievous to the Spirit of God) when we want it ourselves. Pride in apparel is not only seen in the wearing, but in the desire of it, when we can no sooner see a vain fashion but we are taken with it, as Ahaz was taken with the altar at Damascus, and we must have another of the like fashion. It is the duty of christians 'to consider one another, to provoke to love and to good works,' Heb. x. 24, who should be most sober, most modest in their apparel; but we often provoke one another to excess and pomp, and strive who shall excel; therefore this desire, when we are taken with vain fashions, is sinful. And if our hand will not reach to it, then we envy and speak against others, not out of zeal, but emulation, because we cannot attain to the like ourselves. as Diogenes trode on Plato's rich

garment with a greater pride, *Calco Platonis fastum.* Envy shows we value these things. Now, to moderate this secret envy, take a consideration or two—

[1.] If we have food, and raiment to cover our nakedness, why should we trouble ourselves about more? 1 Tim. vi. 8, 'And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.' When God first made Adam and Eve apparel, he made them coats of skins, plain and homely ware; and they were greater persons than we are. And it is said of the children of God, those of whom the world was not worthy, Heb. xi. 37, 'They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins.' Our condition is much better; therefore let us not envy others when they shine and excel in pomp of the world; it is enough God hath given us anything for warmth and use.

[2.] Consider how holy men have behaved themselves upon a like occasion. It is recorded in the life of Bernard, if he saw a poor man in coarse habit, he would say, It may be this poor man may be glorious within, and have a better soul than thou hast; but if he saw a man with a fine garment, he would say, It may be he excels thee as much within as without. So Pambus, when he saw one very curious in dressing herself, he wept, saying, Have I been as careful to please Christ, to deck my soul with grace in the sight of God, as she is to please a wanton lover? Thus should we make a spiritual use of such a spectacle, and strive to be as fine in God's sight as they are in bravery without.

2. The work of sobriety is not only to moderate the affection, but to moderate the use of apparel and outward ornament, that we may not be pompous and excessive. That there is such a sin as excess in apparel appears by the frequent dissuasives of the word. The scripture takes notice of it chiefly in women, but men have their share. The Holy Ghost by the prophet Isaiah is pleased to give us an account of the fashions of those days, and to make an inventory of their wardrobe: chap. iii. 18–24, 'In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils;' and therefore threateneth a heavy judgment, ver. 24, 25, 'And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well-set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding with sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.' Mark the judgment; a scab, which meeteth with their aim, which was to set off their beauty; and the violence, incivilities and rudeness of the soldiers to meet with the matter of their sin, who shall strip them of their garments, that they should not have rags to cover their nakedness. So 1 Peter iii. 3, the Spirit of God takes notice of 'the outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and of putting on of apparel.' By which he reproves, not a decent dressing, but a laying of it forth in curls and locks and

wanton plaits. So Luke xvi. 19, there it is taken notice of as a luxury in the rich man that 'he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.' Curious clothing is made to be one of his crimes, as well as gluttony and neglect of the poor; usually they go together. And the experience of all ages showeth that there is such a sin, and in these times more abundantly, when all distinctions of ranks and place and superiors and inferiors are taken away.

But how shall we do to find out the sin, cases being so different, and the custom of ages and nations so various? I answer in the general—Such a modesty as is without exception doth best become the saints and christians indeed, who are chiefly to regard the inward ornament, to adorn themselves in the sight of God rather than in the sight of men: 1 Peter iii. 4, 'Whose adorning 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 price.' And again, they are to stand at a distance from a snare, and to avoid all appearance of evil: 1 Thes. v. 22, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' And again, they are to 'give no offence, neither to Jew nor gentile, nor to the church of God,' 1 Cor. x. 32; neither to their fellow-members within, nor to observers without. Therefore, if we had to do with a gracious heart, the case would be soon decided; they do not love to walk upon the brink, nor to come near a sin. An inoffensive modest habit is free from all exceptions; and if men and women were wise, they would soon see that it would neither lessen their esteem with God or men, but increase it rather. But more particularly, persons guilty are clamorous, and say, Why do we abridge them of their liberty, and take upon us to condemn their garb? I confess it is a sin to condemn what God hath not condemned. There are two sorts of superstition—positive, when we count that holy that God never made holy, and negative, when we condemn that for sinful which God never made sinful. Therefore what rules can be given to trace and find out the sin? The abuse will be best discovered by considering the use. What are the ends of apparel? They are diverse, either for necessity to defend the body against the injuries of the weather; therefore they that discover their nakedness sin against that; or else for honesty or modesty, to cover that deformity of the body which was the fruit of sin; or else for profit, such apparel as suits with our callings and course of life; or for frugality, according to the proportion of our estate, that we may not waste the good gifts of God, that should be kept either for family uses or for other good uses; or for distinction of persons, of age, sex, and rank: Deut. xxii. 5, 'The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are abomination to the Lord thy God.' By these ends the abuse may be conceived.

[1.] It is a foul abuse of apparel and ornament when men and women disguise nature, and seek to mend that which God hath made, by patching, painting, and other varnishes of art. Jezebel is infamous in scripture for painting; and dare any sober woman that pretends to be a christian put herself into her garb and fashion? They reprove God that seek to mend nature. Cyprian saith, It is a dislike of God's work. So Tertullian before him, They dislike God's workmanship in

their own faces, and consult with the devil how to mend it. That which is natural is from God, and that which is artificial is from the devil. How shall God own them at the last day when they are ashamed of his workmanship? Will thy maker own thy disguised face? He will say, This is not the face that I made. We should appear before men with no other face than we would appear before God with at the day of judgment. Would I have God see me thus disguised, patched, and painted? Doth not conscience startle at the thought of it? When God shall come to take knowledge of all the works he hath made, wouldst thou appear then with these spots and artificial varnish?

[2.] Addictedness to fashions, certainly that argues such a levity that doth not suit with the gravity of religion. That there is a sin in fashions is plain by Isa. iii., where the Holy Ghost is pleased to give us an inventory of the wardrobe of the women among the Jews; for what reason, but to show they were vainly addicted to fashions. So Zeph. i. 8, 'I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.' God takes notice of pride in apparel, though it be in courtiers, nobles, princes, and kings' children, their new and strange exotic garbs; therefore much more is it evil in private persons and those that are of an inferior rank. But you will say, If we must not follow the fashion, of what date should our habits be? Should we go back as far as Adam, to clothe ourselves with skins and leaves, and run back to the rudeness of former ages? I answer—There may be as much vanity and affectation in being too much out of the fashions of the times and places in which we live, as in being too much in it; therefore our liberty in this kind is to be determined by the general and received custom of the gravest and godly wise. It stands not with christian gravity to be first in a fashion and affect that which is new, nor to take it up when it is only the fashion among those that are light and vain; they are not to be imitated, for that is conforming ourselves to the fashions of the world, which the apostle disproves: Rom. xii. 2, 'Be not conformed to this world.' The apostle speaks in the business of long hair; and when he had spoken what an unseemly thing it was for a man, ruffian-like, to go with long hair; 1 Cor. xi. 14, 'Doth not nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair it is a shame to him?' he adds, ver. 16, 'But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God;' which seems to carry this sense, that if women will come with their nakedness into the congregation, and if men will wear long hair, and if any man or woman will contend and say the thing is indifferent, and they have a liberty in this kind, this is the short answer, 'We have no such custom, neither the churches of God.' Therefore the general and received custom of the churches of God ought to be a law in all such cases. Mark, the vain world is not to give you a precedent, but the use of the churches, and the practice of godly christians, and their sobriety.

[3.] When our apparel exceeds the proportion of our callings and abilities. There is more due to persons of a higher rank than to those of inferior place: Mat. xi. 8, 'They that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.' It is more commendable in them that stand before princes than in others; and therefore our rank and place and estate must be considered. It is a wrong to the family and the poor when our gar-

ments exceed our abilities. Nay, but take them both together; though they do not exceed our abilities, yet if they exceed our state, place, and calling, it is a sin. As for instance, for ministers, who should be mortified to the glory and pomp of the world, it is not fit for them to shine in bravery as others do. So for ministers' wives; the scripture is pleased to take notice of women in that relation above all other women: 1 Tim. iii. 11, 'Their wives must be grave, sober.' And for servants, it is odious to see them strive to be in a garb exceeding their station, and to do as others of better rank and higher place. As habits were given for necessity, so for distinction of ranks and orders of men; and as odd a sight it is to see an inferior exalting in pomp as to put the attire of the head upon the feet and shoes on the head.

[4.] When it suits not with modesty and chastity. Garments were given to cover nakedness and the deformity that was introduced by sin; therefore the apostle saith, 'Let the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array,' 1 Tim. ii. 9. And therefore the leaving the breasts naked, in whole or in part, is a transgression of this rule; they uncover their nakedness, which they should veil and hide, especially in God's presence; as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xi. 10, 'The woman ought to have power on her head, because of the angels.' In the assembly there you meet with angels and devils; angels to observe your garb and carriage, and devils to tempt you; therefore be covered because of the angels. Yet usually women come hither with a shameless impudence into the presence of God, men, and angels. This is a practice that neither suits with modesty nor conveniency; nothing can be alleged for it but reasons of pride and wantonness; it feeds your own pride, and provokes lust in others. You would think they were wicked women that should offer others poison to drink; they do that which is worse, lay a snare for the soul; uncover that which should be covered; lest you provoke others of your rank to imitate your vanity, if they should not by the fear of God be guarded from unclean thoughts and filthy desires. Now christians should be far from allowing sin in themselves, or provoking it in others.

[5.] When dressing of the body takes up too much of our hearts and time, so as to cause us to neglect the inward adorning, and by it we are tempted to pride. Certainly there is a sin in fashions themselves, but the greatest sin is the pride of the heart. The garment falls under a rule; but apparel is not the offence, but pride: Isa. iii. 16, 'The daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-out necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet.' Better never wear jewels or costly raiment more, than to be tempted by it to pride. Therefore the spiritual ornament you should still preserve is being humble in spirit: 1 Peter iii. 4, 'Let your adorning be the hidden man of the heart, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.' When you forget that, it is a sad exchange. Outward adornment belongs to the pomp of the world, but the inward adornment is our spiritual glory and excellency. The outward adorning is to please men, but the inward adorning pleaseth God. Now we should rather please God than men; better never please men than offend God.

Secondly, To offer some helps.

1. Consider, curiosity in clothes argues deformity of mind; a godly, serious, humble christian is above these things. Therefore, how can we choose but think that a man or woman hath vanity in his heart, that is so clothed with it upon his back? Look, as plasters argue a wound or sore, so do these exotic and vain attires argue a wound and blot in the soul; that there is pride, vanity, and levity there. Clemens Alexandrinus observes that the Lacedemonians permitted only harlots and infamous women and common prostitutes to go in gorgeous attire. Clothes, then, are the flag and ensign which pride hangs out, and the nest of wantonness.

2. To be proud of clothes is to be proud of our own shame. Before sin came in man did not need a garment. Look, as the sun is adorned with light, it needs no trimming and ornament, so man in innocency was adorned with grace, and needed no other robe; but when he sinned, he needed garments. So then he that is proud of his clothes is but proud of the rags with which his wounds are bound up. Clothes are a memorial that we were once disobedient to God. Shall a thief be proud of his shackles, or a malefactor of his brand or mark in his forehead? This is a time of mourning, not of triumph; therefore God at first clothed Adam with skins, an habit that becomes mourning. We shall not need these things in heaven; clothes are only there in use where sin is.

3. Consider that habit makes not the man. A horse is not chosen by his trappings, but by his strength and swiftness; the trappings are things external, that conduce nothing to his goodness; so man is not to be valued by his habit, it is but the excrement of silk-worms; not by the ornaments of the body, but the endowments of the mind. *Imperatoria majestas,* saith Seneca, *virtute constat, non corporis cultu.* And therefore, if you would excel others indeed, you should excel them in grace and virtue. Alas! many are but dung finely dressed; the hidden man of the heart, that is the man. Grace is the best dressing, and that which is never out of fashion; by this men are valued. The more wise and excellent men are indeed, the less curious in their apparel. Cato, that had been consul at Rome, never wore apparel that exceeded an hundred pence. Let great ones be known by their modesty of apparel.

4. Consider, when you are most gorgeous, the beasts excel you. Crœsus, king of Lydia, being gorgeously arrayed, asked Solon if ever he had seen a more beautiful spectacle? He answered, Yes, sir; I have seen peacocks and pheasants and other birds. And Mat. vi. 29, Christ takes notice of this, that 'Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the lilies.' The draughts and colours of nature are more beautiful than art. Therefore neither delight in bravery nor envy it; when thou seest the bravery of others, thou hast a fairer flower in thy garden.

5. Think often of Jesus Christ hanging naked upon the cross, who was stripped of his garments to satisfy for thy excess. Oh! shall we again put him to open shame, as if he died in vain? say, Shall pride live when Christ died to subdue it, and mortify it, and to expiate for it?

Fourth branch, sobriety in worldly cares.

The next branch is sobriety of moderation in worldly cares. These also besot the mind, and deprive it of the sense of spiritual things. By a strange fascination and enchantment, our care becometh our pleasure, and men grow quite drunk with the world, so that they are always scraping and raking here as if their whole time were given for nothing but getting wealth.

First, What this carking and worldly care is that must be moderated. The scripture doth not only allow but require an honest diligence. It is a command as well as a threatening: 'In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread,' Gen. iii. 19. The grievousness and burdensomeness of labour falls under the threatening; but the labour itself is a command, as moral as any of the ten. The apostle saith, Phil. iv. 6, 'Be careful for nothing;' but he doth not say, Do nothing. The scriptures would not have us to be idle and careless; they commend the diligent hand. To let children and family shift for themselves were not only unchristian, but unmanly; we see the very brute beasts provide for their young ones. Diligence is one of the means by which God provideth for us. But yet, though the scriptures do allow a diligent care, yet they forbid a carking distrust. There is *σπόνδη*, a care of diligence, and *μεριμνὰ*, a care of diffidence; the first is a duty laid upon us, the second is a sin. Faith is painful, but not distrustful. It is represented by the emblem of a pair of compasses; while one foot is fast in the centre, the other wanders about in the circumference. So the heart is fixed in God by faith; it depends upon him, and looks for the success and issue of all from his blessing, though the hand in the meantime be employed in the use of means. Certainly God allows us careful provision against all visible evils, though they be to come; as Joseph stored the granaries of Egypt against the dear years. But not to distract ourselves with a supposal of future contingencies; therefore our Saviour saith, Mat. vi. 34, 'Take no thought for the morrow;' and ver. 31, 'Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?' This is that the scripture forbids. You ought not to trouble yourselves with uncertain future events, but to refer yourselves to the disposal of God. Briefly, sinful cares may be thus discerned—

1. Distrustful care is troubled about the event, what shall be the issue, but lawful care is employed in the use of means. The event is God's act, duty is ours; and to trouble ourselves about it is to take God's work out of his hands. We set ourselves in God's stead when we think to accomplish our ends by our own industry. The Lord might lay this burden upon us as a punishment of sin, but he would have us cast it upon himself: 1 Peter v. 7, 'Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' To neglect the means were to neglect providence; but then to trouble ourselves about the event, what will be the issue, and how these means will succeed, that is to renounce providence, to reproach God as if he were not solicitous for us. A christian is not to trouble himself what will become of him and his posterity, that is God's care; and it is altogether needless in us, for God is all-sufficient; but he is to be diligent in a lawful calling, and then let God do what seemeth him good.

2. Sinful care flieth to unlawful means, but religious care keepeth

within the bounds of duty: Prov. xvi. 8, 'Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.' It useth no means that are indirect and sinful. Men that will not trust God with success, will soon go out of God's way. The unbeliever looketh not to what is just, but to what is gainful; as those that gathered manna on the sabbath day, and 'trode wine-presses, and brought in sheaves, and laded asses,' Neh. xiii. 15.

3. Sinful care is immoderate in the use of lawful means: Eccles. ii. 23, 'For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night.' Those that have none else to trust to, no wonder if they make use of their own endeavours to the uttermost; but he that hath an heavenly Father should not so cumber and distract his spirit: Eccles. iv. 8, 'There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good?' The world will not let them be quiet; they toil and moil, and there is no end. When men multiply means, they have no trust in God. God is tender of all his creatures, much more of the reasonable creature.

4. Sinful care increaseth upon good duties, but diligent care fairly complieth with them. Christ warns his disciples, Luke xxi. 34, 'Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life.' Our care for eternal things doth not carry any proportion to the excellency of them, but they are laid aside: Mat. xiii. 22, 'He heareth the word, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.' They take up the room, travail, and affection which heavenly things should have, so that they have no time to converse with God, or to look into their souls, so that the heart groweth poor, lean, distempered, and unfit for holy uses; they are greedy of wealth, and prodigal of salvation.

Secondly, Whence it ariseth. From a distrust of God, and discontent with our portion.

1. From a distrust of God. Carking takes his work out of his hands, as the care of the son is a reproof to the father. You tax his being and providence. A child at school taketh no care for maintenance, because he hath a father: Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.'

2. From discontent with our portion. We have never enough, and expect more than God will allow: Heb. xiii. 5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' It is not our necessities, but the enlargement of our desires, that causeth carking. We would have more and more worldly goods, which hindereth us from trusting God's promise, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' The sea hath banks and bottom, but not man's heart. We begin and end with nothing, and yet nothing will suffice us. There is a story of a discourse between Pyrrhus and Cynicus, when he told him of his designs. When thou hast vanquished the Romans, what wilt thou then do? Conquer Sicily. What then? Subdue Africa. When that is effected, what then? Then we will sit down, and be quiet, and spend

our time contentedly. And what hinders but thou mayest do so before, without all this labour and peril?

Thirdly, The cure of it. Cure it by Christ's arguments: 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?' &c.

1. Life is more than meat, and the body than raiment, ver. 25. *Deus donando debet;* God by giving is become a debtor. Life, without any aid of ours, is a pledge of more mercy. God provided us two bottles of milk when we were new-born: Ps. xxii. 9, 10, 'Thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope, when I was upon my mother's breast. I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly.' Who formed us, and suckled us, and continued us hitherto? We are unthankful to God if we ascribe it to ourselves.

2. Consider God's providence to other creatures. God feeds the fowls: Mat. vi. 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: are not ye better than they?' God paints the lilies: ver. 28, 29, 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.' Luke instances in the raven, which is *animal cibi rapacissimum*, a creature ravenous of food: chap. xii. 34, 'Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them.' The raven is a bird of providence: Ps. cxlvii. 9, 'He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.' The raven as soon as it is hatched it is left to prayer, for the crying of the ravens is their prayer. Now ask the beasts if there be not a providence: Job xii. 7, 'But ask now the beasts, and they will teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.' These creatures have no ordinary means, they neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns; the lilies spin not; and yet God feedeth and clotheth them; 'And shall he not much more clothe you? O ye of little faith!' Mat. vi. 30.

3. Consider the fruitlessness of our care unless God add a blessing: ver. 27, 'Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?' A man never gets anything of God by not trusting him. He that will not take God's word must look elsewhere. The way to obtain earthly things is to be less careful and distracted about them.

4. Consider it is for them to distrust who know no providence, or no particular providence: ver. 32, 'For after all these things do the gentiles seek.' Distrust and carking becometh none but those that will not grant a providence. Shall our profession be christian, and our practice heathen?

5. Set your minds on a higher interest: ver. 33, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' You then promote both cares at once. Christianity is a compendious way; the body followeth the state of the soul. Man was made to contemplate and enjoy better things; and when he doth so, these things shall be given in over and above.

SERMON IX.

Righteously, &c.—TITUS ii. 12.

I NOW come to the second branch, wherein the duty of man is expressed, and that is justice or righteousness, which implies the duties of our public capacity and relation to others. Though the discourse be moral, yet it may conduce to spiritual ends. Therefore let us see what may be spoken concerning justice and righteousness. Justice is a grace by which we are inclined to perform our duty to our neighbour. There are many distinctions usual in this matter, which I shall omit, and only deliver you the nature of this grace in some general rules; and then show you how much it concerns us to look after this grace, to be just and righteous in the course of our conversation.

First, To give you the nature of this grace in some general rules, and they are such as these. To give every man his own; to do injury to no man; to make restitution; to bear the injuries of others with patience; in many cases not to demand our own extreme right; to do as we would be done unto; public good to be preferred before private; and that according to our power we must be useful to others.

First rule, To give every man his own. This is laid down, Rom. xiii. 7, 'Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.' This due ariseth either by virtue of the law of God, or by virtue of a bargain and contract, or by virtue of a voluntary promise.

1. There is a due that ariseth by virtue of the law of God; such things cannot be dispensed with, therefore the obligation cannot be made void. As for instance, a child is to honour his parents by the law of God, and a father cannot discharge his child from obedience, as we may remit a duty or thing that is due by bargain and contract, because we have greater power over it. There is a due to every one, as reverence to parents, obedience and tribute to magistrates, double honour to ministers and the guides of the church. It is injustice to deny parents a respect; it is theft and robbery to defraud magistrates of their tribute or ministers of their maintenance: it is not a gift, but a debt, the scripture saith, they are 'worthy of double honour,' 1 Tim. v. 17; 'Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.' And it is not in a begging way, as a contribution, but as an honorary stipend. Things that are due by natural duty cannot be dispensed with, as things due by bargain and contract, because the obligation cannot be made void.

2. There is a due that ariseth by way of bargain and contract: Rom. xiii. 8, 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another.' If money be borrowed but not restored, it is theft and injustice. If you bargain with another, the full bargain is due to him: 1 Thes. iv. 6, 'Let no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.' He is to enjoy his full bargain. The apostle saw a need of enforcing this doctrine in the church to prevent the iniquity of traffic.

The seller is not to work upon the simplicity of the buyer, nor the buyer upon the necessity of the seller, but all things must be done equally, else God will be offended. But chiefly is this iniquity committed, and that it is in an high degree, when the reward you are to give is not bought with money, but earned with labour. Defrauding the hireling and servants of their wages is a very crying sin, the greatest height of iniquity; it cries in the ears of the Lord of hosts: James v. 4, 'Behold the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.' God is their patron. This is a grievous sin, because it is their life and their support and solace: Deut. xxiv. 14, 15, 'Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant, that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of the strangers that are in thy land within thy gates. At his day thou shalt give him his hire; neither shall the sun go down upon it: for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee.' It is often spoken of in scripture. There is a greater and more pressing inconvenience to defraud the labourer than to defraud others.

3. Again, there is a due ariseth by voluntary promise. We make ourselves debtors, and it is part of justice to make good our promise, though it be to our own hurt and loss: Ps. xv. 4, 'He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.' All promises must be kept but those that are evil, and those are void in making. Why? Because they are bonds of iniquity; so they must be broken, and not kept; and again, because they are contrary to the former promise we have made to God to obey his laws. It is evil to make a sinful promise, and it is a greater sin to keep it.

Second rule, Do injury to no man: Jer. xxii. 3, 'Do no wrong, do no violence.' Do no wrong to their persons, their names, or their goods.

1. Not to their persons; that will not suit with the mildness of religion. The apostle saith, Phil. ii. 15, 'Be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke.' Man by nature is fierce, 'hateful, and hating one another,' Titus iii. 3; that is his disposition; but now the children of God their nature is changed; the Spirit of God is in all his members. Now Christ went about doing good; he did no harm, neither was guile found in his mouth; and if you would be the children of God, you must be like him, be harmless. That we may be mindful of this, the Lord hath given us an emblem of it almost in all things, among the birds, the beasts, the plants, the worms. Among the birds, natural men are compared to the eagle and the kite, birds that are ravenous; and a christian to the dove: Mat. x. 16, 'Be harmless as doves.' Among the beasts, natural men are compared to the wolf and the lion, and a christian to the lamb. Among the plants, natural men are compared to briers and pricking thorns that cannot be touched. Saith the Spirit of God, 'The sons of Belial shall be as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands,' 2 Sam. xxiii. 6. And the children of God are compared to the lily. And then among the worms; wicked men are compared to vipers, Mat. iii. 7, 'O generation of vipers!' And the children of God to an innocent worm apt

to be trod upon, to receive injury, and do none: Ps. xxii. 6, 'I am a worm, and no man.' Usually in a well-ordered kingdom the fierceness of men is restrained by the severity of laws; but yet it is bewrayed, and breaks out in fury against those that fall under the displeasure of the magistrate, especially for matters of religion, out of blind zeal; there civil men are fierce and cruel. And therefore it is notable that Paul, when he makes an acknowledgment of his natural condition, saith, 1 Tim. i. 13, 'I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious.' That Paul was a blasphemer of God and a persecutor of the saints is clear; but how doth he say he was *injurious*, since elsewhere he said he 'walked in all good conscience to this day?' I suppose it relates to the violence of his persecution, to his haling and dragging the saints out of their houses, having a commission from the rulers, Acts viii. 3, and that he calls injury. Thus it falls out, men are transported by irregularity, heats, and violence, and forget humanity. Now in such cases, though the cause be right, yet this violent dragging and insulting over those that are in their power is but natural rage let loose; and this Paul confesseth to be his injuriousness, and a crime that kept the same pace with his blasphemy and persecution. True zeal is manifested by pity and compassion. The heights and fervours of zeal are only necessary when evil men are countenanced, and when it is dangerous to appear against them, not when they fall under our power; then there is some pity due to their humanity.

2. Do no wrong to their names; next to their persons this is to be valued. A slanderer is worse than a thief; the one is publicly odious, but the other robs us of our better treasure: Prov. xxii. 1, 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches,' and more conducible to our usefulness for God than wealth. A wrong done to the estate is sooner repaired than a wrong done to the name of others, for a reproach divulged is hardly recalled; when the wound is cured, yet the scar remains; and therefore this is a very great evil to do wrong to their names; especially when you reproach the godly, and do wrong to them, because their discredit lights upon religion. God is much concerned in the credit and honour of his servants. You hinder their service, and lay them open to the rage of the world. A blemished instrument is of little use. Num. xii. 8, saith God, 'Were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?' To speak against persons eminent and useful for God in their age is to render them suspected to the world; and who would drink of a suspected fountain? You hinder their use and serviceableness. And the wrong is greater when one christian blemisheth another, for one scholar to speak against another, and one lawyer against another; so for one christian to speak against another, it aggravates the injury. Therefore, when there is cause to speak against a man, it should be with grief.

3. There must be no wrong to their goods, no invading of right and property: Eph. iv. 28, 'Let him that stole steal no more.' Every one is against a gross thief; but the more plausible and secret ways of wrong, and getting estates into your hands, or abusing trusts, is theft. The apostle there writes to the Ephesians that lived in the city, and by iniquity of traffic were likely to heap up an estate to themselves.

I shall here take occasion to handle a question or two about property.

[1.] Is there any property, yea or nay? or must all goods lie in common? This was Plato's fancy. Some men think that if all were levelled and reduced to a parity, and we did live as fishes in the sea, there would be less confusion in the world. But this is contrary to God's appointment, who by his wisdom hath cast the world into hills and valleys. God is the maker of rich and poor: Prov. xxii. 2, 'The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.' And Christ saith, Mat. xxii. 11, 'Ye have the poor always with you.' A world of mischief would follow otherwise; if there were no property, there would be no justice, whose chief property is to give every man his own. There could be no charity. How can we give, if we have nothing that we can call our own? It would hinder diligence and prudent administration; the idle would have as great a share as the industrious and diligent; rewards of special eminency and virtue would be taken away. Who would undertake the hardest labours and the condition of servants? Superiority and inferiority is the bond of human society. It is God's wisdom to dispose of the conditions and estates of men that one should need another, and supply each other's wants and defects. The poor need the bounty of the rich, and the rich the labour and service of the poor. *Object.* But what shall we say to the example of the primitive times? Acts iv. 32, 'And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common.' *Ans.* This was extraordinary, and it was done freely, and not by virtue of any precept, as appears by what Peter said to Ananias, chap. v. 4, 'Whilst it remained, was it not thy own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?' still they kept a property to dispose of it as they saw cause. And pray mark, it is not said that they did equally divide among them all the things that were sold; but, Acts ii. 44, 45, 'All that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.' Here was no levelling, but an orderly charity; there was great necessity, and they believed the destruction and desolation of Judea, and therefore in wise foresight took this course. And therefore it is notable that it is not said that they sold all they had, but only their possessions and inheritances: Acts iv. 34, 35, 'As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet,' &c. And still it was free; yet it was not taken from them, but freely given by them; it was not catch who catch can, but 'distribution was made unto every man according as he had need,' ver. 35. Some good people kept their houses still, as Mary had her house: Acts xii. 12, 'He came to the house of Mary.'

[2.] Have wicked men any right in what they do possess? or may they be spoiled as the Canaanites were, and ousted of all their possessions? I answer—Wicked men have a civil right, and that is bank enough against violence and invasion of property; or suppose there were no other title but grace, and a man that had not grace were an usurper, what a world of inconveniences and confusions would follow! If one man were made judge of another man's grace, how should we know who had a right? Give unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's.

If it were so, we could not trade with them; but Abraham bought the field of Mamre. Wicked men have a civil right; but that is not all, they have a right before God, a common right of providence, so that they are not usurpers of what they do possess; it is their portion: Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure.' It is true they have made a forfeiture as to God, and deserve to lose all, but the sentence of the law is not executed upon them; and therefore by the gift and indulgence of God they have a just and free use of such things as fall to their share and portion. There cannot be a better title than God's own gift. Now God in the general course of his providence giveth wicked men many things, as he gave Tyrus to Nebuchadnezzar. He that giveth them their lives giveth them meat and drink; they do him common service, and God rewardeth them with common mercies. But they have not such a right as God's children, a right from the covenant of grace, from God's love, and for their good, but their blessings are salted with a curse.

Third rule, If wrong be done, restitution must be made. It is not enough to reconcile yourselves to God if you have thriven by unjust gain, but you must make restitution to men, else the sin remains. There is in all such acts the sin and the injury. Now many seek to take away the sin while the injury remains, but that cannot be; and some may seek possibly to do away the injury while the sin remains; they do not reconcile themselves to God. In the law of Moses, he that wronged his neighbour was to make restitution: Lev. vi. 5, 'He shall restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass-offering.' That law speaks of wrong done against our will. The thief that wronged with set purpose was to restore fourfold; but if a man did by chance, and against his will, wrong another, when he was convinced of it, he was to restore the principal and the fifth part in the day of his trespass-offering. Our Lord renews and repeats this sentence of the law: Mat. v. 24, 'First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' It is an allusion to this law, where, on the day of their offering, they were to make restitution. This is the only way to retract the wrong. As long as you retain the use and fruit of your fraudulent practices, the sin and the injury is continued, and there can be no true repentance. In the very counterfeit repentance of Judas there is a kind of restitution; it is a necessary fruit of grace. When salvation was come to Zaccheus' house, and he was converted, he offers the restitution of the law: 'If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold,' Luke xix. 8. Therefore the continuance of gain gotten by fraud upbraideth the tender conscience with the sin. *Non remittitur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum*; and if you should be disabled from restitution, your acknowledgment must be very serious and humble, and take shame to yourself, and do what you can. And if servants have purloined from their masters, or if any have thriven by iniquity of traffic, restore as far as possibly you can. He that can rectify the injury and doth not, doth not repent, and God will not accept him. If the party wronged be not living, it must be given to the next heir, if none of the line be found,

it must be given to God; for as long as it remains with you, it is an accursed thing, and will bring a curse on all the rest. If you have wronged others in their names, make them all the satisfaction you can. Christ drew from Peter a treble profession of his love, to answer his threefold denial. By all public vindications you should seek to heal the wound you have made. Take an instance of one that accused a bishop at Jerusalem falsely; God touched his heart that he wept his eyes blind.

Fourth rule, You must bear the injuries of others with patience rather than revenge them. If patience be not a part of justice, I am sure private revenge is a part of injustice, because you take God's work out of his hands, and you make yourselves magistrates without a commission: Rom. xii. 9, 'Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.' You must leave it to God and his deputies. It is an usurpation and against all right to avenge yourselves, that a man should be an accuser, judge, and executioner, and all in his own cause, where self-love is apt to make us partial. If we are fit to be an accuser, certainly not to be judge and executioner. It crosseth the ends of just revenge, which are to right the party wronged, or mend the party offending, or to provide for public safety. He that avengeth his own quarrel doth but more and more enrage his adversary, scandalise others and not right himself. In taking wrong we suffer evil, in returning wrong we do evil; the one is our affliction, the other is our sin. It will be no excuse for you to say you were wronged first. See how the Spirit of God takes off these pleas: Prov. xxiv. 29, 'Say not thou, I will do so to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.' This is but a continuance and reciprocation of injustice. So Prov. xx. 29, 'Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord and he will save thee.' I remember Lactantius hath a pretty saying in this case, *Qui par pari referre nititur, ipsum a quo lœsus est imitatur*—Revenge and injury differ only in order; he that begins the injury goeth before in mischief; and he that requites it comes as fast after as he can; he doth but delight to follow that which he saw go before him. If you judge it evil in others, why do you fall into the like yourselves? What care hath he of justice and goodness that imitateth that which he acknowledgeth to be evil? It is no excuse to say he began; his doing wrong to thee doth not dissolve the obligation of God's law, or the binding power it hath upon thy conscience. Nay, the return of injuries argues you to be the more malicious, because it is a more willing, a more knowing act.

Fifth rule, We must be so far from wronging any man, that in many cases we must not demand our own extreme right: Phil. iv. 5, 'Let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand.' Your moderation, *επιείκεια*; it signifies the mitigating of the extremity of justice: James iii. 17, 'The wisdom that is from above is peaceable and gentle.' Extreme right is but an injury when you do not all you may do by the letter of the law out of lenity and christian forbearance. Power stretched to the utmost is but tyranny; and when the words of the law are urged contrary to the end, the law is made a pattern of sin

and unjust dealing. In short, this equity and moderation lieth in not interpreting things doubtful to the worst sense: Eccles. vii. 16, 'Be not righteous overmuch;' when we do not interpret things rigorously that are receptive, and capable of more plausible interpretations, when we depart from our own right for just and convenient reasons: Ps. lxix. 4, 'I restored that which I took not away.' For peace's sake much may be done, that we may not dishonour God, nor vex others for every trifle; the good of others is to be considered, that we may not undo them, though it be our right. Thus Paul departed from his own right, 'to cut off occasion from them that desire occasion,' 2 Cor. xi. 12. He would labour with his hands rather than lose an opportunity of spreading the gospel: 2 Thes. iii. 8, 'Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you.' Paul took no maintenance. The spiritual things we sow are above your best carnal things. Considering our labour and pains, the bread we eat is bought at the dearest rate. We have a right, but for God's glory, and not to lay a stumbling-block in the way of young converts, we recede from it. You are not to exact all your labours, Isa. lviii. 3. When you hold poor men to a bargain that is burdensome, it is injustice; and thus our Lord Christ himself paid tribute to avoid scandal.

Sixth rule, Do as you would be done unto: Mat. vii. 12, 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; for this is the law and the prophets;' this is the scope of scriptures. This saying the Roman Emperor Severus much admired, and wrote it upon many places of his palace; for it is a rule serves in all cases. If we would do as we would be done unto, what lives might we lead? We are very tender of our own interest, give a favourable sentence in our own case, and are very sensible of the wrong done to us; we would not be circumvented by a fraudulent bargain, we would not be detracted in our own names, we would have our infirmities hidden and not divulged, we would be succoured in such distresses; now do so to them. If in all cases we would do aright and judge aright, let us change the persons, and suppose ourselves in another's case, Would I have others thus do with me? But how is this law to be understood? Some lay violent hands upon themselves, others desire things sinful, as to be drunk and to commit adultery. I answer—It is meant of what we wish to ourselves, by a regular self-love, and a free and unperverted will.

Again, it holdeth not in duties of relations; it is not just that the father should do that to the children which he would have the children do to him, as to give honour and reverence and the like. So in all relations between inferiors and superiors, it is to be understood if we were in their place and in the like condition; as if I were a son, or if I were a servant. Still take the person of him with whom thou dealest upon thyself; that right which you would have others do to you, as you would be kindly dealt with in buying and selling, in pardoning injuries, forgiving unadvised wrongs, do you the same to others. This will help us to keep a good conscience in all our dealings.

Seventh rule, Public good is to be sought as well as private, and in many cases to be preferred before it. No man is born for himself, and

therefore it is injustice when men mind only their own things, and are wholly taken up with fulfilling their own wills and desires. God hath commanded us to love one another; he hath devolved upon one man the respects of all the world in effect; for all men are bound to love thee and seek thy good. What is the reason of this but to engage and oblige us the more to seek the good one of another: Rom. xii. 5, 'We are all members one of another;' the members seek the good of the body. The stomach receives meat not for itself, but to disperse it for the use of the whole body. When men are of a narrow private spirit, and do not seek the welfare of others, they sin against nature and grace. Man is *ζῶον πολίτικον*, a sociable creature; if he could live by himself, then he might live to himself. Human society is founded upon communion and commerce, and therefore we are bound to seek the good one of another. There is a great body to which all the members must have respect. As in a clock all the wheels move one another, and each part receiveth help one from another, so every one should mind the common good, and be sensible of the common evil: 1 Cor. x. 24, 'Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth;' not his own exclusively; it is not to be understood *in sensu conjuncto*, not his own so as to neglect and exclude the care of the public. We are not to live as beasts, every one to shift for himself; but human society is maintained by communion and converse. Yea, in many cases others' good is to be sought more than our own: Rom. xv. 3, 'For even Christ pleased not himself;' for the common good of the elect he regards not his own life. And this example we are to follow: 1 John iii. 16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren;' that is, my single life to save the community; I must promote their spiritual good with the loss of my temporals; my interest must be exposed to hazard for a more public good.

Eighth rule, We must help others according to our power. This is a part of righteousness. In the law it is said, 'It shall be righteousness unto thee before the Lord thy God,' Deut. xxiv. 13 ,when it speaks of the poor's due. Carnal, wicked, covetous men stand upon property; 1 Sam. xxv. 11, 'Shall I take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers?' &c. Thy estate is not thy own, but God's; it is ours in law, but God's in use, and you are but stewards for him. This will be no plea in the day of judgment to say, It was my own, and I did not rob others: thou art a thief before God, if thou givest not. He that useth not his estate as God would have him use it, is a spiritual thief: Prov. iii. 27, 'Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it.' When the poor are cast upon thee by God's providence, they are a kind of owners; that which thou detainest from them is theirs; it is not ours when Christ calleth for it, and his members need it. Ambrose saith, *Non qui capit aliena, sed qui non dedit sua, &c.*—Though we have done no wrong, yet if we have not disposed our goods and estate for God's glory, it is injustice and sin; as stewards must dispose of goods according to the mind of the master.

Secondly, What reason have we to look after this grace of righteousness, and to be just?

1. It is a piece of God's image: Eph. iv. 24, 'That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' Nothing makes us so like God as righteousness; we must be like God not only in holiness, but in righteousness. See the distinction between these two; the one signifies purity of nature, and the other justice and equity in our dealing and conversation. For God is holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works; his essence is holy, and his administrations just. So the new man is created after God in righteousness and true holiness; be like God in both.

2. It is an evidence of the truth of grace to walk in all your relations righteously, amiably, and justly. We are bidden 'to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance,' Luke iii. 8; that is, such as are meet evidences that there is a change wrought. What are these? Defraud no man; 'Exact no more than is appointed you,' ver. 13. And when the soldiers came to ask, What shall we do? he said, 'Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages,' ver. 14. And that is the reason the children of God so much stand upon their righteousness, because it is an evidence of their interest in grace: Job xxvii. 6, 'My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go;' Acts x. 35, 'In every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.' Still it is made to be the evidence that God hath taken us into his own grace, and that we are heirs of salvation.

3. It is a delight and rejoicing to God to see his children just and righteous in all their dealings. God exceedingly hates iniquity in traffic and commerce: Deut. xxv. 15, 16, 'Thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have; that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee: for all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination to the Lord thy God.' And it is repeated again: Prov. xx. 10, 'Divers weights and divers measures both of them are alike abomination to the Lord.' But now it is said, Prov. xv. 9, 'He loveth him that follows after righteousness.' So Ps. cvi. 3, 'Blessed are they that keep judgment and he that doth righteousness at all times.'

4. It is necessary for the honour of religion. Grace teacheth us to live soberly and righteously. Truants at school are a reproach and disgrace to the skill of the teacher; and so carnal professors are a reproach to God. If men are unrighteous, they never learned it of grace. Hypocrites usually abound in acts of worship and duties of the first table, but they seldom make conscience of duties of the second table, here they bewray themselves. What is the cry of the world? None so unjust and unrighteous in their dealings as those that profess religion; this brings a reproach upon the ways of God: Neh. v. 9, 'It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?' It is high time to vindicate religion, and do it all the right we can, and make it comely: Rom. xii. 17, 'Provide things honest in the sight of all men.' The wicked world are apt to speak ill of the gospel of God. Now the Lord would have the world know that there is no such friend to human society as his grace. The ancient fathers were wont to make challenges, *Dent imperatores tales, tales consules, tales exactores fisci, talem exercitum, &c.*—Let all the world show such emperors,

princes, magistrates, such treasurers, such soldiers as the christian religion can. But religion is mightily made a contempt when men make it to be the pretence of vile practices.

5. It will be for your own comfort, whatever falls out in the world, good or evil. Samuel could say, 1 Sam. xii. 3, 'Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith?' If good come, Prov. xvi. 8, 'Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right;' and in death you will die comfortably when you can wash your hands in innocency.

6. Consider how just some of the heathens have been, and shall grace come short? What a disparagement is this, as if grace did teach thee to be unjust! Regulus when he had passed his word, though it were to endure an exquisite torment, yet he would not break it. Curius Dentatus, when he had been employed in the highest services of state, as general of an army, yet after he returns to the plough again, not enriched at all with public spoils. Of Aristides it was said, you may sooner pull the sun out of heaven than turn Aristides out of his course. Scævola buying a piece of ground, and the seller setting too low a price, saith he, This is too little, and he gave a great deal more. Abimelech would not have taken Sarah if he had understood she was Abraham's wife. Now shall nature do more than grace?

SERMON X.

And godly, &c.—TITUS ii. 12.

I COME to the third branch used by the apostle, wherein the duty of man is expressed, and that is *godliness*. Here we have a perfect distribution of the duty of the creature. The duties of our personal capacity are expressed by *sobriety;* the duties of our public relation and commerce with others are expressed in the word *righteously;* and then all those intercourses that are to pass between God and us, and the whole tendency of the soul towards God, is expressed by the word *godly*. The scripture speaks of godliness, and of the exercise of godliness: 1 Tim. iv. 7, 'Exercise thyself unto godliness.' Therefore I shall inquire—(1.) What godliness is; (2.) How it must be exercised, or what it is to live godly, the phrase used here.

1. What godliness is. It is a thing not only distinct from righteousness and honesty, but also from holiness. It is the opposite part of the distinction to honesty: 1 Tim. vi. 11, 'Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith,' &c. By *righteousness* he meaneth the duties of the second table; and by *godliness* the duties of the first. More expressly: 1 Tim. ii. 2, 'That we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.' The apostle presseth christians there to pray for the conversion of the magistrate, who is *custos utriusque tabulæ*, that so he may promote the duties of both the tables. If any difference should arise about godliness, or about the institutions of Christ, there the

magistrate may interpose for the defence and safety of the first table; and that we might live peaceably for the exercise of it; and so for honesty in the second table. But it is also to be distinguished from holiness: 2 Peter iii. 11, 'What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' Holiness notes purity of heart and life, and an abhorrence from evil; but godliness denoteth more distinctly a tendency of the heart and carriage towards God; and therefore God is said to be holy, but not to be godly; because it is a grace proper to the creature, and implies inferiority and subordination, a tendency towards God as the highest Lord and chiefest good, as holiness denoteth excellency and perfection. Briefly, godliness may be thus described: It is a religious temper and frame of heart, by which we are inclined to look after the right worship, and to aim at the glory of the true God. To the constitution of godliness there are graces necessary and ordinances; that which swayeth and inclineth the heart is grace; that about which it is conversant are the ordinances of worship.

Therefore I shall inquire—

First, What graces are necessary to make up this religious temper and frame of heart.

Secondly, What are the ordinances about which it is conversant.

First, The principal graces that are necessary to this frame of heart are faith, fear, and love.

1. Faith is necessary, partly that we may have a right apprehension of God, which by nature we cannot have. It is not godliness, but idolatry, superstition, and formality, until we have a right knowledge of God. The Samaritans worshipped the true God, and yet it is said, John iv. 22, 'Ye worship ye know not what.' To worship God out of form and blind custom, it is to make him an idol. But chiefly is faith required, because trust is the ground of all the other respect that passeth between God and us. Look, as unbelief is the ground of all disrespect and departure from God: Heb. iii. 12, 'Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God;' so is faith and trust the ground of all true respect. You know our first parents fell by unbelief. First, Satan seeks to weaken their faith in the promise; first he told them, 'Ye shall not surely die,' Gen. iii. 4; then 'Ye shall be as gods,' ver. 5. First he persuaded them to unbelief, before he persuaded them to ambition, and aspiring after the dignity of the divine nature. This is the root of all. Men care not for God, because they do not believe him upon his word. But now faith is the mother of all respect, of all devotion and obedience to God. When we believe that he is, and is a rewarder of those that come to him, this is that which makes us seek him diligently. To evidence this by the influence which faith hath upon the soul, there are two powerful affections by which the spiritual life is acted and carried on, and they are fear and love, and they both need the influence of faith. There can be no fear till we are persuaded of his being and power whom we cannot see with bodily eyes; but put on the spectacles of faith, and so we 'see him that is invisible,' Heb. xi. 27. God is within the curtain of the heavens; and carnal men say, Tush! he cannot see: Job xxii. 12–14, 'Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high are they? And thou sayest, How doth

God know? can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.' They cannot see him, and think he cannot see them; as the panther hideth his head in a bush, and then thinks the hunter doth not see him; and that is the ground of all disobedience and carnal conversation. But now faith opens the eye, and carrieth us within the curtain and veil, and discovers the invisible God upon his throne of glory, without which sight we cannot fear him. So for love (the other powerful affection), that flows from faith, for our love is but a reflex of God's love, but a reverberation and beating back of God's beam upon himself: 1 John iv. 19, 'We love him because he loved us first.' There must be first a sense and persuasion of his love to us in Christ, and then we love him again. The more we feel the comfortable effects of God's love in the conscience, the more is the heart inflamed with desire of performing love and service and subjection to God again; and therefore faith is said to 'work by love,' Gal. v. 6, and make use of the sweetness of God's love to carry on duty and obedience. Look, as the more directly the beams of the sun do fall upon any solid and smooth body, the more strong is the reflection of heat again. The less of jealousy and doubts of God's love, and the more God's love is darted and reflected upon the soul, there is the more service and care to glorify God, and to do him respect and honour. Thus faith, the radical grace, is necessary for this temper and frame of heart, which is called godliness, and inclineth us to worship and glorify God.

2. Fear and love are likewise necessary. I join them together, because they do best mixed; love with fear, that it may not be servile; and fear with love, that it may not be careless and secure; both are gospel graces. In the Old Testament, when God's dispensations were more legal, and God is represented as a judge, fear is more spoken of; but in the New Testament, where more of grace is discovered, love is more spoken of; but both are necessary. Fear and love are indeed essential respects of the creature to God; therefore both continue in heaven; and they are of great use in the spiritual life to maintain piety. Fear is necessary, that we may keep God always in our eye; and love, that we may keep him always in our hearts. Fear restrains from offence, and love urgeth to work and service. Fear thinks of God's eye, and represents him as a looker-on; and love remembers God's kindness. Fear makes us cautious and watchful, and stirs up aweful thoughts that we may not offend God and grieve his Spirit; and love works a desire to enjoy him, and a care to glorify him, wherein indeed true godliness consists; for godliness in its proper notion importeth a tendency of the heart towards God, either to enjoy him, which is our happiness, or to glorify him, which is our work and duty. And therefore love is of great use, it stirs up desires to enjoy God; and fear, which stirs up care to glorify God. Fear makes us upright, because of God's eye; and love makes us diligent and earnest, because we are about God's work, who hath been gracious to us in Christ. The one makes us serious, the other active; so that they are both of great use to constitute that frame and temper of heart wherein piety consists. Well, then, he is godly that feareth God, for he would not offend him; and he is godly that loves God, because all his care and desire is to serve him, and enjoy him.

Secondly, The ordinances about which godliness is conversant. Because particulars are most affective, let me speak a word of each. The ordinances which manifest, which nourish which increase godliness, are these—reading, hearing, meditating, prayer, the useof the seals, and keeping of the sabbath.

1. Reading the word. The words of scripture have a proper efficacy. The Holy Ghost is the best preacher, therefore it is good now and then to go to the fountain ourselves, and not only to have the word brought to us by others, but to read it ourselves. As the eunuch, Acts viii. 28, when he returned from public worship, he was reading the scripture, and God owned it by sending him an interpreter. Every ordinance hath its proper blessing, and when we use it out of conscience, God will not be wanting. He that sent Philip to the eunuch will send his own Spirit to help thee, therefore read the word. Daniel the prophet, that had the highest visions from God, yet he studies other prophecies, those of Jeremiah: Dan. ix. 2, 'I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet.' Mark, the study of the scripture is a duty that lies upon those that are most gifted and most eminent for parts. Nay, the prophets and holy men of God read over again, and studied their own prophecies: 1 Peter i. 10, 'Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.' And if they that were guided by an infallible Spirit, immediately inspired by the Holy Ghost, if they thought fit to read, and read again and again their own prophecies, and inquire diligently into the salvation they spoke of, much more is it our duty to read the word. None is above the ordinance of reading; that is one ordinance which nourisheth godliness.

2. Hearing. One institution must not jostle out another. It is not enough to read at home, but you must also hear and attend upon public preaching: Rom. x. 14, 'How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?' It is God's ordinance. Seldom is grace got by reading. We have our confirmation by reading, but usually conversion is by hearing; therefore do not reason against this duty, and say, You can provide yourselves with books. You are not wiser than God; his will should be reason enough, though the institution should be never so mean and despicable: 1 Cor. i. 21, 'It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' All God's institutions are full of wisdom and full of reason. There is some help certainly in hearing, there is a ministerial excitation which is of some use. Look, as warmed milk is fitter to nourish than that which is cold, so the word of God delivered by a lively voice hath a greater congruity and suitableness to the work of grace. As the ear was the door by which death got into the soul, by hearkening to the temptation, so God would have the ear to be the sense of grace, and the door of life and peace. In the church hearing is exercised, as in heaven, seeing. Our happiness in heaven is expressed by vision and sight; but in the church hearing is our duty, and our benefits and advantages come in by attending upon the word; therefore it is good to take all occasions, and to 'be swift to hear,' James i. 19. Though we know a great deal already, and have never so great parts, yet we need a monitor to represent the things of God to us, and to awaken our consideration, and lay them

before our eyes; and though we know many things, we are forgetful, and do not think of them. It is good to come to this duty, that we may be put in remembrance.

3. Meditation, a neglected thing; but it falleth under the care of godliness as well as others. It is not enough to exercise the eyes and the ears, but the thoughts. God deserves the best use, and the flower and strength of our reason; and the things of God deserve consideration, being so difficult and so excellent. Especially should we meditate upon the word we hear, for then there is matter to work upon, and somewhat whereby to fix the thought: Ps. lxii. 10, 'God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this.' That which God speaks we should go over again and again in our thoughts; as when a man hath been hearing of bells, the sound hovereth in the brain when the bells cease. Thus and thus hath God spoken to-day, and what shall I say to these things? This is like grinding of the corn; it prepares and makes it fit nourishment for the soul. So meditate upon what you read: Josh. i. 8, 'The book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.' And this I suppose is that meditation which is required of the simpler sort of christians. Certainly it is every one's duty to meditate, but every one hath not riches of invention, and cannot command their thoughts; they are slow of conception: what then? Shall they continually live in the neglect of a necessary duty? No; here is a help; read, and ponder what thou readest; urge thy soul; do as the clean beasts, chew the cud; go over and over it again. You have often seen the beasts, when they have done feeding, chew over their food again, and so prepare it for the stomach; thus may the meanest christians do, they may urge their hearts with what they read; whereas their thoughts are not like a ball struck against a wall, that cometh to hand again, but as a ball struck into the open air, that returneth not. Certainly meditation is one of the exercises of godliness; and they that delight in the law of God will be meditating, pressing and fixing it on their hearts: Ps. i. 2, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night;' for we muse upon what we love.

4. Prayer, that is another exercise of godliness. Here we have our constant commerce with God. If there were no other use of prayer but only to appear before God to do our homage, to profess our service and dependence upon him, it were enough; but it is a means of spiritual acquaintance; by these private soliloquies God and the soul grow intimate, and we unbosom ourselves to God, as intimate friends are often together speaking one to another. Prayer is such a necessary duty and a part of godliness, that it is often put for the whole worship of God: Acts ii. 21, 'Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved;' it is only expressed by that. On the other side, atheism is expressed by not calling on God's name: Ps. xiv. 4, 'Who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.' There is not a swine but is better regarded than God; they are tended morning and evening, but God is forgotten. Oh! what honour is put upon dust and ashes to speak to the great God! Prayer is to be reckoned among our privileges. If we had such freedom of access to an earthly prince, we would not reckon it a burden. It is a part of our liberty by Christ, that was purchased at a dear rate; therefore let us often call

upon God with thankfulness. God hath been at a great deal of cost to erect a throne of grace that we may pray with confidence: 'Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,' Heb. x. 19. If a charitable man should see a company of beggars wandering in the street in the time of worship, and their pretence is that there is no room for them in the public place of meeting, and he should build a chapel for them, they would be without excuse. God hath been at great cost to provide a throne of grace, that we might not neglect prayer.

5. Singing of psalms, that is one of the exercises of godliness, and is of great use in the spiritual life, though usually it be performed perfunctorily and customarily. It is chiefly required as a solemn profession of worship. As far as the voice will extend, we proclaim it to all the world that we are not ashamed of God's worship. David calls upon the nations to make a joyful noise to God: Ps. lxvi. 1, 2, 'Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands; sing forth the honour of his name, make his praise glorious.' As it is the custom of nations to proclaim what they would have noted and observed, by sound of drum and trumpet, so by singing we manifestly own God's worship and service. But this is not all; it is an excellent way of instruction: Col. iii. 16, 'Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord.' It was one means of Austin's conversion, *Quantum fluminis in hymnis et canticis suavi sonantis ecclesiæ?*—How did he weep and mourn when he heard the psalms sung by the church, to think of the mercies and dispensations of God to the church. And it is a fruit and effect of spiritual delight, the vent we give to it. Look, as drunkards, when filled with carnal mirth, they howl out their wanton songs, so when the soul is filled with spiritual consolation, it breaks out into singing. The apostle alludes to it: Eph. v. 18, 19, 'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.' It gives vent to strong spiritual affections when the heart is ravished and overcome with the love of God. It is a more distinct and fixed reading, a reading with meditation. Singing and meditation are put for the same thing: Ps. civ. 33, 34, 'I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being; my meditation of him shall be sweet.' Singing is but a more distinct pronunciation, that we may have more liberty for thought and meditation as we go over those portions of scripture that are sung in the church.

6. A religious use of the seals. Baptism must not be forgotten, though not to be reiterated. Look, as Christ told Peter when he washed his feet, John xiii. 7, 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter;' so you are to look after the fruits and effects of your baptism, and of your engagement to Christ in your infancy, and what benefit you have by virtue of your being baptized into Christ. But especially the use of the supper; that is one of the exercises of godliness; it is the seal of the covenant. It is called, 'The new testament in Christ's blood,' Luke xxii. 20; that is, it is a sign and seal of it. Sacramental speeches must be understood sacramentally. Now this is a high condenscension on God's part (with what reverence should we

come to such an ordinance!) as if his word did not suffice, but we must have all ways of ratification and assurance. The Lord's supper is the map of the gospel; all the mysteries of salvation are here abridged; it is the epitome of the gospel, Christ's public monument to the church. Look, as kings will not only have their royal acts and deeds recorded in faithful chronicles, but also erect a public monument to keep up their memory, so the Lord Christ would not only have his royal acts recorded in the chronicles of the scripture, but hath erected this public monument, that we may remember what he did for us, how he triumphed over principalities and powers, and made a spoil of them openly. It is a visible pledge of his second coming. Christ would have it celebrated in the church to awaken our hopes, our thoughts, and our desires, till he come again in person to convey us into his Father's bosom. It is a mysterious instrument and means God hath found out to convey comfort and grace to the soul, to work out a union between him and the creature. We do not only draw nigh to God, but are united to him. It is the beginning and antepast of glory; so much Christ intimates, Mat. xxvi. 29, 'I will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' It is a taste of the new wine we shall drink with Christ, those spiritual consolations we shall receive from him in his kingdom.

7. Keeping the Sabbath day holy. It is a sure mark of an ungodly person to be a Sabbath-breaker, as a conscionableness to celebrate it to God's glory is both a mark and a work of godliness. It is the description of the godly eunuch, Isa. lvi. 4, 'Thus saith the Lord to the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant.' Mark, it is one of the chiefest things that is taken notice of there, the observation of God's own day. If you would exercise yourselves to godliness, this is a great means. Profaning the Lord's day is the cause of profaneness all the week after; and so a careless keeping the Lord's day is the cause of the carelessness and formality you are guilty of in the business of religion. God hath appointed this day for a repose for the soul, that, by a long uninterrupted continuance in worship, it might be more seasoned, and fit to converse with God all the week after. Dost thou love Christ? then observe his day. Ignatius calls it the queen of days. The primitive christians were very careful of the Sabbath; they would run all hazards rather than not keep the Sabbath day. When they were accused as guilty of Sabbath-violation, they would answer, I am a christian, how can I choose but love the Lord's day? This is the day wherein we do most solemnly and publicly profess the worship of God; therefore it is to be celebrated with all care. Thus much for the description of godliness from the disposition of the heart, and the duties about which it is conversant.

II. I am to speak of the exercise of godliness: 1 Tim. iv. 7, 'Exercise thyself to godliness.' It must be exercised both in worship and conversation: 2 Peter iii. 11, 'What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?'

First, In worship. What is the part and office of godliness in worship?

1. There must be a care that it be right. God will not be at the

creatures' carving; his honour is best kept up by his own institutions, and therefore he will accept nothing but what he requires. The woman of Samaria, as soon as she was converted, inquired after the right worship. Christ had convinced her of lewdness, and living in adultery: John iv. 18, 'The man thou now hast is not thy husband.' The great thing that troubled her was her present standing, and the superstition she was nursed and brought up in: ver. 20, 'Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.' As soon as men are awakened, that is the question; they can no longer be content with their ignorant, senseless, careless, ceremonial worshipping of God, and say, Thus our fathers did; this will not serve the conscience when it is a little stirred. It is said of the people of God, Jer. l. 5, 'They shall ask the way to Sion with their faces thitherward.' Sion was the place of God's residence and solemn worship; and it is the disposition of his people still to be inquisitive after the way to Sion, how God is worshipped. I speak not this to unsettle men, and to draw them to scepticism and irresolution, but partly that they might settle upon better grounds than tradition, public consent, and the example of men. Cyprian observes that this is the reason men are so fickle, so inconstant, so soon off and on, they do not practise those things upon good grounds. None so inconstant as they that practise things right and good, but not upon principles. And partly that men may not content themselves with a cheap worship, such as costs them nothing, as when they do not inquire about the grounds and reasons of what they do, or when they do but even as others do. We should be still searching 'and proving what is acceptable unto the Lord,' Eph. v. 10, and 'seek for knowledge as for silver, and search for her as for hid treasures,' Prov. iii. 4. It is a thing of great care and exactness to be a christian, to be right in God's worship. Usually men serve God at random and at peradventure; and if they be right, it is but a happy mistake; they do not inquire and search, and so miss of a great deal of comfort, settlement, and experience in the way of God.

2. There is required constancy and zeal in the profession of God's worship. This is religion, to be zealous for God's institutions, to contend for the faith of the saints, and hate what is contrary to right worship and sound doctrine: Ps. cxix. 104, 'Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way;' and ver. 128, 'Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way.' This is the effect of the knowledge of the truth, to hate all falsehood, idolatry, and superstition, as much as they love God's institutions, that they may not be entangled, and so either deceive others, or be deceived themselves, by the craft of them that lie in wait for such an enterprise. Whenever they hear or read any such doctrines, the heart nauseateth them; there is a rising of heart not only against corruptions of manners, but falsehood of doctrine. But if men be indifferent, come what may come, Christ or antichrist, they care not greatly, their religion is worth nothing. If you do not hate heresy and corruption in worship, there is no true religion or godliness in you. Heretics and men in a false way seldom hate one another though they differ in principles. Why? Because they have not a love to truth.

But those that love the truth prize the institutions of God; there is a displeasure in their hearts against any false way.

3. There must be frequency in the practice of it. God and their souls must not grow strangers. Things that are not used contract rust, as a key seldom turned in the lock turns with difficulty. So it will not stand with your spiritual welfare to omit duty long. Much spiritual exercise keeps the soul in health and sweet; as the oftener they drain the well, the sweeter the water is. By running and breathing yourselves every day, you are the fitter to run in a race; so the oftener you come into God's presence, the greater confidence and freedom and enlargement it will bring. The way to be fervent in prayer or in any holy exercise is to be frequent. Rest breeds many distempers, which are prevented by exercise. The right arm is bigger and stronger than the left, and fuller of spirits. Why? Because it is most agitated, and in exercise; so the oftener you are with God, the more full of life, strength, and spiritual enlargement. The field of the sluggard is overgrown with thistles. You grow barren, raw, sapless, and lose the choiceness of your spirits, and the savouriness of your thoughts, when you are seldom with God. The soul runs out of repair when you pray but now and then; and therefore a christian indeed cannot be long out of God's company; there is a strong bent in his heart towards God. Can a man love God and be a stranger to him? Is it possible? Briefly, there are so many necessities, so many frequent impulses and excitations of grace, that it cannot be imaginable that a man be a christian and neglect worship. Certainly if we did not want a heart we could never want an occasion to come to God, either for ourselves, children, friends, or relations. God hath left the more wants upon the creature that he may the oftener hear from him. The throne of grace was erected for 'a time of need,' Heb. iv. 16. Many needs are left upon us, that we may have continual recourse to God; many doubts to be resolved, many graces to be strengthened, many corruptions to be mortified. A christian in good earnest will be sensible of these things. It is true it is not expressly set down in scripture how often we should pray, meditate, read, or perform other duties. In these days of the gospel, God trusts love, which is a grace that is wont to keep the heart open and free. We are left to our liberty more than those under the law, not that we may come short of them, but that we may do more. However, there is no gap opened to looseness, because the terms wherein duty is enjoined are very large and comprehensive: 1 Thes. v. 17, 'Pray without ceasing;' Eph. vi. 18, 'Praying always;' that is, upon all occasions. And we have high patterns; we are referred to the angels that are never weary. David had his seven times a day: Ps. cxix. 164, 'Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments.' And Daniel thrice: chap. vi. 10, 'He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.' Certainly it must be done every day; for Christ saith, Mat. vi. 11, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Every day we stand in need of the blessings of providence, and it must be sought *καθ' ἡμέραν*, day by day. Every day we live as it were a new life; it is but the lesser circle of time, and it should not pass without some worship. From the morning and evening sacrifice we may

plead for morning and evening prayer: Num. xxviii. 4, 'The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even.' This is expounded, Ps. cxli. 2, 'Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice;' there is the exposition of the sacrifice. Certainly there is a standing occasion. Who dares venture on the temptations of the day without prayer, or the dangers of the night? In the morning we are to beg direction; in the evening, protection. Can God's children go to bed without leaving their hearts with him over-night, or awake without God in the morning? It is an ill sign when men wrangle and dispute away duties rather than practise them.

Secondly, There is godliness in conversation. In all you do, godliness must bear sway. Even in the actions of the civil life, they must be done from God, to God, and for God, with a sense of his eye, a dependence upon his strength, and an aim at his glory. All such actions as proceed from self-love, and tend only to self-welfare they cannot be godly, for godliness comes from God, and brings to God; it hath another alpha and omega than nature hath.

1. In the course of our conversation there must be a sense of God's eye. The world is a great stage, men are the actors, God and angels are the spectators and lookers-on; therefore all must be done in God's presence. All actions and duties which lie between man and man must be done in and to the Lord. You must love your neighbour for God's sake. The swaying reason of all your actions must be the love and fear of God; by this means you make your commerce to be a kind of worship, and turn duties of the second table into duties of the first table: Eph. v. 19, 'Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.' Remember he seeth thee; it is done to him. Submission is the usual effect of fear of man. When men have power, they cast off the yoke. This is the fairest bond and tie. So to servants: Eph. vi. 5, 'Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ.' What would you do to God and Christ if they were present? Use yourself thus often to think of God, for this is to walk with God, to keep always in his eye and presence.

2. Dependence upon his strength. It is notable, when the apostle had laid down reciprocal duties of relations, between children and parents, husbands and wives, masters and servants, he concludes all, Eph. vi. 10, 'Finally, brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' It is an error to think that the supplies of grace are only necessary for duties of worship; they are necessary also for duties of your civil relation. We are like a glass without a bottom; when it comes to stand of itself, it is broken in pieces; so we shall surely miscarry, and walk unworthy of our relation, if God do not help us, but we be left to ourselves. It is a good part of godliness to look to God, and wait upon him all the day for counsel and strength. You give him the honour of a God when you acknowledge him in all your ways: Prov. iii. 6, 'In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' By a constant dependence you acknowledge him most; and this preserves a constant intercourse between us and God, when we lift

up the heart that we may receive grace and strength to walk in all our relations to his glory.

3. An aim at God's glory; that must be the supreme end of all our actions, be they of never so small a consequence: 1 Cor. x. 31, 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' Whatever we do, eating, drinking, trading, all must be done that God may be honoured by ourselves and others. This is to make every meal an act of worship, your trading a solemn praise. It is God's design that all our lifetime we may do him service; this must be our fixed scope, that his honour and glory may be at the end of every natural and civil action. Look, as in all the works of creation, providence, and redemption, God made it his aim to glorify himself in all, so we should make it our fixed aim and scope to bring honour to God in all our work; all other things are nothing to this.

Use 1. Examination. Art thou godly? Hast thou been a diligent hearer and reader of the word? a religious observer of the Lord's day? an earnest worshipper of God? zealous for his glory against those that profane his name, corrupt his doctrine, make void his institutions? an enemy to idolatry and superstition; a lover of God's ordinances? It is an evidence of interest in grace to live godly. Only there is a form of godliness—(2 Tim. iii. 5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof')—which is discovered by a pretence of worship and a neglect of honesty; as the pharisees made long prayers, but devoured widows' houses; or else by a disproportionate zeal against idolatry, but not against heresy, or such falsehoods as yield no gain. It is not zeal for God's institutions when you do not hate every false way: 2 Tim. ii. 16, 'But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.' The apostle speaketh of some that suppose godliness is gain, 1 Tim. vi. 5, that make a merchandise of their zeal: Rom. ii. 22, 'Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?' He speaketh to the Jews that gloried in their privileges; he had said before, 'Dost thou steal? dost thou commit adultery?' But here, 'Dost thou commit sacrilege?' That was their glory, that they did not serve idols, but they robbed the true God; they would not endure a false god, or an idol to be set up, but in the meantime they defrauded the temple of its maintenance, and things consecrated. But the closest rebuke is, ver. 23, 'Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?' They were much in worship, but were not bettered by it; they were not changed in heart. You do not feel the power of it if the heart be not new-fashioned, and put into a godly frame.

Use 2. To press you to exercise yourself to godliness.

1. It is the aim of the gospel. The gospel is called, 1 Tim. vi. 3, 'The doctrine which is according to godliness,' invented on purpose to maintain and keep godliness alive. So Titus i. 1, 'The truth which is after godliness,' which preserveth the true worship of the true God, and right thoughts of God. Here in the gospel the way to eternal life is discovered.

2. It is the aim of providence. All God's dispensations seem to put us in mind of God, and to draw us the nearer to him; afflictions to increase our reverence and watchfulness, and mercies to engage our

love and trust. God complains of Israel that he had inflicted many judgments on them, and 'yet ye have not turned unto me, saith the Lord,' Amos iv. 8–11. So he complains of their abuse of mercies: Hosea ii. 8, 'She did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold which she prepared for Baal.' The mercies of God should be cords and bands of love to draw us to God.

3. Consider how God hath deserved it. We are God's. You that have servants expect they should work for you, their strength and time is yours: Rom. xiv. 8, '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.' A christian is not master of anything; his affections, his interests, his time his care, his strength, all is the Lord's.

4. Consider God hath given us sufficient grace to live godly: 2 Peter i. 3, 'According as his divine wisdom hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.' We cannot complain, as the Israelites did of Pharaoh, that he required brick where he gave no straw; or as the servant did of his master, that he expected to reap where he never sowed: the divine power is engaged to help us. How much do we walk beneath that divine power which he is ready to afford us! Do not say, I shall never be godly if this be to be godly; I am but flesh and blood, what would you have me do?

5. Consider the worth of godliness: it is our chief duty. First we must show our respects to the first table, because there are the great commandments: Mat. xxii. 37, 38, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: this is the first and great commandment.' *De loco modum, de ordine statum, de confinio meritum cujusque præcepti cognosces,* says Tertullian. It is the first table, and therefore most worthy; the object is greater; God is greater than man; by the breach hereof we do more immediately sin against God. He that wrongeth his neighbour sinneth against God: 1 Cor. viii. 12, 'But when ye sin against the brethren, and wound their weak consciences, ye sin against Christ:' but not so immediately. Godliness directeth honesty, which is otherwise but a civil action, proceeding from interest and self-love. This is the great commandment; without it all other graces are worth nothing: 2 Peter i. 5, 6, 'Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness.' Civility is nothing, temperance is nothing, abstinence from pleasures is nothing without godliness. Many virtues are reckoned up, as patience, knowledge, temperance; all these things the Lord requires, not without godliness, therefore add godliness. God requires nothing but that which draweth the creature to himself; this bringeth us to the well-head.

6. Consider the profit of godliness. I mention this to counterbalance the discouragements which you would meet with in the ways of godliness. It will cost you trouble: 2 Tim. iii. 12, 'Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' Mark, if they will live godly, not civilly only; if they are zealous for Christ's institutions. A Gallio will escape well enough; but you have encouragements: 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' They have

an interest in both, but the promises of this life are subservient to that which is to come. If the things of this life hinder our progress to heaven, grace should be content to be without them. There is much comfort with a little: 1 Tim. vi. 6, 'Godliness with contentment is great gain.'

SERMON XI.

In this present world.—TITUS ii. 12.

HAVING shown you the substance of the lesson, let me now speak of the season of it, when this is to be performed; and that is, *in this present world.*

Doct. That our abode in the present world is the only time wherein we are to discharge the duty of our heavenly calling. I shall—(1.) Draw forth the force of the expression; (2.) Give you the reasons of it.

I. The force of the expression, 'In this present world.' It implies three things—timely beginning, zealous discharge, and final perseverance. Whatever we are to do upon the teaching of grace, we are to do it speedily, earnestly, constantly. Speedily, now or never, take hold of the present occasion; earnestly, it is the work of our lives, wherefore we are sent into the world; and constantly, that is, all the time of our living here.

1. Speedily; now or never must it be done. We must set upon this work speedily upon two grounds—because time to come is uncertain, and it is not fit to neglect it. (1.) Time to come is uncertain. We have nothing to command but this instant; that which is to come is not in our power. One being invited to a feast the next day made answer, *Ego a multis annis crastinum non habui*—For these many years I never had a to-morrow. The present time is put into thy hands; thou hast no security for the next day but thy own word; and how is he the better assured that is security to himself? When you promise yourselves many years, you are liberal upon another man's goods; and it is the fashion of madmen to reckon other men's estates to be theirs. The Father hath reserved times and seasons in his own power, and taken them into his own hands. We are not masters of a day; therefore now or never must we set upon this work of living soberly, righteously, godly. Oh! how sad is it to be surprised, and death to find us unprovided! 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace.' This is the great business of our lives, to be found in a condition pleasing to God. A man should live every day as he would be found of God, for usually death comes by way of surprise; it finds us before we look for it, and steals upon us ere we are aware. (2.) Because it is not fit to neglect it till death, and to provide work for that time when we need cordials; the infirmities of age and sickness need supports, and not work. Oh! how sad is this, that many times we are going out of the world before we begin to think why we came

into it! Our great business here is to save our souls; and when time is gone, then we begin to think of it. He is a foolish traveller that would set out at night, and begin his journey when the sun is setting, and the darkness of the night is coming on; so when time appointed is gone, then to think of saving our souls. It is too late to be sparing when we have spent all upon prodigality. The foolish virgins came to buy oil too late. Who would expect to conquer then when his enemy is strongest and himself weakest, or purposely delay it till such a time? If you do not presently set about the work, you do but provide grief and sorrow for your last age, when you are least able to bear it.

2. Earnestly. It is the reason why we are sent into the present world. It is the work of our lives. We were not put into the world as leviathan was put into the sea, to take our fill of pleasure; but we were sent into the world for our trial and for our exercise. For this end was life given us; not to get wealth and honour, and great estates, or only to eat, drink, and sleep, and so live as if we were never to die, and then die as if we were never to live more; such lose the end of their lives. God hath appointed a time for everything under the sun, and the time of life is appointed to work out our salvation; and therefore it is but reason that our best business should have the greatest share of our time and strength, and that this work should go forward according to our years; still should you increase and be bettering yourselves in the great business of your lives. It is some work of grace to raise the soul to desire things within the veil; it is more to hope for them; it is more to seize upon them as our right and portion, and 'lay hold of eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 19. This is the great work of our lives, first to raise up the soul and carry it within the veil, to be always increasing our assurance of heaven, and looking after a better life: John ix. 4, 'I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.' Hereafter there is no prophecy, nor labour, nor faith, nor repentance. We have a little time, and a great deal of work, and a great many temptations. It is a great work to get out of a state of nature into a state of grace, to fit ourselves for a better world. Now, because we have no long continuance here, we should be doing it with all our might; therefore let us not forget the main thing, that which is the business and employment of our lives; let not your time pass unfruitfully, for 'the night cometh, wherein no man can work.'

3. Constantly. It is in the present world as long as we are here, without any limitation, and therefore it hints final perseverance, without which as good we had never begun. It is notable that under the law the Nazarite, if he had made a vow, he should touch no wine or anything that was forbidden for so many days or months; but if he had defiled himself before the days of his purification were accomplished, he was to begin again: Num. vi. 12, 'The days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.' So when we have renounced the vanities and delights of the world, and given ourselves to God, all is lost when we turn apostates, and go off from a course of godliness; Ezek. xviii. 24, 'But when the righteous turneth away from his right-

eousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.' As good never have begun if we fall off and tire before we come to the end; nay, in some respect it would have been better if we had never begun than not to have continued; for it is said, 'The latter end is worse with them than the beginning,' 2 Peter ii. 20. A malefactor who hath made an escape out of prison, if he be taken again, he is loaded with chains and irons; so when any have made some show of escape out of the devil's clutches, by keeping a constant course of duty and communion with God, and then turns and breaks off again, none in such bondage and slavery as they. Nay, and this apostasy is a mighty dishonour to Christ, as well as a disadvantage to yourselves; for a man that hath begun to be strict, and careful, and holy, and righteous, and profess himself to be taken out of the kingdom of darkness, and made experience of the ways of Christ, yet if he falls off, he doth as it were after trial pronounce to the world that Satan's service is better than Christ's. As Jacob kept wrestling till daylight appeared, and would not let go his holdfast, so till the morning of glory come, still keep on and continue your courage. Or as Elisha would not leave his master till he was taken from him into heaven, so be constant to the last; let the world know you see no cause to leave Christ or to be weary of his service, and to begrudge the strictness of religion. Mat. xx., you read some were called into the vineyard sooner, some later, but they all kept working to the end and close of the day. There is a different time of calling; some begin with God in infancy, some in riper age, but none must be weary of well-doing. But how apt are we to turn aside from God! Our righteousness must be as the morning light, that always increaseth till high-noon; but our righteousness is like the morning dew, it is gone as soon as the sun breaks out in strength and power. We have a great many resolutions when we begin a course of godliness, but soon grow weary. Look, as a tired horse is ready to turn in at every inn, so upon every occasion and temptation we are ready to turn away from God. But it is not enough to begin to live godly, strictly, righteously, but while life lasteth you must hold on in God's ways; it must be during your whole present state and abode here in the world.

II. The reasons why this duty of our heavenly calling must be in the present world.

1. Because this is the time of grace. There is no other time to get the favour of God and an interest in heaven but here upon earth. Now we have the means, hereafter the recompenses. Now Christ saith, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,' Mat. xi. 28 Hereafter he will say, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,' Mat. xxv. 34. Now he calls us to receive grace, hereafter we must receive either vengeance or glory. In the angels' song we find, Luke ii. 14, 'Peace upon earth.' Here God proclaims tidings of peace and reconciliation to the creature, if it will submit to God. Now the golden sceptre is held out, and you will have no more such a season. This is God the

Father's, God the Son's, and God the Spirit's time, but after this life you shall have it no more; it is the time of God the Father's patience, and these are the days of the gospel when God the Son is offered to us; and now we have the advantage of the Spirit's impulses, and his convictions upon our hearts: but after this life there is neither prophecy, nor gospel, nor conviction, nor means offered any more; then comes recompense and retribution. Zanchy speaks of some which had a fancy that the gospel should be preached hereafter in the other world to those that never heard of Christ in this world; as to children, to Turks and pagans. To justify this conceit, they allege that place: 1 Peter iii. 19, 'By which he went and preached to the spirits in prison.' But that is a clear mistake. The apostle speaks there how the Spirit of God went forth by Noah's preaching in warm conviction upon the hearts of those that are now in prison, that were sometimes disobedient to the warnings of Noah, and are now held with chains of darkness in the prison of hell. But however there is nothing to this world. Now you have the means, and God's golden sceptre is held out. Now Christ saith, Come; but if you refuse, hereafter he will say, Depart: 'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation,' 2 Cor. vi. 1.

2. This is the time of our exercise and trial.

[1.] There must be this exercise before we come to heaven. We do not leap into heaven without any preparation. The vessels of glory must first be seasoned with grace: Col. i. 12, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' First we are qualified and seasoned, then filled brim-full. As when the virgins were chosen for Ahasuerus, they were to accomplish their months of purification, so we must have a time of purifying and cleansing from corruption before we can get to heaven. Balaam would die the death of the righteous, but not live his life: Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' As it is said of the snake, that when it is stricken with death, it stretcheth out itself straight, though crooked before; *at oportuit sic vixisse*, you should have so lived; you should be sober, righteous, and godly. 'Enoch before his translation had this testimony, that he pleased God,' Heb. xi. 5. Something must be done here; there is no triumph without a warfare: 2 Tim. ii. 5, 'If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned unless he strive lawfully;' that is, according to the laws of the race or exercise; so we cannot expect to die in the Lord unless we live in the Lord: Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.' Your works die not when you die: Eccles. xi. 3, 'If the tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth there it shall be.' In the time of the law there was nothing to be gathered upon the sabbath day, but a double portion to be gathered before; those that provided nothing on the sixth day, had nothing on the sabbath day. The sabbath is a figure of heaven, of that eternal rest we shall have there. If we do not make provision during the time of life, there can be nothing done afterwards.

[2.] It is only here; this is the fittest place for exercise. Here are difficulties, snares, and temptations, and these serve to discover the

glory of grace; and this makes it worthy of praise, that we can act for God in the present world, where so many miscarry: 2 Tim. iv. 10, 'Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world.' Here is the fit place for our trial, where we have so many difficulties, snares, baits, avocations, and scandals, to take us off from performing the duty of our heavenly calling. As death leaves us so judgment finds us. Upon our behaviour in the present life both our everlasting woe or weal depends. Hereafter is not a time of labour, but of reward and punishment; there is no room for exercise and trial there, no snares in the next world. Grace cannot be found worthy of praise there, for that is God's day, called the day of the Lord: 2 Peter iii. 10, 'The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.' Here is our day, because God affords time to us as a space and season of repentance and reformation; but the day of judgment, that is the Lord's day, the day of recompense, rewards, and punishments.

Use 1. To reprove them that delay the work of repentance and their change of state. There is nothing more usual than delays and put-offs. Some are full of employment, and after their business is a little over, then they will think of saving their souls: Luke ix. 59, 'Suffer me first to go and bury my father;' still there is something in the way. Others, when they have arrived to such a degree of wealth, and made such provision for their families, then they will look after their souls. Others, when their youthful heats are spent, then they dream of a devout retirement and a religious age; there is nothing more usual. The Lord knows these are our inward thoughts; still there is something in the way when we should act holily, righteously, and godly. This is Satan's last shift to elude the importunity of a present conviction by a future promise. As a bad debtor promises payment for the future to be rid of the importunate creditor, though he means no such matter, so we make promises for the future. Felix, when his conscience boggled, dreams of a more convenient season: Acts xxiv. 25, 'Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient season, I will send for thee.' And Mat. xxii., when they were invited to the wedding, the answer is not scornful, but civil; it is not *non placet*, but *non vacat;* they do not deny, but make excuse; they had present business, and were not at leisure to comply with God's will. Always God comes unseasonably in the sinner's esteem, reckoning, and account: and Satan's usual clamour is, when we begin to be serious and mind our salvation, 'Art thou come to torment us before our time?' Mat. viii. 29. The devil would fain have a little longer possession, and therefore something is pleaded by way of bar and hesitancy. You find it in particular cases; when you go to perform anything that is good, to pray, to meditate, to renew your communion with God, something is in the way. If such a business were over, then I were at leisure. Thus we dream of another time, a more convenient season, and we linger and draw back as Lot in Sodom. Oh! consider, the work must be once done, or you are for ever miserable; and you will never have a better season than now, when you are under conviction, and the warm impulses of the Spirit of God. David takes hold of the present season when his heart was engaged and he had a religious bent towards God: Ps. cxix. 60, 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.' So

when there is such a strong bent in your souls, strike while the iron is hot; you may have more hindrances, but never more helps. Again, we owe more than we are worth already, and why should we run more in debt? The longer you continue in sin, the higher will your accounts rise. A tenant that cannot pay the rent of one year, if he let it run on, how will he be able to discharge the rent of two years? So if it be so troublesome now, do you think it will be more easy hereafter, when the heart is hardened by a constant resistance? If there were a sound conviction you would not delay. A sensible sinner is always in haste: Heb. vi. 18, he flies for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before him. It is an allusion to the man pursued by the avenger of blood; he that hath wrath at his heels, he runs as for life to Jesus Christ. It is but a slender and insufficient touch upon the conscience. He that knows the danger can never make haste enough to come to Christ, as the pursued man could never make too much haste to get into the city of refuge that is before him. Nay, it argues little love to God, and a great deal of disingenuity of spirit, to continue in rebellion against God, and think to come in at last, when you can stand out no longer. This is merely self-love, when you care not how much God is dishonoured and his Spirit grieved, provided at length we be saved. The Lord did not so deal with us; his whole duration and existence is for our sakes; from eternity to eternity he is God, and from eternity to eternity his loving-kindness is great to them that fear him: Ps. ciii. 17, 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting to them that fear him.' If God thinks of us from one eternity to another, before the world and after the world, can we be content to thrust him into a narrow corner of our lives? Can you satisfy your hearts when you have nothing to give God but the rottenness, weakness, and aches of old age and sickness? Consider once more, sin leaves thee in sickness, thou dost not leave sin; it is not a work of choice, but of necessity, as a merchant throws his goods overboard in a storm, though he loves them well enough. At least it is a very suspicious act, a natural aversation from our own misery, and a desire of our own happiness; it is a yielding upon force when a man never yields to God, but when God hath him under, and he can sin no longer. And what assurance have we, that we shall have a heart to mind salvation at all, and turn to God hereafter? When all our distractions are out of the way, is grace at our beck? There is an offer of it to-day: Heb. iii. 15, 'While it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' Nay, there is a shrewd presumption to the contrary, that obduracy, hardness of heart, and despair will grow upon us. Long use makes the heart more obdurate, and long resistance grieves the Spirit of God, and makes him more offended with us. By putting off the change of your lives, you put your souls into Satan's hands by consent for a while. He that delays his conversion doth, as it were, pawn his soul into the devil's hands, and saith, If he do not fetch it again at such a day, it is his for ever. Again, it is a great honour to seek the Lord betimes. Mnason was an old disciple. Seniority in grace is a very great honour. The apostle saith, Rom. xvi. 7, 'Salute Andronicus and Junia, who were in Christ before me.' And the Lord saith, Jer. ii. 2, 'I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thine espousals.' God

prizeth these pure virgin affections, when, before our hearts be prostituted to the world, we apply ourselves to seek his face. You lose the advantage of much early communion with God, whenever you are called to grace; and if ever you taste of the sweetness of grace, it will be your grief that you were acquainted with it no sooner, and all the time that remains will be little enough to repent the loss of that which is past. Consider, a man can never come soon enough into the arms of mercy, nor soon enough out of the power of Satan. Present necessity admits of no deliberation, therefore charge yourselves to be more solid and serious. Sin, if you let it alone, will gather more strength: 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.' When a stick hath been long bent, it will hardly ever be set right again. Some that have been late converted have much bewailed their disadvantage, their standing out so long, till their inclinations were fixed, and that they have got a stubborn nature so strong and ever apt to recoil upon them. Consider, we would not have God to put us off when we come for mercy, and are in present need, and shall we put off God? We would count a delay to be as bad as a denial; therefore take heed of delays in this kind, for if ever you be called to grace, you will smart for it soundly. Christ waited upon the spouse for entrance: Cant. v. 2, 'My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night;' and then the spouse waited for comfort: ver. 6, 'I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone; my soul failed when he spake; I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.' What is the reason, when the work is begun and the first stroke is given to sin, that christians walk so mournfully for a great while? Oh! they have made God wait long, and stood out many a call, therefore the Lord exerciseth them with waiting. Let all this work thee to comply with the importunity of the present conviction of the Holy Ghost.

Use 2. Is to reclaim us when we are greedily set upon other businesses and projects than the great business of our lives, as to get wealth, honour, and great estates. Remember what is thy duty and work in this present world. Consider—

1. The shortness of life. We have a great deal of work to do in a little time, therefore we should not waste it; every day we are nearer to the grave. We are sensible of the decays of others, but not of our own; thou seest others wax old and die, remember thou thyself art going that way. When two ships meet one another in the sea, the other ship seems to sail faster than yours, though both pass away alike, because you are not sensible, or do not observe your own motion. We see others are mortal, but do not number our own days. This is a point of prudence: Ps. xc. 12, 'So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' A man would think of all points that were plainest and soonest learned, yet it is very hard to learn the lesson of our own frailty; I mean, to learn it by heart, to learn it practically.

2. The uncertainty of life. We know not when death will surprise us; it is ill to be taken unprovided; when death comes, to say, Hast thou found me, O my enemy? Every day we have cause to look to

it; more are mistaken in reckoning upon life than upon death. Thou art asleep in the wolf's mouth; there is no remedy but imploring the shepherd's help. A carnal man that goeth on in sin provoketh God to his face, and trieth whether he will cut him off, yea or nay. We are sure to live to enjoy what we provide for heaven, but we are not sure to live to enjoy what we provide for the world. A man may not roast what he took in hunting; but when he cometh to enjoy his estate, God cutteth him off: Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?' And shall my master come and find me idle?

3. After death followeth eternity, the great amazement of the soul. Now, if death find you at peace with God, eternity will be comfortable and death sweet; body and soul part, but God and the soul meet. When we can see angels ready to do their office, and conscience becometh our compurgator, I bear you witness you have spent your time in this world in obeying and serving God; and then body and soul take leave of one another, it is a blessed parting. But now; when you have not regarded your work, you are then delivered up to Satan by such an excommunication as shall never be reversed, accursed till the Lord come; and then body and soul meet to be tormented for ever. It is a sad parting when conscience falls a-raving, and we curse ourselves and the day of our birth. Oh! that ever such a creature were born! Oh! that I had been stifled in the womb, and never seen the light!

4. The necessity of working out our own salvation. God's stipulation with mankind is not made up all of promises; something is required: holiness is the way to salvation. Men that live as they list can claim nothing. The world is a common inn for sons and bastards; in the time of God's patience he keeps open house for just and unjust; but no unclean thing entereth into heaven. At the great rendezvous God maketh a separation: Ps. i. 5, 'The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.' The wicked shall not be able to look Christ in the face, nor veil themselves in the glorious assembly: 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.' Our desires settle into opinions; we think God will not damn his own creatures, and an universal hope is natural.

5. The folly of not doing our business. To get bodily supports is but our errand by-the-by. These souls were not given us to scrape up wealth, and only to provide and purvey for the body; Let us use them to the end that God gave them, to think of eternity: Luke x. 41, 42, 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.' Martha was careful to entertain Christ in her house, but Mary to entertain him in her heart. The one thing needful is the care which every one ought to have of his own salvation. Everything is best that helpeth us on towards heaven, and that is evil that hindereth us in our pursuit of heaven. This will

appear to be the greatest wisdom at length, and not to spend your lives in getting honours or pleasures, or screwing yourselves into the favour of great personages. It is commonly said of a man that hath gotten an estate, that he hath spent his time well; but the apostle commands, Eph. v. 15, 16, 'See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.' Those other are the worst fools, who make no provision for the future; they part with jewels for trifles.

SERMON XII.

Looking for that blessed hope, &c.—TITUS ii. 13.

I OBSERVED—(1.) The teacher, 'The grace of God;' (2.) The lesson, the whole duty of our heavenly calling, 'To deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly,' &c.; (3.) I come to the third general branch, the encouragements to learning; here are two—eternal life, and Christ's death. There are two great principles of obedience—gratitude and hope. Gratitude, or thankfulness, because of the obligation that is left upon us from Christ's death; and then hope, because of the glorious reward that is set before us. So that whether we look backward or forward, we meet with obligations to obedience. Backward, there is an excellent merit: ver. 14, 'Who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity,' &c. Forward, there is a glorious hope: 'Looking for that blessed hope,' &c. There is nothing lost by God's service. The Lord might deal with us out of sovereignty, and rule us with a rod of iron, but he is pleased to 'draw us with the cords of a man, and with bands of love,' Hosea xi. 3; to indent with us and propound rewards, as if we were altogether free before the contract. Men do not use to covenant with their slaves; we are bound to serve him whether there had been any reward or no; but the Lord will not leave us without an encouragement. We are apt to have hard thoughts of God, and to think him harsh and austere, requiring work but not giving wages. But consider, we have the highest motives as well as the noblest work; we are not only 'to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world,' but 'to look to the blessed hope.' Life and immortality is brought to light by the gospel. There is no such encouragement to virtuous living anywhere as in the gospel. Lactantius saith of the heathens, *Virtutis vim non sentiunt, cujus præmium ignorant*—They do not feel the force and transforming power of virtue, because they are ignorant of the reward of virtue. The heathens had no such encouragement as immortality and eternal life, and the happy enjoyment of God and Christ for evermore.

But to handle the words a little more distinctly. We have here—(1.) The reward itself, called a 'blessed hope;' then (2.) The time when it shall be accomplished to the full, at the 'coming of the Lord.' Both these things you must look for. Christians, as often as you think

of eternal life, you must also think of Christ's appearing. Before we enter into glory we must first give an account. Carnal men fancy a heaven without a day of judgment; they would be saved, but they would not be called to an audit and reckoning with God. Many can brook sitting upon the throne with Christ, but not coming before his tribunal; but they that would live holily must look for both the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of Christ. Many points may be observed out of this verse.

Doct. 1. That looking for the blessed hope conduceth much to the advancement of the spiritual life.

1. What this looking is.

2. What influence and power it hath to work us to the spiritual life.

I. What this looking is. It implies patience, but chiefly hope.

1. Patience in waiting God's leisure. Patience is a grace very needful in our pilgrimage, where we are exercised with so many difficulties: Heb. x. 36, 'For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.' You do not only need holiness, but patience. It is long before we can bring our hearts to do the will of God; but after that is done, you have need of patience, that you may wait God's leisure for your reward; for the reward is not given till there be time for labour and exercise, and troubles coming on make time seem very long. Whatever grace we may spare, we cannot spare patience if we would persist in well-doing, for we are to wait for the blessed hope. The good ground 'bringeth forth fruit with patience,' Luke viii. 15. Look, as the ground endures the plough, the harrow, the cold, the frost, that in due time the seed may spring up, so we have need of patience that we may wait upon God for the blessed hope. And as patience is very needful in the present life, so it is inseparable from hope; 1 Thes. i. 3, it is called 'the patience of hope.' To every grace he gives a proper action; there is 'the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope.' Faith propounds work, love makes us to labour and sweat at it, and hope makes us wait with patience for our reward and recompense: Rom. viii. 25, 'But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' What we hope for we wait with patience for; between hope and having there is an intervening time to exercise patience. There is want of the thing desired, and delays are troublesome. Now to keep looking is a work of patience.

2. It chiefly implies hope. This looking for is the formal act of hope, an actual expectation of blessedness to come. Now, because there is a bastard and blind hope, and there is a regular and good hope—2 Thes. ii. 16, 'Who hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace'—therefore let me tell you—(1.) What this expectation is not; (2.) What it is.

[1.] Negatively, what it is not.

(1.) It is not a blind hope, such a hope as is found in men ignorant and presumptuous, that regard not what they do. Presumption is a child of darkness, as hope is a child of light; presumption is the fruit of ignorance and inconsideration. When men are once serious, they find it the hardest matter in the world to hope; for guilty nature in itself is more presageous of evil, more inclinable to fear and sorrow, than

to joy and hope. But yet a blind confidence is very common, because men do not consider what they do, but hand-over-head make a full account that they shall go to heaven, without warrant and without evidence. And therefore you shall find it is one of the first things God works by the word, to break down our former carnal hopes, and make men see they are out of the way, lost and undone creatures. Paul in his presumptuous state thought he had as much to show for heaven as any man in the world: Rom. vii. 9, 'I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' The commandment coming in full conviction upon his heart, he began to be serious, and then he found himself lost and obnoxious to God's judgment. The excellency of hope doth not lie in the strength of confidence, but in the clearness of your ground and warrant. In Mat. vii. latter end, the scripture takes notice of two builders, the foolish and the wise; there was no difference in the building itself; both might raise a structure equally fair; but the difference lay in the groundwork and foundation; the one built upon the sand, the other upon a rock: therefore you are not to look so much to the strength of your hope, as to the evidence, the ground, the foundation of it. Do you know what you do when you so confidently believe your salvation? Presumption grows upon men they know not how; it is not an act of advice and consideration, and therefore will leave us to shame. A man had need have good grounds for his hope. True hope is a serious act, arising from grace, longing after its perfection; and therefore we are said 'to be begotten to a lively hope,' 1 Peter i. 3. Seed desireth growth; everything aimeth at perfection. When grace is infused, presently there is a tendency and motion this way. Others may have strength of confidence, though a weak foundation whereon to build it, therefore their hope comes to nothing but shame and the greater confusion. Job viii. 14, the hope of the hypocrite is compared to a spider's web. Oh! what a curious web doth she spin out of her own bowels! But as soon as the besom comes, down goes the spider and the web too; both are swept away and trodden under foot. So it is with hypocrites; they spin a fine web out of their own bowels, conceive rash but strong hope, a hope of their own forming and making; but when death comes, the man dies, and his hopes die with him. So Prov. xi. 7, 'When a wicked man dies, his expectation shall perish; and the hope of the unjust man perisheth.' It is not meant only of his worldly expectations, though that is true; he that aspired to be great, and to feather his nest, and excel in the world, when he dies, all his plots and projects die with him; but it is meant of his heavenly hopes; when they come to enter upon their everlasting state, then they are sensible of their mistake. We are more sensible of what is near at hand than what is at a distance. Men grow wise when they come to die. Eternity is near at hand, and men begin to awake as out of their dream, and lose all their confidence; and when they thought they were full, they find themselves hungry. Again, the hope of the hypocrite is compared to the giving up of the ghost: Job xi. 20, 'Their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.' When the frame of nature is dissolved, it is done with bitter gripes and pain; the soul in a moment takes an everlasting farewell of the body; so all the hopes of the wicked vanish and are lost in an instant, and they are full

of horror and sad despair. It is the greatest evil that can befall you, to lose all your hopes in an instant. Well, then, this looking for the blessed hope is not a slender imagination, an unadvised rash confidence, such as is lost whenever we begin to be serious, either by the conviction of the word or the approaches of death.

(2.) It is not some glances upon heaven, such as are found in worldly and sensual persons. Sometimes worldly men have their *lucida intervalla*, their good moods, and now and then have some sober thoughts of heaven that rush into their mind. Balaam had his wishes: Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' And the apostle speaks of some that had a taste, Heb. vi. 4, snatch now and then some savour of the sweetness of heaven and spiritual comforts. A wretched worldling, in whose fancy the world plays all the day, riseth with him, goeth to bed with him, yet now and then hath his wishes, and some sudden raptures of soul, some flashes and motions; but alas! this is not the looking for the blessed hope, for that is a constant viewing of happiness to come. Sudden motions are not operative; they come but now and then, and leave no warmth upon the soul, as fruit is not ripened that hath but a glance of the sun; and you know a sudden light rather blinds a man than shows him his way; so these sudden flashes, enlightenings, and heavenly thoughts vanish, and leave a man never the better.

(3.) It is not a loose hope, a possible salvation, that can have such an efficacy upon the soul to urge and incline it to the spiritual life: James i. 8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.' When a man is double-minded, divided and distracted between hopes and fears, there will be much irregularity and unevenness in his conversation; he will be off and on with God. As their hearts are up and down and divided, because the success is doubtful, so also is their care of strictness weakened and broken: 1 Cor. ix. 26, 'I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.' He alludes to the Isthmian games. In an ordinary race a man might run and be outstripped; the event was very uncertain, he might miss of the goal; if the other sensibly got ground, then he was discouraged, and began to slack his pace out of hope; but, saith the apostle, 'I run not as one that is uncertain.' Here we are all sure to obtain, though we cannot keep pace with the foremost: and this is that which quickens industry, and stirs up those holy endeavours. The surer your hope is, the greater strength you find, and the greater power upon your conversation. Thus it is not a blind hope, or some glances upon heaven and the blessed things to come, that rush into the mind of a cursed worldling, nor a loose hope and bare conjecture; a possible salvation hath not such efficacy and power upon the soul.

[2.] Positively, what this expectation is of blessedness to come. It is an earnest and lively hope, a solid expectation of blessedness to come; and it bewrays itself by three things—serious thoughts, earnest groans, and lively tastes.

(1.) By frequent and serious thoughts. Thoughts are the spies and messengers of hope sent into the promised land to bring the soul tidings of what is to come. It is impossible for a man to hope for anything, but his mind will run upon it, and he will be thinking of it. We

find it in all earthly matters, that hope sets the mind on work; and so we preoccupy and forestall the contentments that we expect; we enjoy them before they come by serious contemplation, feasting the soul with images and suppositions of the happiness we shall have when we come to fruition. Contemplation of heaven is the feast of the soul. Hope brings in the image and suppositions of what is to come as if it were already present. Certainly wherever the treasure is, the heart, the thoughts will be there. Hope carries the mind above the clouds, in the midst of the glory of the world to come, as if we did see Christ upon his white throne, and Paul with his crown of righteousness, and all the faithful ones in Abraham's bosom. If a beggar were adopted into the succession of a crown, would he not please himself in forethinking of the happiness, honour, and pleasure of the kingly state? So we vile creatures, that are adopted to be co-heirs with Christ, if we did hope to be heirs of the kingdom of heaven, heaven would have more of our thoughts, and take up more of the musings of our souls. We should still observe what we muse upon most. Carnal thoughts, and carnal projects discover a carnal heart; when we are always thinking of plucking down barns and building greater, advancing our families and providing worldly increase; when we are talking to ourselves, as Luke xii. 18, 'He thought within himself, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns, and build greater,' &c. The word διελογίζετο signifies he was framing dialogues with himself of bestowing his goods; this shows a carnal heart. So James iv. 13, 'To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.' It is usual with men to live upon the reversion of their hopes, and feed themselves with the pleasure thereof. As young heirs spend upon their hopes, and run out their estates ere they possess them, so doth the soul, either in matters carnal or heavenly, still feed upon its hopes. And therefore if there be such an earnest hope, you will be entertaining your spirits with suppositions of heaven, and framing images of the glory of the world to come.

(2.) It bewrays itself by hearty sighs, and groanings, and longings after this happiness: Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but 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.' They that have once tasted of the clusters of Canaan, that have the first-fruits of the Spirit, have tasted of the goodness and sweetness of God in Christ, think they can never be soon enough with him in heaven. When shall it once be? They are still looking out; and the nearer they come to enjoyment, the more impatient they are of the want. As natural motions are swiftest in the end—a stone, the nearer it is to the centre, it moves the faster—so the longer a christian lives in Christ, the more he sends forth his desires and heart after his happiness, and therefore groans, waiting for the revelation of the sons of God, and for this blessed hope. The apostle says, 'The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God,' Rom. viii. 19. The word ἀποκαραδοκία signifies a lifting up of the head, as we are wont to put out our head to see if we can spy a thing a great way off; as Judges v. 28, Sisera's mother and the ladies 'looked

out at the window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming?' as if they would spy him afar off. So the soul is still looking out: When will the change come? when will it once be? They would have a fuller draught of the consolations of the Spirit, more freedom from sin, and a more entire love of God: they have had some taste already, therefore they long for the increase and full perfection of it.

(3.) By lively tastes and feelings. It is said of a believer, 'He hath eternal life,' John iii. 36; that is, in the beginnings of it; he hath some taste here upon earth. Hope is called not only living, but 'lively hope,' 1 Peter i. 3, because it quickens the heart, and fills it with a solid spiritual joy; and Rom. v. 2, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' It is a joy that is for enjoyment and possession. In worldly things there is pain and travail, and burdensome expectation till we come to enjoy a thing; but a christian rejoiceth in his hopes. So 1 Peter i. 8, 'In whom believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' It is true all feel it not in such a degree; it depends on a sense of grace, which all believers have not always; but all believers, whenever they meditate upon heaven, they find sweetness shed abroad in their hearts when they think what is provided for them by Christ. Worldly hope is only as a dream of a shadow; there is pain and travail in expectation, and there is no satisfaction when we come to fruition; but our hopes in Christ fill the soul with this lively joy. Look, as the patriarchs that waited for the coming of Christ, the consolation of Israel, they hugged the promises: oh! here is a sweet promise that will yield a Messiah at length, that shall save the world! Thus they rejoiced in what they foresaw concerning Christ in vision, type, and figure. So christians that wait for happiness and blessedness to come, how do they find a great deal of sweetness shed abroad in their hearts by meditating upon their hope.

II. To show the influence it hath upon the spiritual life.

1. It purgeth the heart from lusts and the filthiness of sin: 1 John iii. 3, 'Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.' How doth this hope make him purify himself? Thus; the things we look for are all holy and pure; it is a great part of our portion in heaven to be freed from sin, to be consorts of the immaculate Lamb. Now the soul will say thus, Do I look upon this as my happiness? Do I hope to be like Christ hereafter, and be freed from the burden of corruption, and can indulge and allow these lusts in my heart? A man hopes for nothing *de futuro* which he would not presently compass were it in his power. We do not look for a sensual paradise, but for a pure and blissful estate, that is made up of sinlessness and purity; and therefore, whoever hath set his heart upon the hopes of christianity, the vision of God, and fruition of Christ, he must needs begin here, especially since God hath required preparation; here we are to be made meet, seasoned and qualified, to accomplish the months of our purification, to prepare ourselves more and more for these glorious hopes.

2. It withdraws our hearts from present things: Phil. iii. 20, 'Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.' A christian lives in the earth as if he were in the

midst of the angels. We are weaned from the world by looking for better things, and so the world is outshined. As a man that hath looked upon the sun, his eyes are dazzled, and cannot see an object less glorious, so when we look within the veil upon our blessed hopes, the glory of the world is obscured. The apostle renders this as a reason why Abraham was a stranger in the promised land, there where he had most right, yet he dwelt in tents: Heb. xi. 9, 10, 'For he looked for a city which hath foundations.' Abraham had other expectations; he did not look upon the walled cities of the Amorites, but upon heaven that was founded by God himself; he had other thoughts. They that live to the world and to the flesh never tasted what eternal life means. Look, as the Israelites longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt before they had tasted the clusters of Canaan, so here the heart is carried out after better things. The soul must have some oblectation and delight, for love cannot be idle; it is carried out to present things if we know no better. See how fitly they are joined together in the text: 'Denying worldly lusts, and looking for the blessed hope;' thereby do we come to deny worldly lusts, by looking for the blessed hope. We should soon return to worldly lusts if we do not often look up and consider what God hath provided for us in heaven. A man whose heart is much in heaven, his affections are pre-engaged, and therefore the world doth him little hurt. Birds are seldom taken in their flight, but when they pitch and rest. Oh! if we had more of these heavenly flights; if the soul did mount upward more, it would better escape the snares of worldly things.

3. It urgeth to care, diligence, and constancy in obedience. Hope is the great spring that sets the wheels a-going: Phil. iii. 13, 14, 'Forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forward towards those things that are before, I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ.' What is the reason Paul was so earnest that a little grace would not content him, but he was striving for more so earnestly and zealously? He was called to enjoy a high prize, a glorious reward. There is an excellent glory set before us; this race is not for trifles. Christians are the more cold and careless in the spiritual life because they do not oftener think of heaven. The end quickens to the use of means; as it is the measure of the means, so it sweetens the means, notwithstanding all difficulty. Why? Because it will bring us to such an end: 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as you know your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.' You can never do enough for the Lord. Why? 'Your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' This will make you to be instant and earnest, and to hold out to the end in the midst of difficulties; heaven will pay for all. You have no cause to begrudge God any service; though it put the body to pains and labours, do not spare it; Christ will honour it sufficiently. The apostle hath an expression, 2 Thes. i. 10, 'That Christ will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.' The soul will remember the body as Pharaoh's butler did Joseph. How? In prayer and fasting and holy exercises. And when Christ comes to raise the body, he will put so much glory and clarity upon it that the angels shall stand wondering what Christ is about to do with a poor creature

that is but newly crept out of dust and rottenness. Before a feast we use to take a walk. There is a world of glory provided for us in heaven. Though the work of God be painful, yet it is very fruitful. God will reward you as much as you can desire; and this makes you to be earnest and zealous, and to labour in the spiritual life. We compare the pains of duty with the pleasure of sin, but the comparison is not rightly made; you should compare the pleasure of sin with the reward. I confess you may compare Christ's worst with the world's best, the pains of duty with the pleasure of sin; the former is more sweet to a gracious heart; but the comparison should rather be made thus: compare the base dreggy pleasures of sin with those pure pleasures that are at God's right hand, and with the happiness that is to come, which we expect in Christ.

4. It maketh us upright and sincere in what we do. That is hypocrisy and guile of spirit to look asquint upon secular rewards. You know the hypocrites that Christ taxeth, when they pray, fast, and do other duties to be seen of men, 'they have their reward,' Mat. vi. 2. They have given God a discharge, they look for no more than they have already. As hired servants must have present wages and pay in hand, they wait not for the inheritance as children do. So carnal affections they look to the rewards here below. If they may have the world, and live in honour and pleasure here, they give God an acquittance for anything else. But now this is sincerity to make God our paymaster to do all we do upon the encouragement of the blessed hope: Col. iii. 24, 'Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ.' You have a master good enough, you need not look elsewhere for your wages. And nothing on this side heaven will satisfy the soul, nothing but these glorious hopes.

5. This blessed hope supports the soul under afflictions and difficulties that do befall us in a course of godliness. We counterbalance what we feel with what we expect. We feel nothing but trouble, yet it is not in vain to serve God. I confess we are apt to think so. Saith David, Ps. lxxiii. 13, 14, 'Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.' My innocency is to no purpose: Mal. iii. 14, 'Ye have said, It is in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance?' It is a usual temptation, for we measure all things by sense and feeling, and sense makes lies of God. Ah! but consider, that which you feel is not worthy to be named the same day with that which you hope for: Rom. viii. 18, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' Glory is revealed to our ears in the gospel, but it will be revealed in us hereafter: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Alas! this light affliction is but the scratch of a pin compared with the weighty massy crown of glory; for, saith the apostle, 'we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.' Christians, what do you make your scope? (for that is the word *σκοπούντων ἡμῶν*). Is it to preserve your interest, to live delicately? Then the blessed hope is not for your turn. But when you have fixed your hopes upon these

things, you will see this is but a small matter in comparison of what God hath provided for you. A christian's blessings are future, his crosses are present; therefore we need some support. Now hope is of great use in affliction and temptations; this appears by the comparisons that are used; it is called an anchor in the stormy gusts of temptations, and a helmet in all spiritual conflicts. There are fightings without and fears within; here is a helmet, here is an anchor; hope is the anchor of the soul; and the apostle reckons up all the properties of a good anchor; it must be firm, sharp, and enter into good ground; so saith he, 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.' Here is a sure holdfast, upon good ground; it is a weighty anchor, which will not bow nor break. Mariners when they have cast out a good anchor, which is fastened to the ship with a strong cable, they sleep quietly; though the winds blow, and the storms and tempests arise, they know the anchor will keep them from floating and dashing upon the rocks; so hope is a good anchor. Then it is a helmet: Eph. vi. 19, 'And take the helmet of salvation,' that is, hope; 1 Thes. v. 8, 'And for an helmet the hope of salvation.' The apostle reckons up all the pieces of the spiritual armour; faith, that is a shield for the body; but hope that is a helmet for the head. As long as we can lift up our heads, and look up to heaven, we are safe whatever befalls us; it will hold out in the midst of all the fiery darts that are cast at us.

6. This looking for the blessed hope is of use to resist temptations. Sin makes many promises, and so prevaileth by carnal hopes. Balaam was moved to curse God's people against his conscience; but when he boggled and stuck at it, Come, saith Balak, I will give thee gold and silver; this puts quickening into him. The fool in the gospel promised himself long life: Luke xii. 19, 'Soul, soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.' So Jer. xliv. 17, 'We will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.' And so the devil comes to Christ, and makes the temptation as strong as he can: Mat. iv. 8, 9, 'He showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' And Babylon's fornication was presented in a golden cup; there are baits of honour and preferment to draw them to popery and heresy. Now faith sets promise against promise, and heaven against earth, and the pleasure at God's right hand against carnal delight. As one nail drives out another, so one hope and one promise drives out another. Carnal motions are defeated by spiritual promises, and those motions that are presented to the soul.

SERMON XIII.

Looking for, &c.—TITUS ii. 13.

USE 1. Information.

1. It informs us that we may look for the reward. Those men would be wiser than God that deny us a liberty to make use of the Spirit's motives; they begrudge God's bounty. To what end should God propound rewards but that we should close with them by faith? Graces may be exercised about their proper objects without sin. It requireth some faith to aim at things not seen. The world is drowned in sense and present satisfactions; they are mercenaries that must have pay in hand; their souls droop if they do not meet with credit, applause, and profit; they make man their paymaster; they have the spirit of a servant, that prizes present wages above the inheritance; but it is the work of grace to look for the blessed hope, and a great help to us in our work. It was the comfort of Christ's human soul: Heb. xii. 2, 'Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.' Christ as man was to have rational comforts and human encouragements. Nothing is sinful but coveting the reward whilst we neglect the work; when we will be *mercenarii*, but not *operarii*; we would receive the reward, but not do our work. We are all born libertines; we would sever the reward from the duty: Hosea x. 11, 'Ephraim is an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn,' but not to break the clods; in treading out the corn there was pleasure and profit, but in breaking the clods pain and labour. Or else we sin in having a carnal notion of heaven; our looking for heaven is like their looking for Christ as the consolation of Israel. Some of the Jews look for a carnal Messiah; so do many christians for a carnal heaven, for base pleasures, fleshly delights. Such hopes debase the heart. It is the privilege of our profession that we have a sublime hope. Or else we sin in looking for the reward as the fruit of merit; if we expect it as wages for work done, we are mercenaries. Sin and death are as work and wages: Rom. vi. 23, 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Eternal life is a donative. What is the reason of this difference? Because wicked men stand upon their own bottom, but Christ hath obtained this privilege for us. Wicked works are ours, merely evil, but the good we do is by God's grace, as a servant tradeth with his master's estate. I am bound to do good, and am forbidden to sin; when I do that which is forbidden, I deserve punishment; but when I do that which is commanded, I do not deserve a reward, because I am bound to do it: Jude 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' It is mercy that we are called, mercy that we are glorified; neither before conversion nor after conversion do we deserve anything. We serve a good master, he hath provided comforts for us, not only against our misery, but our unworthiness; we have not only glory as a reward, but mercy as the cause of it, glory out of the hands of mercy. Thus must you look for the reward, and build your

hopes of it. As you pray, so must you expect. Now you will not pray, Lord! give me heaven, for I deserve it; natural conscience would blush at the immodesty of such a request. Who would not have the title of inheritance rather than of hire? Again, our own happiness must not be our ultimate end. Man was made for a twofold end—to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever; they must both go together; we must desire the enjoyment of God that we may glorify God to all eternity, otherwise interest swayeth us more than duty. First, we love God out of interest, and are drawn with the cords of a man; as first the fire is kindled, and then it sendeth forth much smoke; afterwards we love God out of pure affection; at length, as the new nature gathers strength and perfection, men rejoice in God's glory as much as in their own salvation; it is a simple act of adoration. In heaven it will be so, we shall rejoice in God's glory as much as in our our own interest and profit.

2. It informs us of the reason why the world and sin have such a power over men, why they lie under the power of present things; we do not awaken our hopes, and consider blessedness to come so much as we should. It is not only a difference between sinners and saints, but between christian and christian; one is more heavenly than another. As there is a difference between ordinary subjects and courtiers; those that are always in their prince's eye and company are more polite in their manners than others, so the oftener the soul is in God's court, the more holy; our hopes will have an influence upon our practice. It is hope that carries the soul aloft out of the reach of temptation, as birds when flying on high in the air need not fear nets nor snares nor the craft of the fowler. Keep hope alive, and then a christian cannot fail: Heb. iii. 6, 'Whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end.' If a man had such a lively hope, and some taste and feeling of heaven and blessedness to come, and a constant groaning after them; if we could but glory in our hopes as much as if we had present possession, then we need not fear miscarrying.

3. It informs us that it is a false hope that doth not urge to practice and strictness of life. Some men make full account to go to heaven, but make no preparation for it; their course is another way; there is not only an unsuitableness to their hopes, but a contrariety. If there were only an unsuitableness, it were enough to discover the cheat, for we are 'to be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,' Col i. 12, and 'to walk worthy of God, who hath called us to his kingdom and glory,' 1 Thes. ii. 12, and 'to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,' Eph. iv. 1. There is a suitableness between a man and his great hopes. When David was a shepherd, he spent his time in keeping his father's sheep, and had the heart of a shepherd; but when he was called to be king, then he behaved himself like a king, like a shepherd of the people. So a christian discovers his hopes in his disposition and in his practice, and doth walk as an heir of the grace of life. There may be a slight hope which hath no efficacy, but those serious sighs and hearty groans I speak of, certainly they will work a suitableness in the temper of our hearts and the constitution of our souls, and we shall be more holy; there will be more

worthy walking, more detestation of sin, more contempt of the world, more diligence in the spiritual life. When you walk as if your hopes were altogether in this world, when princes in scarlet embrace a dunghill, when those that are called to great and glorious hopes live as if their happiness were only here below, heaping up wealth, treasure, and worldly conveniences to themselves, it is a lamentation. If you saw a man labouring in filthy ditches, and sullying himself as poor men do with mire and dirt, who would believe he were an heir-apparent to a crown, and called to inherit a kingdom? So when we live as men of the world, when there is an unsuitableness between us and our hopes, how do we walk as the heirs of grace? But now, when there is not only an unsuitableness, but an open contrariety in their practice, and yet they think to go to heaven, it is as if a man whose journey lay north should travel just south. Can that man look to be filled up with God when God is not in all his thoughts? Can he long for the company of Christ that slights his ordinances; Can he prize the communion of saints to whom good company is a prison? Can he look for an immaculate and sinless state to whom purity is an eye-sore, and who hates the power of godliness? Yet many such deceive themselves with false hopes, when there is not only unsuitableness, but a plain contrariety.

4. It informs us that an assured interest in heaven is no ground of looseness or laziness. Comfort serves to quicken, but not to slacken our endeavours. The more we look for heaven, the more it engageth us to strictness of life. The apostle, after he had professed his assurance, 'We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord,' 2 Cor. v. 8. What then? ver. 9, 'Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' Here is a sure recompense; our great care is that we may live and die in his grace, because we are confident we shall live with the Lord when we depart from the body: Jude 21, 'Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' When God is so gracious in Christ, providing such great things for such unworthy creatures as eternal life, and we come to receive glory out of the hands of mercy, what a mighty engagement is this to make us watch against all decays and coolings of love.

Use 2. To exhort us to this expectation or looking for the blessed hope. The method and way is first to believe, then to apply, then to expect.

1. Believe it, that there is such a happiness reserved for the children of God. Next to God's being we are bound to believe his bounty: Heb. xi. 6, 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' These two principles, that God is, and that he is a rewarder, are the fundamental notions that keep up all religion. There is a mist upon eternity to a carnal heart; they are led by sense, and believe no more than they see: Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' Fancy and nature cannot outsee time and look beyond death. Faith holdeth the candle to hope, and then we are able to look into the other world, and to see a happy state to come. Now because faith is weak in most, and we waver more in the belief of God's bounty than of

his being, his Godhead is manifested by present sensible effects, but we scruple his rewards, which are wholly to come; therefore let us strengthen and help faith as much as we can. The word is clear in this point. Now God hath been true in all things: *Fidelis in omnibus, in ultimo non deficiet*—He that hath been faithful in all things will not fail us at last. The calling of the gentiles, the rejection of the Jews, the sending of the Messiah, these were things as invisible and as much to come as heaven is to us; now all these things have been fulfilled, and why should we not trust God to the last? Experience is wont to beget hope: Rom. v. 4, 'And patience, experience; and experience, hope.' Can God lie, or truth itself be false? What need hath God to flatter thee or deceive thee? If we did preach a God that needed the creatures, then you might suspect what we tell you in his name; but he hath no interest to be gratified; his vehement longings are for your good and profit: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their children for ever.' God doth not say that it may be well with me, but with them. Again, let reason be heard to speak how suitable it is to God's nature. Consider, the being of God is infinite and eternal, and so is the reward; the apostle calls it, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Araunah gave like a king. God's gifts are like himself, suitable to his infinite mercy and eternal duration; how likely is it that God will once show himself like himself! And they are suitable to the merit of Christ. Is God at such expense for trifles? The comforts of this world may be bought with gold and silver, but the apostle saith, 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, &c., but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' Why would God give so great a price out of his own treasury, but to take a debt upon himself, and to oblige his justice to be our friend? If Christ can be in the womb and in the grave, why may not we be in heaven? It is more credible to believe that a creature should be in heaven than a God should be in the grave; and Christ's abasement (which is first) is more than our advancement. There is not so great a distance between us and happiness as between Christ and misery. Men naturally being made capable of a higher condition of mind and affections, to love and know God, godliness must have a better recompense than is to be had in the world. These are but the offals of providence, enjoyed by God's enemies; they have the greatest share: Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men of the world, which have their portion in this life.' The wiser men are, the more they contemn these things; children are taken with rattles. Grace cannot be satisfied with the world without a higher enjoyment of God. Pleasures are common to us with the beasts; wicked men flow in ease and plenty. A reward there must be; it is impossible a creature should rest in its own action. We see that natural actions that tend to maintain life have a sweetness and pleasure mingled with them, that we may not neglect them, or our own preservation, as eating and drinking, and the like; therefore virtuous actions, much more such as are against the hair and bent of nature, must have a reward, a reward better than the work, or else it would be lost labour. There is a dis-

position and instinct of nature towards eternal happiness. Man's soul like a sponge is thirsty, and seeketh to be satisfied: Ps. iv. 6, 'Who will show us any good?' And every good will not serve their turn. Men at first take up with the creature, because it is next at hand, but it satisfieth not; their sore runneth till they come to enjoy God: Acts xvii. 27, 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they may feel after him, and find him.' When we have all outward blessings, the soul of man is not filled up; there is something wanting to our peace and quiet. Solomon made experiments, but had no satisfaction. Thus you see there is no such reward so suitable to what is declared of God, of Christ, of the nature of man, of grace, as this blessed hope.

2. Apply it. Besides the truth of the promises, look to the clearing up of your own interest and title. It is a poor comfortless meditation to think of a blessed hope, and the certainty of it, unless we have an interest in these things; this will be but like the gaze of an hungry man upon a feast. The reprobates hereafter are lookers-on, and David speaks of a table spread for him 'in the presence of his enemies,' Ps. xxiii. 5. Hope hath never a more lively influence than when it is founded in property and a sense of our own interest: Job xix. 25, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth;' and 2 Cor. v. 1, '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;' 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.' There is not only an heaven, but for me. Thus are the saints wont to profess their interest and assured hope. But is hope only the fruit of assurance? I answer—It is the fruit of faith, as well as of assurance or experience; but certainly it is very comfortable when we can discern our own interest, and in some sort necessary. Before we can hope for ourselves, our qualification is to be supposed, for that is our evidence. Therefore I shall—(1.) Press you to get this assurance; (2.) Show what kind of application is absolutely required, that you may thus look for the blessed hope.

[1.] Let me press you to get an assured title to heaven. In a matter of such moment, would a man be at an uncertainty? Can he be quiet and not sure of heaven? Not to look after it is a bad sign. A godly man may want it, but a godly man cannot slight it. A man may want it, he may creep to heaven; some are 'scarcely saved,' 1 Peter iv. 18. Others have 'an abundant entrance;' 2 Peter i. 10, 11, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' For want of this you quite lose your heaven upon earth, which consisteth in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; and you lose much of the influence of hope. Uncertain wavering thoughts have little efficacy. But a good man cannot slight it; it is a breach of a command which requireth diligence. It argueth spiritual security when men can be content to live long, and yet do not know what will become of them. How can you think of the coming of Christ without terror? That which others look for and long for is your fear; as Felix trembled as soon as he heard of judgment to come.

[2.] I shall tell you what application there must be if we cannot attain to assurance. There are three degrees of application beneath assurance—

(1.) Acceptation of God's offer, that is one degree of application: Job v. 27, 'Hear it, and know thou it for thy good.' Put in for these hopes; and take God on his word; stipulate with him, and undertake thy part of the covenant upon a confidence God will not fail thee. As Moses, when the book of the law was read, Exod. xxiv. 6, 'took half the blood and sprinkled it on the altar,' to show that God undertook to bless them; and ver. 8, 'the other half he sprinkled on the people,' by which they were engaged to obey. There must be in all christians 'the answer of a good conscience,' 1 Peter iii. 21.

(2.) Adherence. Stick close to this hope in a course of obedience. If we do God's work, we shall not fail of wages: 1 Cor. ix. 26, 'I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.'

(3.) Affiance, resting, waiting upon God, though with some doubts and fears, for the revelation of this glory. Though you cannot say, It is yours, yet wait with hope till your change come, looking for the mercy of Christ, so that you durst venture your soul in that bottom. This is 'committing our souls to him in well-doing, as to a merciful and faithful Creator,' 1 Peter iv. 19. You put your souls into God's hands that made them.

3. Expect it. This is the formal act of hope which is pressed in the text. This hope and expectation of blessedness is the strength of the inward man. The devils have a faith, but because it is without hope it yieldeth no refreshment: James ii. 19, 'Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble.' The word signifies such a trembling as the raging of the sea; it is a light that does not refresh, but scorch. There would be comfort in hell if there could be hope there. It is the duty now in season; here we must expect: Rom. viii. 24, 'We are saved by hope.' In innocency there was little or no use of hope, and in heaven there will be none at all; the object of man's happiness will be present and enjoyed; but now all is to come; we have only a taste and pledge to make us long for more and expect more. Faith by hope maketh them present substance: Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for.' Things of eternal life seem as a shadow and fiction to a carnal heart. This hope is an earnest elevation of the mind to look for what faith counteth real.

Use 3. To direct us how to look for this blessed hope.

1. Consider it. Hope is a temperate ecstasy, a survey of the land of promise. As God said to Abraham, Gen. xiii. 14, 15, 'Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward, and eastward and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever;'. so Ps. xlviii. 12, 'Walk about Zion, and go round about her, tell the towers thereof.' It is a great advantage to think often of heaven, it maketh it present to us. Heaven deserveth our best thoughts. We should always do it; in the morning it were a good preservative to keep us from being under the power of present things: Ps. xvii. 15, 'I shall be satisfied when I

awake with thy likeness.' In some special seasons doth hope set the mind a-work. In times of trouble and present sufferings we enjoy a happy dedolency; the mind is untouched, whatever the body suffereth. When we are summoned to the grave, and bodily sicknesses put you in mind of death, when sense and speech fail, the love of God never fails; this pale horse is sent from Christ to carry us to glory; and though we go down to the grave to converse with worms and skulls, this hope may comfort us, 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.'

2. Long for it. Hope cannot be without groans. Every day wind up your affections, for here is nothing but conflicts and sorrows. Love to Christ cannot be without him, it will never be content. Nature desires perfection: Col. iii. 1, 2, '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 on the earth.' There is our God, our Christ, our rest: 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,' Mat. vi. 22; not only the mind, but the heart; what we are much thinking of, the desires will be working that way. The new nature cannot be without these desires; everything tendeth thither whence it came: Eph. i. 3, 'Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings ἐν τοῖς οὐρανιοῖς, in heavenly places.' God sits in heaven that dispenseth grace, Christ that conveyeth it; thence come our mercies, comforts, and joys; therefore it is against the tendency of the new nature not to be tending thither, where Christ is, who is our greatest happiness. There is your father, your elder brother, the best of the family, and your spiritual relations, whom you most valued; the best company is in the other world. Here you have maintenance as in a foreign land, but there is your interest and estate. How unworthy soever we are, there is infinite mercy to give it, there it acts like itself; infinite merit to purchase it, there we receive the full fruits of our redemption; and the present fruits of the Spirit are the earnest of it, as an earnest is something in part of a greater sum.

3. Wait for it. There are groans of expectation as well as of desire. You have a fair charter granted by God the Father, written with the blood of Christ, sealed by the Spirit. To make your expectation more firm, consider—

[1.] Christ's goodness and mercy: 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life,' Jude 21. He never discovered any backwardness to thy good, or inclination to thy ruin.

[2.] God's faithfulness: Heb. ix. 18, 19, 'That by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation.' God stands more on his word than on heaven and earth. If an honest man has made a promise of anything, he will make it good; much more may we depend on the faithful God.

[3.] God's power. If our souls were in our own keeping, we might fear; but 'we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,' 1 Peter i. 5. Abraham, being persuaded of God's power, 'against hope believed in hope,' Rom. iv. 18.

[4.] Christ's merit and intercession: Rom. viii. 34, 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' By his merit our right to heaven is purchased, and by his intercession it is maintained for us.

SERMON XIV.

That blessed hope, &c.—TITUS ii. 13.

DOCT. 2. The hope of christians is a blessed hope.

Hope is here put for the thing hoped for; as Col. i. 5, 'For the hope that is laid up for you in heaven,' where hope is put for the object of hope. Now this matter or object of our hope is sometimes called life, sometimes glory, sometimes joy and pleasure. It is a life that never shall be quenched or put out: Jude 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.' It is a glory that is eternal for duration; 2 Cor. iv. 17, it is called 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' For the measure of it, it is above our conceit and expression, as much as a creature can bear. It is joy and pleasure without mixture and without end: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' Now this hope is said to be blessed, because it puts us into the fruition of absolute blessedness. We cannot conceive of it now to the full; when we come to enjoy it, we shall find it above all that ever we could conceive or hear of it. As much as we see and know of it showeth it is a blessed thing, but we shall understand it best when we hear the great voice calling us, Come up and see.

But a little to set it before you. In blessedness there must be a removal of all evil, and a coacervation and complete presence of all that is good. As long as the least evil continueth, a man is not blessed, only he is less miserable. If a man had all things that heart could wish for, what would it avail him? as Haman, when he wanted Mordecai's knee, Esther v. 13, 'All this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.' Ahab had the kingdom of Israel, but yet he fell sick for want of Naboth's vineyard. If a man were never so well fitted for a journey, a little gravel in his shoe would founder him. As in carriages of war, though there be a great train, yet if one peg be missing or out of order, all stoppeth; or in the body, if one humour be out of order, or one joint broken, it is enough to make us sick or ill at ease, though all the rest be sound and whole; so if there be the least evil, a man cannot be a complete happy man; complaining will not suit with blessedness. Now—

First, In the hope that we look for there is a removal of all evil. Evil is twofold—either of sin or of punishment; and in heaven there is neither sin nor misery.

1. To begin with sin, that is the worst evil. Affliction is evil, but it is not evil in itself, but only in our sense and feeling; if a man had a dedolency, it is no pain to a benumbed joint to be scourged. But sin is evil, whether we feel it or no, but it is worst when we feel it not. Certainly that is evil which separateth from the chiefest good. Affliction doth not separate from God, it is a means and an occasion to make us draw nigh to him; many had never been acquainted with God but for their afflictions; but sin separateth us from God: Isa. lix. 2, 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.' Let a man be never so loathsome, yet, if he be in a state of grace, he is dear to God, the Lord taketh pleasure in him; though rough-cast with ulcers and sores, and thrown into a prison, yet God will kiss him with the kisses of his mouth. There is nothing so loathsome and odious to God as sin; this grieveth the saints most: Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' If any man had cause to complain of afflictions, Paul had; he was often in perils, whipped, imprisoned, stoned; but he doth not cry out, When shall I be delivered from these afflictions? Oh! but this body of death was worst of all; lusts troubled him more than scourges, and his captivity to the law of sin more than chains and prisons. This is the disposition of the saints; they are weary of the world, because they are sinning here whilst others are glorifying God, not only that they are suffering here whilst others are enjoying God. A beast will forsake the place where he hath neither meat nor rest. Carnal men, when they are beaten out of the world, have a fancy to heaven as a place of retreat; but that which troubles godly men is their sin. Well, but in heaven there is no sin: 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.' There is neither spot nor wrinkle upon the face of the glorified saints. Their faces were once as black as yours, but now Christ presenteth them to God as a proof of the cleansing virtue of his blood. And how pure and clean they are, without spot or wrinkle, the apostle's words, 'that he might present it,' imply as if Christ did glory and rejoice in their purity as the fruits of his purchase. There you are freed from all sins. With much ado we mortify one lust, but nature recoileth; as ivy in the wall, if you cut it down, it breaketh out again, It is much here if the dominion of sin be taken away; there the being of it is abolished, in heaven it is not at all; you will displease God no more, and are freed from all the immediate and inseparable consequences of original sin, distraction in duty, and the like. Here is no perfect love, and therefore the soul cannot be fixed in the contemplation of God; that is the reason of wandering thoughts; but there the heart cleaves to God without straggling. In heaven we shall be freed from pride, which lasts as long as life, therefore called 'Pride of life,' 1 John ii. 16. We cannot have a revelation now but we grow proud of it: 2 Cor. xii. 7, '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.' Nor

can there be an influence of grace but we are apt to be proud of it; there is a worm in manna; but then we are most high and most humble, because most holy. O christians! is not this a blessed hope that telleth you of a sinless state, of being like Christ in purity and holiness? 1 John iii. 2, '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.' What is it that you have struggled with, and groaned under all your lives, but sin? Now that is blotted out when the days of refreshing shall come. And as there is no sin, so there are no temptations. In paradise there was a tempter, but none in heaven; Satan was long since cast out thence, and the saints fill up the vacant rooms of the apostate angels. The world is a place of snares, a valley of temptations; it is the devil's circuit, where did he walk but to and fro in the earth? but in heaven 'nothing entereth that defileth,' Rev. xxi. 27. No serpent can creep in there, though he could into paradise. O christians! lift up your heads, you will get rid of sin, and displease God no more. Here we cry, Lord deliver us from evil; and then our cries are heard to the full. Grace weakeneth sin, but glory abolisheth it, and the old Adam is left in the grave never to rise more.

2. The next evil is the evil of affliction. Whatever is painful and burdensome to nature is a fruit of the fall, a brand and mark of our rebellion against God; therefore affliction must be done away as well as sin if we be completely happy. As in hell there is evil, and only evil, a cup of wrath unmixed, without the least temperament of mercy, so in heaven there is happiness, and only happiness; sorrow is done away as well as sin. It is said, Rev. xxi. 4, 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.' The afflictions of the soul are gone, there are no more doubts of God's love, nor sense of his displeasure; here though we are pardoned, and the wound be cured, yet the scars remain. Absalom could not see the king's face when he was restored. In wise dispensation God sometimes hideth his face from us here upon earth. We need to be dieted, and to taste the vinegar and the gall sometimes, as well as the honey and sweetness, that we may the better relish our christian comforts. The world is a middle place, standing between hell and heaven, and therefore hath something of both. The saints have their mixture of pleasure and sorrow: Job ii. 10, 'Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?' But there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore: Ps. xvi. 11, 'Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence there is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore;' there is no mixture of sorrow. Here we complain that the candle of the Lord doth not shine with a like brightness as in the months that are past; there our sun remaineth in an eternal high noon, without clouds and overcasting; *Nox nulla secuta est*, no night follows. The afflictions of the body are done away. Heaven is a happy air, where none are sick; there is no such thing there as gouts and aches and the grinding pains of the stone. Here it is called 'a vile body,' Phil. iii. 21, as it is the instrument of sin and the subject of diseases. We have the root of diseases in the soul, and that is sin;

and the matter and fuel of them in the body, peccant humours and principles of corruption. As wood is eaten out with worms that breed within itself, so there are in our bodies principles of corruption that do at length destroy them; but there we are wholly incorruptible. Yea, because deformity of the body is a monument of God's displeasure, one of the penal events of sin, introduced by Adam's fall, it is done away. The body riseth in due proportion; whatever was monstrous or misshapen in the first edition is corrected in the second, like the erratas in a second edition. And for violence without, heaven is a quiet place; when there are tumults in the world, God is introduced as sitting in the heavens, a quiet posture: Ps. ii. 4, 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh.' There is nothing to discompose those blessed spirits; wicked men cannot molest them nor abuse them. Here the very company of wicked men is a burden; as Lot's righteous soul was 'vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked,' 2 Peter ii. 7. David complains, Ps. cxxx. 5, 'Woe is me that I dwell in Mesech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar.' But there 'the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity,' Mat. xiii. 41. The wicked shall be bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness; as when men will not be ruled, they are sent to prison. Here poor saints are subject to a number of infirmities, labour, thirst, hunger, cold, nakedness, and want, which all cease then. It is a rich inheritance, as well as a glorious one: Eph. i. 18, 'That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' These distinctions of poor and rich, as they are understood in the world, do not outlive time; we shall have enough of true riches, which is eternal glory, and the full fruition of God. Labour ceaseth, though there be a continual exercise of grace. All things rest when they come to their proper place, so do they that die in the Lord. We still serve God, but without weariness; yea, we are freed from the necessities of nature, eating and drinking and sleeping, to which the greatest potentates are subject; though they are exempted from hard bodily labour, yet they are not exempted from the necessities of nature. But there the use of meats and of the belly and stomach is abolished: 1 Cor. vi. 12, 'Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them.' It is a piece of our misery that our life is patched up of so many creatures; as a torn garment is pieced and patched up with supplies from abroad. The sheep or silkworm supplies us with clothing, the beasts of the earth and fishes of the sea with food, and all to support a ruinous fabric, that is ever ready to drop about our ears. But there we are above meat and drink and apparel; it will be our meat and drink to do our Father's will; nakedness will be no shame, we shall have glory instead of a robe. And the body will not be a clog to the soul, but a help. This mass of flesh we carry about with us is now the prison of the soul, where it looketh out by the windows of the senses; but there it is no longer the prison of the soul, but the temple of it. In short, all that I have to say upon this branch is comprised in Rev. xxi. 4, 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed

away.' There is quite another kind of dispensation, no distraction of business; our whole employment there will be to think of God, and study God, but without weariness, satiety or distraction.

Secondly, In blessedness there is a confluence of all good. To the happiness of the creature it is necessary that his comforts should be full and eternal: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore;' 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' That they may be full for parts, full for the degrees and the manner of enjoyment, and that they should continue for ever; that he may possess this happiness without fear of losing it, let us examine these things.

1. He must enjoy all good for the parts of it; the whole man in all his relations must be blessed; for man being ζῶον πολίτικον, a sociable creature, is to be happy not only in his person, but in his company and relations; so we hope for an estate when our persons shall be happy, both in body and soul conformed to Christ, and we shall be blessed in our company and relations; we are brought into the presence of God, which is blessedness itself, and into the sight and fellowship of his blessed Son, and into the company of blessed angels and saints.

[1.] The happiness of his person, and there both of his body and his soul.

(1.) Of his body. It is good to consider that. It is now a temple of the Holy Ghost, and he cannot leave his mansion, and quit his ancient dwelling-place, and therefore he raiseth it up, and formeth it again into a complete fashion, like to Christ's glorious body: Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be like to his glorious body,' for clarity, agility, strength and incorruption. Solomon's temple was destroyed, but the latter temple was nothing so glorious as the former. Men wept when they saw it: Ezra iii. 12, 'But many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men which had seen the first house, when the foundations of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice.' But it is not so here; what is raised shall be quite another body. For the present there is to be seen a beautiful fabric, wherein God hath showed his workmanship; every member, if it were not so common, would be a miracle, all is so ordered for the service and comeliness of the whole; but now it is a vile body, subject to diseases, fed with meat, humbled with wants, many times mangled with violence, dissolved by death, and crumbled to dust in the grave, like a dry clod of earth. This is the body that we carry about with us, a mass of flesh, dressed up to be a dish for the worms. Men labour with a great deal of do by embalming it with spices to keep it from putrefaction, but all will not serve the turn; it moulders at last. But this vile body shall rise in another manner, like to Christ's glorious body. When the sun appeareth the stars vanish, their lustre is eclipsed and darkened; but the Sun of righteousness, when he appears at the last day, doth not obscure but perfect our glory. But wherein shall our bodies be like to Christ's glorious body? The apostle will tell us that in another place: 1 Cor. xv. 42–44, '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.' Let me single out three expressions; it is raised in incorruption, it is raised in glory, it is raised a spiritual body.

(1*st.*) It is an incorruptible body. Now it yieldeth to the decays of nature, and is exercised with pains and aches, till at length it droppeth down like ripe fruit into the grave; but hereafter it shall be clothed with immortality, wholly impassible. What a comfort is this to them that are racked with stone and gout, humbled with diseases, or withered with age, to think they shall have a body without aches and without decays, that shall be always in the spring of youth! The trees of paradise are always green.

(2*d.*) It is a glorious body. Here it is many times deformed, at least beauty, like a flower, is lost in sickness, withered with age, defaced by the several accidents of life; but then we shall be glorious like Christ's body. The naked body of man at first was so beautiful that the beasts of the field admired it, and thereupon did homage to Adam; but we shall not be conformed to the first Adam, but the second Adam. When Christ was transfigured in the Mount, it is said, Mat. xvii. 2, 'His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.' There was such strong emissions of the beams of glory that they could not endure the shining of his garments, but it astonished the disciples; his garments could not veil, nor their eyes endure those beams of glory. Paul could not endure that light that shined on him when Christ appeared to him from heaven, but was utterly confounded and struck blind: Acts ix. 3, 4, 'And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus; and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' By this you may guess a little what the glory of our bodies shall be, for we shall be like him. Moses, by conversing with God forty days, the complexion of his face was altered, so that he was forced to put a veil upon it. In this low estate in which we are, we must make use of these hints. If we lose a limb or a joint, he that healed Malchus' ear will restore it again.

(3*d.*) It is a spiritual body, either for agility, caught up into the air to meet the Lord, not clogged as now; or rather, because more disposed for spiritual uses, for the enjoyments and employments of grace. Here it is a natural body, a great clog to us; it is not a dexterous instrument to the soul; we are not in a capacity to bear the new wine of glory; there it is made more capacious, as wide vessels, to contain all that God will give out. The disciples fainted at Christ's transfiguration: Mat. xvii. 6, 'And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.' We cannot receive such large diffusions and overflowings of glory as we shall then have; every strong affection and raised thought doth overset us, and causeth ecstasy and ravishment; eminent objects overwhelm the faculty. But there it is otherwise; God maketh out himself to us in a greater latitude, and we are more able to bear it.

(2.) For the blessedness of the soul, which is the heaven of heaven. Our happiness is called 'The inheritance of the saints in light;' Col. i. 12, 'Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be

partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' It is not for a man that knows no other heaven but to eat, drink, sleep, and wallow in filthy and gross pleasures; it is an inheritance in light, and for saints, that know how to value intellectual and spiritual delights. But wherein doth the happiness of the soul consist, in knowledge or in love? Divines are divided, but certainly it is in both; our happiness consists in the love and knowledge of God, from whence resulteth union with God and fruition of God. But now, which is to be preferred, to know God, or to love God? that is a question. In one place it is said, John xvii. 3, 'This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;' so that it seemeth to be the heaven of heaven to have the understanding satisfied with the knowledge of God. And Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' That is our happiness, we go to heaven to know more of God, and the acts of the understanding are most noble. On the other side, 1 John iv. 16, 'God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.' It is not sight merely that makes us happy, the embrace of the soul is by love, the possession of the soul is by acts of love. One saith, though not modestly enough, *Libentius sine aspectu te diligerem, quam te videndo non amarem stella de amore Dei*—I had rather not see thee than not love thee. Here in the world the hatred of God is worse than the ignorance of him, and therefore it should seem love should have the pre-eminence. But we need not make a fraction between these graces; by knowing, we come to love; and by loving, we come to know God; as light is, so is love, and so is enjoyment. Here we love little, because we know little: 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, and he would have given thee living water.' And the more we love, the more we know; this is a fire that casts light. But to speak more distinctly—

(1*st.*) There is the perfection of knowledge. All the faculties must be satisfied before we can be happy, especially the mind, which is the noblest faculty, and that which maketh us men. There is a natural inclination to knowledge, and the soul taketh a great deal of contentment in the contemplation of any truth: 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 unto thy soul, when thou hast found it.' Right and clear thoughts of God breed a rejoicing: Ps. xix. 10, 'More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than the honey and the honeycomb.' A man given to pleasures hath no such choiceness of delight; therefore this is no small part of our happiness in heaven to have more light and knowledge of God and of his ways. We shall know many mysteries of salvation, that now we are ignorant of; as the nature of God: Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' The union of the two natures in the person of Christ: 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 which thou hast given me.' Our union with Christ, and by Christ with God: John xiv. 20, 'At that day ye shall know that I

am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.' The course of God's decrees and providences for our good: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known;' that is, we shall be able to see how the unchangeable counsels of God for our salvation have been carried on, through all the passages of the present life, to bring us safe to the heavenly state. These are the deeps of God, and now there is a darkness on the face of these deeps. The church is but a grammar school; heaven is an university. We shall have better eyes and other light; here prophecy is but in part, but there our intuition is immediate: 1 John iii. 2, 'We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' Now it is *sicut vult*, as he is pleased to reveal himself; then *sicut est*, as he is. Now we see what he is not, not corruptible, not mortal, not changeable, rather than what he is. Now we see him as he is in us, and as he is in other creatures; we track him by the effects of his power, and wisdom, and goodness; but then we shall see him as he is in himself; *ipsum cognoscemus per ipsum*, we shall know him by himself: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'Now we see through a glass darkly, then face to face.' In the creatures there are *vestigium*, the tract and foot-print of God; in the law there is *umbra*, the shadow of God; in the gospel there is *imago*, the image of God, a fair draught of God, as in a picture; but in heaven there is *facies Dei*, the face of God. We shall have excellent books to study, the large manifestations of glory, the majesty of Christ's person, the Lamb's face, who is the bride; we shall be always sitting about the throne, and the Lamb in the midst. There God maketh out himself in the highest manifestations we are capable of.

(2*d.*) There is complete love. There is a constant cleaving of heart to God, without change and weariness, a love that never ceaseth working without weakness and distractions. If we delight in anything here, we soon grow weary, and have a change of objects; but God in heavenly communion is always fresh and new. Here are distractions and startings aside to the creature; but there is an eternal solace and complacency, a continual sabbath that never groweth weary and burdensome. All the heart and bowels run out after Christ; we shall never want the actual breathings of the Spirit. The Spirit came upon Sampson at times, so it doth upon us here; we have several motions and fleetings, but there Jesus Christ is a more lovely object, and the delights of the soul are carried out to him without satiety; we shall have a sweet complacency in and liking of him. Also outward things clog the appetite; as soon as we have them we despise them, because our desires are restless; we sip of them as the bee doth of the flower, and then we must have change, and go to a new flower; but here is an eternal complacency in Christ. Here we are troubled when we want outward comforts, and cloyed when we have them. Curiosity is soon satisfied, and fruition discovereth their imperfection; still the more they are enjoyed the less they are beloved; as Amnon hated Tamar when his lust was satisfied. Imperfections that before lay hid then appear to view, and so our affections are confuted by experience. But there the more we enjoy God, the more his infinite perfections are manifested, and our pleasure is augmented by our enjoyment.

(3*d.*) There is a complete union with God and fruition of him:

2 Cor. v. 6, 'Knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord;' Phil. i. 23, 'I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ.' Here we are united to Christ by faith, but that is nothing to sight and immediate intuition; we lay hold upon Christ, but have not such an absolute possession of him. He is a head that gives out himself, not by necessity, but choice and pleasure, therefore our communion with Christ is not so perpetual and familiar as it shall be then. As an iron that lieth long in the fire seemeth to be changed into the nature of it, so we are then more conformed and changed into the likeness of Christ: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' All comforts in this life we enjoy in God's absence, and have them at the second, third, and fourth hand, by the ministration of the creatures, sun, moon, and stars, or by the ministry of men. Now these are not vessels capacious enough to convey so much of God to us as we shall receive when God is all in all immediately: 1 Cor. xv. 28, 'And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.' There is no temple nor ordinances in heaven, but the Lamb is the light thereof. We shall enjoy God without means or intervention of ordinances. We are fed among the lilies, but it is but till the day break and the shadows flee away: Cant. ii. 16, 17, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies, until the day break and the shadows flee away: turn my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or young hart upon the mountains of Bether.'

[2.] The happiness of his relations and society. In our company we shall be blessed, God and Christ, and saints and angels: Heb. xii. 22–24, 'But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and to 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, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant,' &c. We shall see God in Christ. The bodily eye, that cannot look upon the sun, shall be perfectly glorified and strengthened; though it cannot see the essence of God, yet it shall see greater manifestations of his glory than it is able to behold here. How will the Father welcome us as he welcomed Christ! Ps. ii. 8, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' So he will say to us, as Mat. xxv. 21, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' We shall not come into his presence with shame. Sin causeth shame, and maketh us shy of God; but as the ey cannot endure the light if it be wronged, so a wronged conscience makes us afraid of the presence of God; but when we shall be perfectly sanctified, and sin shall be done away, we shall be able to stand in the presence of God. So as to Christ; he cannot be contented without your company, and you should not be satisfied without his: John xiv. 3, 'And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and take you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.' Oh! what a

joyful meeting will there be between us and our Redeemer! it will be much sweeter than the interview between Jacob and Joseph. Christ longeth for the blessed hour as you do. The wise men came from far to see him in a manger; Zaccheus climbed up the tree to see him riding to Jerusalem. There will be another manner of sight of Christ in heaven than there was of him in the days of his flesh. When Joseph discovered himself to his brethren, and said, Gen. xlv. 4, 'I am Joseph, your brother,' what rejoicing was there? Much more will there be joy in heaven when Christ shall say, I am Jesus, your brother, your Saviour, your Redeemer; when he shall lead us to God in a full troop and goodly company, and say, 'Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me,' Heb. ii. 13. What a blessed sight will that be! Then as to the angels, what welcome will there be between you and them! When Christ entered into heaven, they entertained him with their applauses and acclamations: Ps. xxiv. 11, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in;' so will they welcome the saints to heaven with acclamations. They delight in the good of men, in their creation, redemption, conversion, so surely will they delight in the glorification of a sinner. And as to the saints your acquaintance, with whom ye have prayed, suffered, and familiarly conversed, memory is not abolished in heaven, but perfected; those whom we knew here, we shall know again. A minister shall see his crown, and the fruit of his labours: 1 Thes. ii. 19, 'You are our crown and our joy.' And those which have been relieved by us shall welcome us into heaven, who therefore are said to 'receive us into everlasting habitations,' Luke xvi. 9. Yea, we shall know those that we never saw; why else is it made a part of our privilege 'to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven?' Mat. viii. 11. As Adam knew Eve as soon as he saw her, and in the transfiguration Peter knew Moses and Elias, who were dead many hundred years before, so shall we know one another; certainly we shall not go to a strange people where we know nobody. As men at a feast are free and familiar with one another, we shall be discoursing of God's wisdom, mercy, and justice in the work of redemption. So did Moses and Elias talk with Christ: Luke ix. 30, 31, 'Behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.' Of the wonderful providence of God in conducting us to glory, as travellers in their inn take pleasure in discoursing with one another of the dirtiness and dangers of the way. The saints are clothed with majesty and glory, more lovely object than ever they were upon earth; and here is an innumerable company of them. With what joy were the disciples rapt when they saw but these two prophets, Moses and Elias! Mat. xvii. 4. Heaven is called not only a palace, but a city, a world to come, where there is a multitude which no man can number. This for the parts of this happiness.

2. For the manner and degree of enjoying, it is full. We are filled with the fulness of God, and shall eternally lose ourselves in an ocean of sweetness; the soul is more capable, stretched out to the greatest capacity of a creature, yet God filleth it. Here we have but a few

drops, there we shall be filled up to the brim, and have as much as we can hold: Ps. xvii. 15, 'I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' There shall be complete joy and satisfaction; all want, sorrow, and sin shall be done away; we shall enter into our master's joy. We do not say the sea entereth into a bucket or cup, or a river into a man. In heaven the soul is so full of joy and glory as is inexpressible.

3. For the duration of it, it is eternal. Our happiness is immortal, we can never lose it, which doubleth the joy and contentment of that state. God's love is everlasting, and so shall our happiness be; there will be no fear of losing it: Rev. xxii. 5, 'They shall reign for ever and ever.' We shall never lay aside our diadem of glory, it is a garland that shall not wither. It is not only a certain and eternal state, but a state of actual delights. Christ's manifestations are not lessened by enjoyment, but they are like the widow's barrel of meal and cruse of oil, never spent; but we shall always have the actual comfort of his presence.

SERMON XV.

That blessed hope, &c.—TITUS ii. 13.

USE 1. For information in seven particulars—

1. That the children of God are not so miserable as they appear; they have other hopes and enjoyments than are seen, a large estate that lies in an invisible country; it is not *terra incognita*, a land unknown, but it is a land unseen. Pearls and precious things lie out of sight, so doth the glory and blessedness of a christian. Our happiness is a mystery to a carnal heart; it lieth in another world: 1 John iii. 2, 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be.' Here we have a right, but the children of God are subject to the chances and accidents of the present world as well as others. Our happiness is only to be seen with a spiritual eye and with spiritual light: Eph. i. 18, 'The eyes of your understanding being opened, that ye may know what is the hope of your calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' However christians seem in the eye of the world, mean, afflicted, despicable, yet they are blessed creatures. Look, as beasts know not the excellency of a man, so carnal men know not the excellency of the saints. The whore of Babylon, the corrupt church, is set out in her glorious outside with a golden cup, so carnal men, saith the apostle, 'make a fair show in the flesh,' Gal. vi. 12; that is, excel in pomp and worldly splendour; but a christian's glory and blessedness is under a veil and disguise, which shall not be fully taken off till the day of judgment: Col. iii. 3, 4, 'Your life is hid with Christ in God: when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.' Look, as in a dark lantern the light is hid, till the cover be removed little of the brightness of the light is seen, so there is an eclipse upon

the christian's glory; now it is covered and veiled, and therefore now the christian passeth under censures and reproaches; thus was Christ in the world and we must be like him, but then all shall be discovered. A garden and a field differ little in winter, so doth a christian and other men till the great imperial day of Christ, then shall we put on our best robes. Yea, this happiness in a great part is hidden from ourselves. If we hearken to sense and present experience, there is not such a miserable sort of people in the world as God's dearest servants are: 1 Cor. xv. 19, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' It is true by the perspective of faith we may have a glimpse now and then. Holy meditation strikes out and opens a window into the new Jerusalem, and we have some sight of it. A young heir doth not know the particulars of his estate, neither do we exactly know the happiness of our portion and inheritance in light.

2. It informs us what cause we have, not only to be patient, but to be thankful during the time of our pilgrimage here, while we are liable to sin and sorrow; we may bless God aforehand. That is one reason why God hath revealed these things before we come to enjoy them, that we may give thanks for our hopes. Abraham, when he had only a grant and a promise of Canaan, not a foot of land actually possessed, there he built an altar, and offered sacrifice and praise, Gen. xiii. 17, 18; so this is one effect of the certainty of faith, it beginneth the life and work of heaven, and can praise God before enjoyment. Though we be subject to sin and misery here, yet, in despite of sense, faith will praise God and rejoice in him before we enjoy him. Thus the apostle blesseth God for his hopes: 1 Peter i. 3, 4, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.' Certainly we may bless God where God blesseth us; our blessing is but the echo of his: 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.' And therefore we have cause to bless him for our hopes as well as our enjoyments, for the best of our portion is to come; therefore, whenever we think of eternity, we should presently fall a blessing of God, however it be with us for the present.

To this end let me show you how much we expect, and how much we are engaged to every person of the Godhead.

[1.] How much we do expect. There is freedom from eternal torments, and possession of eternal glory: 2 Thes. i. 10, 'Even Jesus, who hath delivered us from wrath to come.' Wrath present is nothing to wrath to come. Now God manageth all things by creatures, and no creature is sufficient to manifest all God's wrath. Those everlasting flames that are the portion of the damned, this is that from which we are delivered. We tremble at the name of hell; what should we do at the sense of these torments that are without end and ease? The grips of conscience for an hour, how terrible are they. Then what is it to lie under the wrath of God for ever and ever? We were involved in the same guilt, in the same polluted mass with others, therefore we might be bound up in the same bundle, to be cast into hell as well as

they. Why are we taken and others left to perish? Oh! bless God for this, that we are as brands plucked out of the burning; we are bound up in the same guilt and misery: Zech. iii. 2, 'Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?' Though you feel the smart of the rod upon your backs, remember this is nothing to hell, damnation, and wrath to come; and this is given to prevent that: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.' What cause have we to bless God, that we may think of hell as a danger that we have escaped by Christ. But then for heaven, the positive part of this blessedness, you have a right, though not an actual enjoyment. Sometimes heaven is said to be kept for us, and sometimes we are said to be kept for heaven: 1 Peter i. 5, 'Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' Christ holds heaven in our right, in our stead, and in our names, and we are kept by the power of God for heaven. Again, heaven is prepared for us: Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit a kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' And we are prepared for heaven: Rom. ix. 23, 'And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory.'

[2.] The greatness of your engagement to all the persons of the Godhead.

(1.) To God the Father. Admire the love of God, that poor worms should be so exalted, that a clod of earth should shine as the sun, that those dark and impure souls of ours should be purified and glorified. God could not satisfy himself with temporal kindness, with loving us for a while, but he must love us for ever: Ps. ciii. 17, 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting to them that fear him.' From eternity to eternity God is God and our God. Nay, and small things would not content him, but we must be interested in a complete blessedness: 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! Beloved, now are we the sons of God, but 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.' Oh! we should often work this upon our hearts, the great love of God in predestinating us to such a glory. There is a great deal of mercy laid out upon us during our pilgrimage, but more laid up for us: Ps. xxxi. 19, 'Oh! how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!' Oh! the greatness of love. Infinite mercy sets itself a-work, to see what it can do for man, a poor wretched creature, a thing of yesterday, a rebel, an enemy to God. Think of it we may, but we cannot express it to the full. The least of God's mercies is more than we can acknowledge, and deserves praise; much more this full portion, for here God sets himself to make a creature as happy as it is capable. The Lord hath gone to the utmost in nothing but his love; he never showed so much of his wisdom and power, but he could show more; but he hath no greater thing to give us than himself and his Christ, he cannot love us more; there can be no more done, there can be no higher happiness than the eternal enjoyment of himself. All the promises of the word come short of what you shall enjoy. That which Paul saw and heard in heaven

in his ecstasy, were ἀῤῥητα ῥήματα, 'words that could not be uttered,' 2 Cor. xii. 4. The scriptures, that are sufficient to make the man of God perfect here, profess an insufficiency, weakness, and imperfection when they come to speak of heaven and the glory of it: 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 'For we know in part, and we prophesy in part,' is spoken with respect to heaven and happiness to come; there the scripture can speak but in part, there are no words nor notions in the world sufficient to express what God hath provided, and we have not ears to hear it. All the notions now we have of things must be taken from what is obvious to sense and present apprehension; and therefore certainly, because heaven surpasseth all that hath been, we cannot apprehend the glory of it. The scripture leaves it rather to be admired in silence; there are joys unspeakable; there is no language intelligible to us that is fit to represent heaven. Oh! then, admire the love of God the Father, that hath provided such great things for us.

(2.) Consider how deeply we are engaged to Jesus Christ. To deliver us from wrath to come, he himself was made a curse, and tasted the vinegar and gall: Gal. iii. 13, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' Something he suffered that answered wrath to come. In hell there is *pœna damni*, and *pœna sensus*, the loss, the pain and sense of God's wrath. The Lord Christ had for a while the suspension of the joys and actual consolation of his divine nature, a loss that cannot be imagined: Mat. xxiii. 46, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' there is his loss. Then he had an actual feeling of the wrath of God; therefore he saith, Mat. xxvii. 38, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;' there was his sense of pain. He was forsaken that we might not be separated from God for ever, and his soul was heavy to the death that we might not be cast into eternal burnings. Then for the positive part, that we might have everlasting glory, Christ left his heaven that we might enjoy ours; he came from heaven, and is gone to heaven again, and will come from heaven the second time, and all to bring us thither with the more triumph; so that going and coming, coming and going, he is still ours. He came at first out of the bosom of God, to establish the merit, and pay the price for our glory. God sold it not at an easy rate; the blood and agonies and shame of the Son of God must go for our glory; it was no easy matter to bring sinful creatures so near to God. The Lord would not so much as treat with apostate angels; when once they were sinners, they were no more to remain in his presence, nor to come near him, but they were cast out of heaven. The door was shut against sinning creatures, but Christ came to open it. Christ came to open paradise that was guarded with a flaming sword; he caught the blow, that we might have communion with God, and therefore he sueth it out as the fruit of his sufferings. When Christ was about to die, he made his last will and testament. Heaven was his by purchase, to bestow upon all his heirs. He had bought it at a dear rate, therefore now he shows what he would do with it: John xvii. 24, 'Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me may be where I am, that they may behold my glory.' And then he is gone to heaven again as our harbinger, to prepare a place for us: John xiv. 2, 'I go to prepare a place for you,' to take up mansions and rooms for us in his Father's

palace. He is gone as a guardian or feoffee in trust, to seize upon heaven in our right, to keep it during our nonage, and he will come again in person, as the husband of the church, to bring us into his Father's house with triumph; therefore it is said, Rev. iv. 10, that the elders did 'cast their crowns before the throne,' not as despising their glory, but as professing their homage and dependence; and Rev. v. 8, 9, 'The four beasts and four-and-twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, &c., saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.' His abasement was for our preferment; and therefore even here upon earth may we bless God (for the elders represent the church upon earth) for his great mercy to us in Christ.

(3.) Consider how much we are engaged to God the Spirit, who fits and prepares us for this happy state, and seals up our interest to us; therefore it is called 'the earnest of the Spirit:' 'Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given to us the earnest of the Spirit,' 2 Cor. v. 5. The Holy Ghost shapes and fashions all the vessels of glory, fits and prepares them for heaven. It is the Spirit of God dwelling in us that wrought us and fits us for this great and blessed hope; therefore whenever you think of it, your hearts should be raised in thanksgiving. It is not only their duty to praise God that are in actual possession of glory, but ours also to whom these hopes are revealed. Rev. v. 8, there was a mixture of 'harps and vials full of odours, which are the prayers of all saints.' Compare this with ver. 11, 'And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and elders.' Not only angels and blessed spirits, but saints on earth; all join in concert, praising the Lamb. We must praise the Lord in the time of our pilgrimage, for this great estate reserved for us in heaven.

3. It informs us how desperately wicked the hearts of sinful men are, that can run the hazard of eternal death, and forfeit this blessed hope of eternal life, for a little carnal satisfaction. Survey all the temptations of the world, how much they come short of it! If the heart were not desperately wicked we would not be carried out to these things. What is vainglory to eternal glory? What are a few dreggy delights to those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore? What are the riches of the world to our glorious inheritance? You would count him a mad gamester that would throw away whole lordships and manors at every cast. A sinner forfeits a blessed hope that is above all the kingdoms and possessions of the world. It is for this you will be the scorn of angels at the last day: Ps. lii. 7, 'Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.' This will make you ashamed in the great congregation, that you were so foolishly bent to your own ruin. Nay, this will torment you for ever. Nothing torments men more than their foolish choice. Conscience will for ever tell them with what disadvantage they have forsaken God for a thing of nought. Disappointment to a reasonable creature is the worst vexation; and what disappointment is more than to be disappointed of our glorious hopes, and that for trifles and a little carnal satisfaction? This will be our shame and torment to all eternity. We may guess at

the gnawings of conscience in the damned by the horrors of carnal men when they come to die. Oh! then how do they bewail the folly of their choice. Oh! that they had been as mindful to serve God as to provide for the world, as careful to satisfy the motions of the Holy Ghost as to satisfy a lust and carnal desire! When they are on a deathbed and upon the confines of eternity, then all worldly comforts cease, and there is a real confutation of the folly of their choice, a sting then begins that never ceaseth: Jer. xvii. 11, 'At his end he shall be a fool.' When he comes to die, his conscience will rage and call him fool, beast, and madman, for hazarding such eternal joys for a trifle.

4. It informs us of the excellency of the gospel or christian profession. Wisdom should be justified by her children. And all that do profess religion should see the excellency of it, what there is in their beloved more than in another beloved, Cant. v. 9. This there is in the christian religion; there are purity of precepts: Ps. xix. 7, 8, 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.' Then there is sureness of principles, of trust and dependence established between us and God, that we may depend upon God with comfort and satisfaction; there do you find rest for the soul: Jer. vi. 16, '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.' Then there are no such rewards anywhere as in the christian profession: 2 Tim. i. 10, 'Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel.' The heathens had dreams of Elysian fields, and Mahomet tells his followers of a sensual paradise; but life and immortality is a revelation proper and peculiar only to the gospel. The heathens were at a loss for the reward of virtue. Austin out of Varro gives us an account of two hundred and eighty-eight opinions concerning happiness and the chief good of man; but now here is all brought to light; we may look beyond the grave now, and there is not such a mist and darkness upon things to come, God having acquainted us with the gospel. Nay, there is more revealed than was in the time of the law. If God had still kept this secret in his own bosom, what a support should we have wanted in our trouble, what encouragement to the practice of holiness! Oh! therefore prize the gospel, it is the charter of your blessed hope.

5. It informs us what little cause we have to be slack in God's work, or to begrudge the pains of his service: 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour will not be in vain in the Lord.' The children of God are wont to think they can never do enough for God, that hath found out such a reward for them in Christ. A thousand years' service will not deserve one hour's enjoyment of this blessed hope, much less eternal happiness. When we come to see what shall be bestowed upon us, we shall be ashamed that we have done no more work for God, having so much wages, and such excellent encouragement. Mat. xxv. 37, the saints are brought in there saying, 'Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?' being

ashamed. Ah! Lord, this is nothing; what have we done? At the day of judgment there will be the highest exaltation of the saints, and yet the lowest self-abasement; they will wonder even to admiration of angels. There will be Christ's owning them, and they disclaiming their own services and all their works, and Christ rewarding them. And therefore grudge not if you have the strictest precepts of any religion; remember you have the noblest and highest reward.

6. It informs us what cause we have to contemn all earthly things, though they be never so great and glorious, because of this blessed hope. There are two considerations that will make us contemn the world, and they are suited to the two essential parts of man, and we should ever think of them. We carry about us a mortal body and an immortal soul; the body lasts but for a while, and the soul survives and outlives the body's happiness. Now we toil ourselves in gathering sticks to our nest, when to-morrow we must be gone. Alas! here 'we dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth,' Job iv. 19. Our estate in this world is represented by a tabernacle, which is a movable habitation; but our estate in heaven is represented by a temple. Here it is but a tabernacle, and that of clay, that will be crumbled into dust; nay, we are said to be crushed before the moth, and a moth is but a little enlivened dust, and so is man. The world is but a house of potters' vessels, that will be soon broken; and shall we, for the conveniences of a temporal life, prejudice and run the hazard and loss of our eternal hopes? Shall we injure the soul to gratify the body? that is the way to destroy both for ever. Our great care should be for that place where we live longest; in the other world we have the longest life and the most glorious possession, therefore our great care should be for that.

7. It informs us what little cause we have to envy carnal men; the hope of your profession is a blessed hope. This was David's preservative; he was daily in danger of his life, and his enemies were fat, and shining in the pomp of the world, and how doth he comfort himself? Ps. xvii. 15, 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness;' as if he had said, Alas! their felicity is but a sorry thing; they are filled, and I shall be filled too. David sums up their happiness under two heads. Whatever here we have, it is either for personal use or for our posterity. A worldly state is only valuable upon these two grounds, what we may use for the present, and what we may transmit to our children. Now, what a sorry happiness is this to what I expect?

[1.] For personal use, ver. 14, 'Their bellies are filled with thy hid treasure;' that is, with the rarest dishes and best meats which God's storehouse doth afford. By 'hidden treasures,' is meant food and other worldly comforts, therefore called 'hidden treasures' because it doth not lie within every one's grasp and reach; they are not vulgar and common delights. The meaner sort their hand will not attain to it. Lo! here is all that which God allows them for their portion, the filling of the belly; and alas! this is but the happiness of beasts, who eat with less remorse: yet all their happiness is to fill their belly with better food than the poorer sort, which indeed is a misery rather than a happiness, for what doth this but nourish sensual lusts, and strengthen and hearten our enemy. And gorgeous apparel is but a supply from creatures

beneath us; it is but *stercus in volutum*, dung neatly wrapped up. Here is the sum of all a carnal man's happiness, that which God allows him for his portion. But a christian hath better fare; if he goes into the sanctuary, there is enough; but if he goes into heaven, there is a great deal more. David defeats the temptation by this, Ps. lxxiii. 16, 17, 'When I sought to know this, it was too hard for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God,' to enjoy God in his ordinances, and the present glimpses of God's face. Present communion with God is far to be preferred above all the dainties in the world. But that is not all; we shall be satisfied for ever. We may go into heaven as well as into the sanctuary and behold God's righteousness: 'When I awake,' that is, out of the dust, 'I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.' A child of God hath his content and happiness to the full when he comes to die. A carnal man's back hath been richly clothed and his belly filled, but when he comes to die he hath a sad doom: 'Son, remember thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus his evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented,' Luke xvi. 25; it was said to Dives, who fared deliciously every day, and was clothed in purple and fine linen. Well, you have your portion, and must look for no more; you give God a discharge for aught else. But for God's children, then their happiness begins; they are going down to sleep in the grave, and when they awake they shall be filled; they have not only God's favour here, but eternal felicity hereafter. They that are called to a feast will not fill themselves at home with coarser fare. The rich glutton, who had his belly full of hid treasure here, was shut out, but Lazarus is carried into Abraham's bosom and feasted there; for this was their table-gesture to lie in one another's bosoms. Christians, reserve your appetite a little; you will be satisfied; it is but staying a little longer for a better meal. We expect to be like angels, let others be like beasts whose happiness lieth in feeding.

[2.] Then, for the other part, the transmission of honour and ample revenues to posterity. It is true, man is much carried out this way; he would fain advance his house, and live gloriously in his posterity. Posterity is a shadow of eternity; children are but the father multiplied; when the father's thread is spun out, then the knot is knit: his name and memory is continued in the world by his children; therefore men would live in their posterity, and have their families great. But this is a sad exchange to forfeit heaven that our children may enjoy the world; as many times it falls out that the father goes to hell for getting an estate, and the son goes to hell for spending it. Though they have an ample patrimony, yet they know not who shall enjoy it; 'Who knows whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?' Eccles. ii. 19. A man hath no knowledge of future events, nor no power of them. So that you see still we have no cause to envy worldly men even in this happiness. We are better provided for, having a covenant interest that countervails all: 'I am thy God, and the God of thy seed.' Though we cannot leave them gold, land, and ample estate, yet you leave them a God in covenant, who hath undertaken for you and yours. And many times they have temporal blessings for their father's sake, the blessings of Ishmael, if not of Isaac.

Use 2. Direction, that we may not seek blessedness elsewhere. Some

seek it in a wrong way. Carnal men think that there is no such happiness as in letting loose the reins to carnal lusts, and living as they list. This is the basest bondage that can be: 2 Peter ii. 19, 'While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.' The work is drudgery, and the reward is death; they are entangled in snares and held in chains; and is this an happy life? This doth but increase our misery, and make way for more shame. Yet carnal men are much taken with this kind of life; they wonder how men can abjure the pleasure and contentment which they fancy: 1 Peter iv. 4, 'Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot.' They think themselves very wise in following the counsels of their own hearts, and doing as others do that are like themselves. You do but make yourselves more responsible to God's justice. Worldly comforts cannot make us happy; it appeareth by our many inventions: Eccles. vii. 29, 'God made man upright, but he hath sought out many inventions.' Every sinner hath his wanderings. Man, being off from God, never cometh on again of himself, but wandereth infinitely, and beats out himself with his own inventions. As a wayfaring man, who hath once lost his direction, turneth up and down, and knoweth not where to pitch, so are all endeavours fruitless till God direct us. We are to follow God's counsel, not the counsel of the ungodly: Ps. lxxiii. 24, 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and after receive me to glory;' as a clock runs at random when the balance is once out. The Lord is willing to direct us: Ps. xxv. 8, 'Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will he teach sinners in the way.' He is too wise to be deceived, and too good to deceive. O sinners! learn the upright way. When we are weary of wandering, and willing to be directed, such as submit themselves to God shall never want a guide. Creatures cannot make us happy; such is the restlessness of the soul, that we must have shift and change. Envying one another showeth the narrowness of our comforts. Gripes of conscience spoil all; as Belshazzar in his cups was affrighted with an handwriting upon the wall. Says the young man in the gospel, Mat. xix. 16, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' What lack I yet? saith the moralist. In false worship men are unsatisfied: Micah vi. 6, 'Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord? and bow myself before the high God?' It is not a loose profession of the gospel that will make us happy: Mat. xi. 29, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls.' Nothing can make us happy but what is a full relief from sin and misery. Here is rest for our souls; the foundation is laid in justification and sanctification. Here is our reconciliation with God, hereafter is our advancement.

Use 3. It is an invitation to the practice of holiness. Blessedness is a great motive; David begins the book of Psalms with it, and Christ his sermons; there is enough in it to allay the sorrows of the present life, and fill up the desires of the life to come. All would be blessed and happy, but we must take the right course; say, as Christ's hearers, John vi. 34, 'Lord, evermore give us this bread;' as Balaam, Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end

be like his.' Be not content, as Balaam, with a vision of Jacob's happy seats: Num. xxiv. 5, 'How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!' As the nobleman that saw the plenty of Israel but did not eat thereof: 2 Kings vii. 20, 'And so it fell out unto him, for the people trod upon him in the gate, and he died.' The damned at the last day are lookers-on, but not partakers of the blessedness of the righteous: Luke xiii. 28, 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.'

Use 4. Exhortation to those that have an interest in this blessed hope. Behave yourselves as those that are called thereunto; think of it often, discourse of it often, and live suitably to it.

1. Often meditate of the happiness that is laid up for you, and warm yourselves with the thoughts of it. The mind ruminateth on happiness. Your minds should be there: Col. iii. 2, 'Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth.'

2. Confer of it often: 1 Thes. iv. 18, 'Comfort one another with these words,' against all the changes and dangers of this life. Alas! how carnal and flat is our discourse! 'He that is of the earth is earthy, and speaketh of the earth,' John iii. 31.

3. Live more suitably to it: 1 Thes. ii. 11, 12, 'As you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.' Make eternity your scope: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'Looking not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are not seen,' *σκοποῦντων ἡμῶν*. There should be a greater proportion between your hopes and your lives. Behave yourselves as those that are interested in this blessed hope. Be not dejected with every cross, nor overcome with every bait and temptation, nor live in a base and low manner; this is not becoming your hopes. Show your interest herein by the heavenliness and courage of your spirits.

SERMON XVI.

And the glorious appearing, &c.—Titus ii. 13.

In the encouragement to the duty of our heavenly calling we have the substance of our hopes, and the seasons when we shall come to enjoy them to the full.

1. The substance of our hopes, 'Looking for the blessed hope.'

2. The time when our enjoyment shall be full, when body and soul shall be glorified, that is, at the time of Christ's appearing, 'At the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' Every one would have the blessed hope, but first there is a glorious appearing.

In this second branch there is the person that must appear, and the kind or manner of his appearing.

1. The person who must appear, Jesus Christ, described by a name of power, 'the great God,' and a name of mercy, 'and our Saviour;' as usually such kind of attributes are mingled in scripture, power and goodness.

2. The kind or manner of his appearing, it is glorious; επιφανειαν της δόξης του μεγαλου Θεου, the appearance of the glory of the great God. The apostle opposed the second coming of Christ to the first; then it was an humble mean appearance, now it is full of glory. But what is meant by this glorious appearing? Some dream of his personal reign before his coming to judgment, but that is a fancy. The scripture only acknowledgeth two comings of Christ: Heb. ix. 28, 'He shall appear the second time without sin to salvation.' There is only his first and his second appearing. After he had once offered himself, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God, there is no more corporal presence of Christ upon earth. But will there not be at least a glimpse? Will he not come in the clouds for a while to convert the Jews, and set things to rights in the world? Will he not appear for a very little while, and so vanish again as he appeared to Paul at his conversion, Acts ix. 3. So some think, and therefore distinguish between his appearing and his coming, but without warrant from scripture; for these two, appearing and coming, are all one; and the expressions are promiscuously used in scripture: Col. iii. 4, 'When Christ, who is our life shall appear;' 1 John iii. 2, 'When he shall appear we shall be like him.' So that this appearing is his coming to judgment; this is that we must look for. And therefore the point I shall first observe is this—

Doct. That it is the duty and property of God's children to look for Christ's second coming to judgment.

There are two choice scriptures that do describe the communion of the church with Christ, and the dispensations of Christ to the church, and they both conclude with a desire of his coming. In the Canticles, where the church's communion with Christ is described, this is the last, the swan-like note which the church sings, 'Come, Lord!' And so in the Revelations, where God's providences to the church are described, this is the last note, the swan-like song, 'Even so, come Lord Jesus.' Compare Cant. viii. 14 with Rev. xxii. 20. In the former it is said, Cant. viii. 14, 'Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.' Christ is not slack, but the church's affections are very strong and vehement; all the seeming delay is occasioned by the earnestness of our desire. A harlot would have her husband defer his coming; but the church, like a chaste spouse, thinks he can never come soon enough. Those that go a-whoring after the world neither desire Christ's coming nor love his appearing; but those that are faithful (as the spouse is to Christ) this is the desire of their souls, 'Make haste, my beloved.' So Rev. xxii. 20, Christ saith, 'Surely I come quickly;' and the church, like a quick echo, takes the words out of Christ's mouth, 'Even so, come Lord Jesus.' There is the same spirit in the church that was in Christ; the spirit of the head is in all his members, and therefore they speak the same thing, and long for the same thing. Christ speaks in a way proper to himself, 'Surely I come;' and the church speaks in a

way proper to herself, 'Even so, come Lord Jesus.' He by way of promise, and we by way of supplication. Christ's voice and the church's voice are unisons. Here is his proclamation, 'Surely, I come;' and here is the church's acclamation, 'Even so, come Lord Jesus.' Christ says, 'I come,' as desiring our company; the church says, 'Lord, come,' as desiring his company. And thus we are taught to pray in the Lord's prayer, 'Thy kingdom come,' that we may always keep those desires afoot, that Christ's kingdom, in the whole flux, from the beginning to the last period, may come. The day of judgment is the most imperial act of Christ's kingly office, and therefore we do not only pray for the beginnings here, but also for the consummation hereafter. And mark, we that live in the latter ages of the world have an advantage of the church in the primitive time. It was the solemn prayer of the church heretofore (as Tertullian showeth us), *pro mora finis,* for the delay of Christ's coming, that his designs and decrees might be accomplished in the world, that the kingdom of grace might be spread far and near. And we that live in the dregs of time pray for the hastening of Christ's coming, for the embracing of our great and glorious hopes, that the name of God may be no longer dishonoured, that the kingdom of sin, Satan, and antichrist, may have an end. They expected the revelation of antichrist, and we his destruction. Thus the saints are described to be those that look for a Saviour: Phil. iii. 20, 'For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.' Paul speaks in his own name, and in the name of all that were like himself, 'We look,' &c. The saints here are a company of expectants, always waiting for the good hour of their preferment when Christ will come, that he may conduct them to everlasting glory. And they not only looked for it, but longed for it; and therefore it is said, 'they love his appearing,' 2 Tim. iv. 8. It is notable Paul doth not mention there other marks and characters; not for me only, but all that believe and faithfully serve and obey Christ; but he describes them by this, which is an essential character of the saints, for it notes the disposition of their hearts, 'Not for me only, but for all those that love his appearing.'

There are several reasons may be given why this is the duty and property of the children of God still to look for Christ's glorious appearing. Look upon their temper, their relation, their privileges, and the profit they gain by this expectation.

1. Look upon the temper of the saints. Within them there is the Spirit, faith, love and hope, and all these put them upon this desire. There is the Spirit: Rev. xxii. 17, 'The Spirit and the bride' (that is, the Spirit in the bride) 'say, Come,' The Holy Ghost breeds and stirs up desires, and begets those holy motions in their hearts, and the church answereth his motions. This is a disposition above nature, carnal nature saith, Stay; but the Spirit saith, Come. If it might go by voices in the world, whether Christ should come or no, do you think carnal men would give their vote this way for Christ's coming? The voice of corrupt nature is, Depart: Job xxii. 14, 'Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;' that is the language of their hearts. Carnal men are of the mind of the devil. When Christ wrought a miracle in casting out a

devil, and discovered somewhat of his divine power, the devils were afraid, as if he were coming to judgment already: Mat. viii. 29, 'Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?' The devil cannot endure to hear of Christ's coming; no more can carnal men, for they are of his mind. If thieves and malefactors might have the liberty to choose whether there should be assizes, yea or nay, do you think they would look for and long for the judge's coming and the day of his approach? So corrupt nature hath no desire of this day. It is the Spirit in the bride that says, Come; as soon as the Spirit of grace works in us, there is a bent and inclination this way; 1 Peter i. 3, 'Who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope.' Spiritual desires come from heaven, and thither they tend. As soon as the Spirit works grace in the heart, it looks out this way; the heart is bent thither from whence it receives all it hath, as all creatures love the place of their original. The great work of the Spirit is to bring us and Christ together. The Spirit comes from the Father and the Son, to bring us to the Father by the Son; and therefore the Spirit stirs up those holy groans in us, When will he come? They look upon the graces of a christian; there is faith, love, and hope. (1.) Faith: The ground of this looking is the promise; now faith stands waiting for the promise as if it were already begun to be accomplished. Look, as Rebecca espied Isaac afar off, so faith espies Christ afar off. Faith is the evidence of things not seen, and looks upon Christ as if he were already on his way, and so makes the soul stand ready to meet and receive him. As a loving wife stands upon the shore, and looks for the return of her husband, and the sight of every ship makes her to realise by an active and loving fancy the sweetness of an interview, so faith stands waiting for the coming of Christ and the approaches he makes towards the church. (2.) Love: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen ye love.' The saints love Christ whom they never saw. We know Christ by hearsay here in the church, not by sight; he woos us, as princes use to do, by picture; therefore they long for his appearing. Whosoever is a friend to Christ will find his heart long for Christ, of whom he had so often heard in the word, and so often tasted in the supper. Love is an affection of union; it desires to meet the party loved; so is love to Christ; it is not satisfied with the present state, but it cries out, Come, come; why is his chariot so long a coming? It longs to see him whom it hath heard of so often and so much, and of whose sweetness it hath already tasted; for this love is not only kindled by the knowledge we have of him by hearsay, but by experience. Christ first comes in the heart by grace, and then the soul, having tasted the sweetness of it, longs for another coming. When will he come in the clouds, that we may see him as he is? And as love to Christ, so also love to the saints enkindles this desire. We have not all our company here in the world; and till we all meet together we shall never be satisfied. (3.) Hope, that is another grace, God fitteth us with graces as well as happiness. The Lord doth not only provide a glorious estate for us, but grace to expect it, and stirs up affections in us suitable thereunto. As in the privative part of salvation, Christ doth not only deliver us from the hurt of death, but from the bondage and fear of death. Despair is the beginning of hell. So in the positive part of salvation, the Lord doth

not only provide heaven and happiness for us, but hope that we may look for this happiness: 'We are begotten again to a lively hope.' 1 Peter i. 3; 'And to wait for his Son from heaven,' 1 Thes. i. 10. Hope was made on purpose for this thing, that we may expect our full and future happiness. When the affection of hope is elsewhere placed, and turned to carnal things, it is like a member out of joint. It was made and framed on purpose that we might look for this glorious appearing of Jesus Christ.

2. Look upon their relation to Christ. There are two relations the scripture usually takes notice of with respect unto the day of judgment—Christ is our master and our husband. As he is our master, we must look for him. It is the property of a good servant to wait for his master's coming: Mat. xxiv. 46, 'Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.' Here we have only present maintenance, but hereafter we shall receive our wages: Rev. xxii. 12, 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.' A servant of God should remember that when Christ comes he will not come empty-handed; he is your good and bounteous master. Here you have but an earnest, as when you hire a man, you give him earnest. But now, because God would not have our affections to be servile, therefore there is a sweeter relation; we are to look for him not only as a lord and master, but as an husband; and therefore it is the 'bride that saith, Come,' Rev. xxii. 17. Here we are only contracted to Christ, he hath passed his promise to us, but the day of judgment is the day of solemn espousals: Hosea ii. 19, 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever.' Here in the covenant of grace Christ doth pass a promise to the church; here he comes to give us a pledge and take a pledge from us. As Tertullian saith, Christ took from us the token and pledge of our flesh, and is gone to heaven to make all things ready; and he hath left with us the token of his own Spirit, that so we might long for the time when he shall come again for the consummation of this happy and glorious marriage that is between him and us. We are to wait for glory, as a servant for his master, and as a bride or virgin betrothed doth wait for the coming of him that hath promised marriage to her.

3. Look upon a christian's privileges which we shall then enjoy, and certainly christians must needs desire Christ's coming. The day of judgment is the day of manifestation, the day of perfection, the day of congregation, and the day of glorification.

[1.] It is called a day of manifestation of the sons of God: Rom. viii. 19, 'The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' All now is under a veil; your Christ, your life, your glory is hid. Our persons are hid under obscurity and abasement: Col. iii. 3, 4, 'Your life is hid with Christ in God; but when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.' Look, as Moses told those rebels, when they would level the officers of the church, Num. xvi. 5, 'To-morrow the Lord will show who are his,' so when once the night of death is passed over, to-morrow, when we awake out of the dust of the grave, then Christ the natural Son will appear in all his royalty and glory, as the great God and Saviour of the world, and then also the adopted sons shall be manifested; we shall put on our best robes, and be apparelled with glory,

even as Christ is. In winter the tree appears not what it is, the life and sap is hid in the root; but when summer comes, all is discovered; so now a christian, he is under a veil, but in this great day all shall be manifested.

[2.] It is a day of perfection. Everything tends to its perfect state, and so doth grace. We see the little seed that lies under ground breaks through the clods and works its way farther, because it is not come to the flower and perfection; so grace still tends and longs for perfection; then we shall have perfect holiness and perfect freedom; Christ to the glorified saints will be a perfect Saviour. Death, which is a fruit of sin, is still continued upon the body, therefore Christ is but a Saviour in part to the spirits of just men made perfect; but then the body and soul shall be united and perfectly glorified, that we might praise God in the heavens. Christ's coming is to make an end of his redemption, of what he hath begun. At first he came to redeem our souls and break the power of sin, but then he comes to redeem our bodies from the hand of the grave and from the power of corruption; the one is done by humiliation and abasement, the other by power. The scripture speaks as if all our privileges in Christ were imperfect till that day. Regeneration, adoption, union with Christ, they suffer a kind of imperfection till then. Regeneration, the day of judgment is called by that name: Mat. xix. 28, 'In the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory.' Then all things are made new; heaven and earth is new, bodies new, souls new. Then adoption is perfect: Rom. viii. 23, 'Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies.' What is the meaning of the apostle's expression? As soon as we are planted into Christ are we not the sons of God? Yes; now we are sons, but the heir is handled as a servant during his nonage: 1 John iii. 2, 'Beloved, now we are the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be;' we wait for the adoption. Justification that is perfect then: Acts iii. 19, 'Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Then our pardon shall be proclaimed in the ears of all the world, and we shall have absolution out of Christ's own mouth; then shall we come to understand what it is that the Lord saith, 'I will remember your sins no more, and your iniquity shall be blotted out.' Then for redemption: Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption;' Luke xxi. 28, 'Look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.' Oh! how doth the captive long for his liberty; so should we long for that day, for it is the day of our redemption. Now the body is a captive, and when the soul is set at liberty the body is held under the chains of death. Ay! but then Christ comes to loosen the bands and shackles of the grave, and free the bodies of the saints. Look, as the butler was not afraid when he was sent for by Pharaoh, because Joseph had assured him he should be set at liberty, so Christ comes to set you fully at liberty, not only the soul, but the body; therefore to think and speak of that day with horror doth ill become them that expect such perfection of privileges, to be acquitted before all the world, and to be crowned with Christ's own hands.

[3.] It is a day of congregation or gathering together. The saints are now scattered, they live in divers countries, towns, and houses, and

cannot have the comfort of one another's society. But then all shall meet in one assembly and congregation. It is said, Ps. i. 5, 'The ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.' There will be a time when Christ's church shall be gathered all together into one place. As the stars do not shine in a cluster, but are dispersed throughout the firmament for the comfort and light of the world, so are the saints scattered up and down in the world according as they may be useful for God; but then, when the four winds shall give up their dead, and the saints shall be gathered from all the corners of the world, this shall be the great rendezvous. Look, as the wicked shall be herded together, as straw and sticks are bound in a bundle, that they may set one another a-fire, drunkards with drunkards, adultererers with adulterers, and thieves with thieves: Mat. xiii. 40–42, 'As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' The wicked shall be sorted with men like themselves, and so increase one another's torment; so shall all the world of the godly meet in one assembly and congregation, and never separate more. In this life we cannot enjoy one another's fellowship for divers reasons; God hath service for us in divers countries; but such a happy time shall come when we shall all make but one body; therefore the saints are still groaning and longing for that happy day, we for them, and they for us; not only the saints upon earth that are left to conflict with sin and misery, but the saints in heaven are still groaning, as the souls under the altar: Rev. vi. 9, 10, 'How long, O Lord! holy and true.' Look as those in a shipwreck that have gotten to the shore stand longing and looking for their companions, so glorified saints that have gotten safe to shore, still they are longing and looking when the body of Christ shall be made perfect, and all the saints shall meet in one solemn assembly. This is the communion between us and the saints departed, they long for our company, as we do for theirs. Here the tares are mingled with the wheat; and besides the persecutions of the wicked, their very company is a burden. Jacob's cattle and Laban's are together, but then they shall be separated, and the saints shall be gathered together, and sit as judges of them, giving their vote with Christ in their condemnation.

[4.] It is a day of glorification to Christ, and therefore the saints long for it; a day when Christ shall be honoured, and get to himself a glorious name. God got himself a great name when he drowned Pharaoh and the Egyptians in the sea; oh! what will it be when he shall cast all the wicked into hell! Now Christ will come to show the fulness of his majesty, the terror of his wrath, and to glorify his justice upon wicked men. 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 saints, that love the glory of God, must needs long for that time when Christ shall be seen in all his glory, when God shall be dishonoured no more, and the kingdom of sin and Satan have an end, and wicked men shut up under their everlasting state. And then from the saints, God hath perfect glory in them and from

them: here God hath not his perfect glory from us nor in us. This is the comfort of God's children, that God is glorified in their glory, that they may live to praise him for ever, without weakness and distraction: and that is the reason of those expressions, 'To whom be glory for ever and ever.' They delight in their own glorious estate, because they shall ever be in a capacity to bring glory to God. Nay, then, God shall be glorified in all his counsels and decrees, in the wisdom of his providence, and in the course of his judgments; for in the day of judgment the full history of the world shall be brought before the saints, whereas now we sée it but by pieces.

4. Why the saints look for Christ's appearing, is the profit of this expectation which they shall receive; partly as it engageth to a heavenly conversation: Phil. iii. 20, 'Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for a saviour.' Where should we converse most but where Christ is? Now where is Christ but in heaven? And therefore our minds should be ever running upon it, our eyes ever looking that way, and our hearts ever longing for him. Partly as it engageth us to faithfulness in our relations; there is a day coming when we shall give an account for the duties of our relations, because that is the particular sphere of our activity: 2 Tim. iv. 1, 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom.' Paul there presseth Timothy to discharge the duty of a minister, and so for a master of a family, and for a servant, Your relations are not things of chance, but they fall under the special care of God's providence, and therefore you must be accountable for them. Here God hath confined you by the wisdom of his providence to serve the great ends of your creation; therefore, whatever is omitted, you are to give an account of your relations; magistrates, ministers, masters, servants, all of their several relations. Partly as it calms the heart against the injuries and molestations of the present life: 1 Peter ii. 23, our Lord Christ 'when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously;' so you must learn of him; when you meet with trouble and hard usage, and unworthy dealing in the world, commit yourselves to God; the judge is at the door, and he will review all things again. Look, as Paschalis, a minister of the Albigenses, when he was burnt at Rome, cited the pope and his cardinals before the tribunal of the Lamb, thus do you. Partly as it engageth to perseverance. If a man hath followed a distressed and afflicted party for a long time, if nothing comes of it, he tires; but remember, if we follow Christ here, all our pains will be recompensed to us: 1 John ii. 28, 'Abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' Christ will come, and that with salvation to them that look for him; therefore let me be faithful in my duty.

Object. 1. But how can we look for it, when weknow there are some signs that precede the coming of Christ? Therefore certainly he is not like to come in our days. Will he alter the prefixed time of his approach, and change the *jacets* of that great journey.

Ans. (1.) Though Christ keepeth his pace, yet it is good for us to alter ours; though we cannot hasten his coming, yet let us be always

ready: 2 Peter iii. 12, 'Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God.' It is good for us to get ground upon our fears and our sins, and to declare our readiness to meet with Christ. Every day we live in the world is a day lost in heaven. (2.) If any age had cause to think Christ would come, certainly we have. It was not far off in the apostles' days; they were called the last days; but ours are the very dregs of time. When we see an old man weak and feeble, aches and diseases of the present life increase upon him, we say, Certainly he cannot live long; so if we look upon the temper of the world, sure it cannot endure long; Christ will come to set all things at rights. One forerunner of Christ's coming are the dreams and delusions that are abroad. *Mundus senescens patitur phantasias*—As the world grows old, it is much given to fancies, as old men are to dotage and dreams. (3.) If Christ come not in our days, yet death is at hand: Heb. ix. 27, 'It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment.' Every man's particular judgment follows upon his departure out of the world, and then the general judgment follows, as death finds him, either among the sheep or goats. Judas died sixteen hundred years ago, yet as he died so shall he be found. After death there is no change of state; therefore your business is always to be ready to depart in peace, and hasten to an eternal state.

Object. 2. How can this be the property of God's children to desire his coming? Are they always in this temper and frame? Many weak ones tremble at the thought of it for want of assurance of God's love; it is the terror and bondage of their lives to think of Christ's coming; and sometimes the saints do not actually feel such an inclination and strength of desire.

Ans. (1.) The meanest saint hath some inclination this way. Can a man desire that Christ may come into his heart, and will there not be such desires that he may come to judgment, since comfort and reward is more naturally embraced than duty? The very first work of grace is to raise and beget this hope: 1 Peter i. 3, 'Who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope.' (2.) There may be sometimes a drowsiness and indisposition when their lamps are not kept burning: Luke xii. 36, 'And be ye always ready, as those that wait for their Lord.' When they are fallen asleep, they may for the present wish that Christ may not come and take them in this condition; as the wise virgins slept as well as the foolish; so God's own children many times find themselves indisposed for his coming. Careless carriage weakens their hope and the remissness of their watch, yet in all there is a spirit this way, which beginneth with the new birth. A wife desires her husband's coming home, but it may be all things are not ready and in so good order as they should; so all christians desire the coming of Christ, but sometimes they are not so exact and watchful, and therefore their affections are not so lively. Drowsiness creeps upon their hearts, and then God rouseth them by afflictions.

Object. 3. But is this the property of God's children, when we see carnal men, sometimes out of weariness of the present life and trouble of the world, will even long for his coming, and wish for death?

Ans. That is an offer of nature after ease, this is a desire stirred up by the Spirit. Sometimes God's children in their passions desire to be

taken out of the world; as Jonah: chap. iv. 8, 'He fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live;' and Elijah: 1 Kings xix. 4, 'He requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough, now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.' But this is but a shameful retreat from duty, and the heat and burden of the day, and the labours of the present life; these are froward thoughts, not sanctified desires, words of a feverish distemper, not of affection, but it comes from the sickness and weakness of their souls. But this I speak of is a solid looking for, desire, and longing for the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ.

Use 1. It showeth what they are who wish that it may never come. Some would be glad in their hearts to hear such news, that Christ's coming would never be; it is their burden and torment to think of it; as Felix trembled when he heard of judgment to come. These men have the spirit of the devil in them; if they had the Spirit of God in them, would it be so? surely no. A carnal man cannot say the Lord's prayer, for he is afraid he shall be heard. *Optas ut veniat, quem times ne adveniat?* saith Austin. How canst thou say, Thy Kingdom come, when thou art afraid lest God should come?

Use 2. To press us to this earnest looking. Christ looketh, he is not slack: 2 Peter iii. 9, 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise.' If all things were ready, he would come presently. Before he came in the flesh, his delights were with us: Prov. viii. 31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.' And he longeth now he is in heaven: Rev. xxii. 12, 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.' The angels expect it; they would not be found liars, they told us of it: Acts i. 11, '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 saints groan, 'How long, O Lord? how long?' Devils tremble at the thought of it: Mat. viii. 29, 'Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?' The creatures expect it in their kind: Rom. viii. 19, 'For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' All things by a natural instinct are carried to their perfection. Evil men cannot endure to think of it, as Felix trembled at the thoughts of judgment to come. Let not the saints stand out, but expect it earnestly. How much was the first coming of Christ wished for and desired! Abraham rejoiced at the thoughts of it: John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.' Kings and prophets desired to see these things: Luke x. 24, 'For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.' Old Simeon, Luke ii. 25, 'was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel;' yet then he was a child in the cradle, now in glory riding on the clouds, then he came in the similitude of sinful flesh: Rom. viii. 3, 'God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh;' but now he shall appear without sin: Heb. ix. 28, 'Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.' This earnest looking implieth strong faith, longing desires, frequent thoughts.

1. Strong faith. Reason saith it may be, faith saith it shall be.

Divine justice must have a solemn triumph; conscience is afraid of it. Our reward may be delayed, but it cannot stand with the justice of God that it should be abolished and taken away. There is confusion in the world. Dives flowed with ease and plenty when Lazarus was rough-cast with sores. We need to be awed with shame as well as fear. Faith saith he will come; we have his word for it; as unlikely things have come to pass that have been foretold. Were the old believers deceived that expected his coming in the flesh? That a few fishermen should preach the gospel to all nations? this is already done. Christ is contracted with us now, he will come to marry us; he went not away upon discontent. He that loved us so as to come from heaven to earth to take our nature, will he not come in glory? We have of his Spirit, and we enjoy his ordinances as a memorial till he comes, and we have many love-tokens sent us as a pledge that he will come.

2. Longing desires. Our hearts should even spring and leap within us when we hear of Christ's coming. Thus the believers of the old testament, how did they rejoice to hear of a Messiah to come: John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.' Abraham rejoiced to think that a son should come of his loins in whom all the world should be blessed: 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.' How did the patriarchs hug the promises! Oh, sweet promise! this will yield a Messiah, a Christ to the world.

3. There should be frequent thoughts of his coming, as if you always heard the trumpet. Every time thou lookest to heaven, think, I have a Christ there, a rich jewel kept safe; and whenever you see the clouds, think of Christ's coming and going. These clouds were chariots by which Christ went triumphing into heaven, and in like manner he will come again: Dan. vi. 10, 'Daniel went into his house, and his windows being opened towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks unto his God.' Daniel had reason to look towards the temple, though ruined, because of the promise of God to his people that prayed towards the temple; so now and then we should look up to heaven; there is Christ above within the heavens. We are called often to lift up our hearts to God, and our eyes to heaven, from whence we look for a saviour; there is our treasure and our Jesus.

Use 3. Of trial. It is good to see how we stand affected towards this appearing. Nothing can content true christians in the world. Do we look beyond it? Whither is the bent of our hearts? How is it with them?

1. If there were this looking, there would be preparing. A man that expecteth the coming of a king to his house, he will furnish his house accordingly, and make all things ready. Surely you look for nobody when you do not suit and prepare yourselves to entertain them. When the house is sluttish, and the kitchen cold, do you look for great guests? What are we to do to prepare ourselves for Christ's coming?

[1.] Judge yourselves: 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own-

selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates.' By judging yourselves God's act is anticipated.

[2.] Get into Christ: Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' They that are in Christ need not fear God's judgment; you may set Christ's righteousness against Christ's judgment. Guilty felons desire not the judge's presence. Art thou in the case wherein thou wouldst be found of him? 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Be diligent, that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.'

[3.] Walk strictly. We are between the two comings of Christ, his first and his second coming; let us live soberly, righteously, and godly. When a man is providing matter of condemnation for himself, can he be said to look for Christ's coming?

2. How do you entertain Christ for the present in your hearts and in his ordinances? Can a man slight ordinances, and expect Christ's second coming? A woman that never careth to hear from her husband cannot be said to desire his coming; so if Christ has often knocked at the door of our hearts, and we will not give him entrance, how can we be said to look for his appearing?

SERMON XVII.

And the glorious appearing, &c.—TITUS ii. 13.

I PROCEED to the manner of his appearance—the glorious appearing. The note is—

Doct. 2. That Christ's second coming to judgment will be very glorious.

Here I shall show—(1.) How glorious it will be; (2.) Why it will be so glorious.

I. How glorious it will be. You may conceive of it if you consider the preparation for his approach, the appearance itself, and the consequences of it.

First, It will be glorious in regard of the preparation for his approach. The scripture mentions two—the trumpet of the archangel, and the sign of the Son of man.

1. There is that great noise of the voice of the Lord, that begets a terror in the world, which is ministerially managed by an archangel, though the power and success be of God. That great noise startles the dead in their graves, and summons all the world to appear before Christ's tribunal. There is much spoken of this in scripture: 1 Thes. iv. 16, 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God;' Mat. xxiv. 31, 'He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.' Some expound this trumpet analogically, some literally. Analogically; some think it only signifies the power

and virtue of Christ, by which all the dead are awakened out of their sleep, and forced to appear before his tribunal; and they say it is therefore expressed by a trumpet, because the solemn assemblies of Israel were wont to be summoned by the sound of a trumpet. But why may we not take it literally for the audible sound of a trumpet? Look, as at the giving the law, the voice of the trumpet was exceeding loud, so such an audible voice, like the voice of a trumpet, is there when Christ comes to judgment, to require an account of the performance of the law, which is, as it were, a terrible summons to all the world, and a near sign of his coming. Look, as at his first coming Christ had his forerunner and harbinger, John the Baptist, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'The kingdom of God is at hand,' so at his second coming Christ hath his forerunner, an archangel, that shall sound a trumpet, which maketh his coming glorious, because it shall awaken and startle all the world. This sound shall be heard all the world over by the dead; as the prophet speaks, Ezek. xxxvii. 7, 8, of a noise and clattering among the bones, and bone ran to bone, and then they were clothed with flesh and sinews, so such a noise shall there be among the bones when Christ comes to judgment. Here in the church God speaks in a stiller voice, but it is not regarded; he speaks by his angels and messengers; they sound the trumpet to the spiritual battle; they pipe, but few dance, till by his mighty power he raiseth sinners from the dead. So at the last day God hath his messengers; there is the archangel that is to manage the ministerial excitation, and the mighty power of God accompanies it to make the dead live and awaken out of sleep.

2. There is a sign of the Son of man; that is spoken of Mat. xxiv. 30, 'Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.' What it is we cannot certainly tell, until experience manifests; sure we are it must be such a sign as shall make the world sensible of his approach. Some think it shall be some strange star, such as there was at his first coming; the wise men were conducted to Christ by a star: this is but a mere conjecture. Others suppose it shall be the sign of the cross which shall appear in the heavens, because that is Christ's badge, by which he was known here in the world. The great subject of the gospel is Christ crucified, therefore it is called the 'word of the cross;' and so they think the sign of the cross shall be impressed upon the heavens in the sight of all the world. To confirm the conjecture, they urge the appearance that was made to Constantine in his war against Maxentius, the tyrant and persecutor of the church; he saw the sign of the cross, say they, with this inscription, ἐν τούτῳ νικήσεις — By this shalt thou overcome. But Eusebius describes it otherwise, as an X, the first initial letter of Christ's name. But many of the ancient writers went this way, they thought that this way the scandal of Christ is best taken away; the cross, which is now the scandal and offence the world takes at Christ, then shall be his ensign and royal standard, which shall be impressed upon the heavens. Look, as kings when they make a triumphant approach, have their banner carried before them, so Jesus Christ shall have his cross, which is the sign of the Son of man; but in

such a point I dare not thus peremptorily dogmatise. Others more probably (and to which I incline) interpret it of some forerunning beams of majesty and glory, which shall darken the great luminaries of the world, the sun and moon, and so strike terror into the hearts of men. The glory of Christ, which is described to pass through the heavens like lightning, shall be like those morning beams and streaks of light before the body of the sun be risen; as Paul was struck blind with the sight of Christ, 'he saw a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about him,' Acts xxvi. 13. Certainly some sign there shall be that shall make the world fall a-mourning. And it is notable that these preparations and beams of majesty are sometimes expressed by light, and sometimes by fire; by light, to note the comfortableness of it to the godly; it is as the light of the sun, which doth not scorch, but refresh and revive, and cheer the heart: light is comfortable. But then at other times it is represented by fire: 2 Thes. i. 8, it is said, 'The Son of man shall come in flaming fire,' or, as the apostle's word is, ἐν πυρὶ φλογὸς, in fire all a-flame, to show the dreadfulness of his appearance to the wicked. Look, as Joseph told the butler and the baker what Pharaoh would do to them, hang the one and exalt the other, therefore when the messenger comes for them, the butler's heart leaps for joy he was to be preferred, but the baker thought of nothing but dreadful execution that was presignified; just thus shall it be with the wicked and the godly; the sign of the Son of man shall be comfortable to the godly, but it shall be as a flame of fire and devouring burnings, dreadful and formidable to the wicked, whose execution and final judgment now draws near. So much for the preparation.

Secondly, The appearance itself. And there you must consider Christ's personal glory, his attendance, and his work.

1. His personal glory. Certainly that must be exceeding great, if you consider the dignity both of his person and employment.

[1.] The dignity of his person. Mat. xxiv. 30, it is said, he shall come 'in great glory;' at other times, 'in the glory of his Father,' Mat. xvi. 27; that is, he shall come as God's own natural Son, with such a glory as cannot be communicated to any creature. His first coming is like the carpenter's son, mean and despicable; but his second coming is like God's Son. Now, that you may conceive of this glory, you must guess at it by several hints. There shall be great glory put upon the saints: 'Then shall the righteous shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of the Father,' Mat. xiii. 43; and Christ will be 'glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe,' 2 Thes. i. 10. But we do not come in the glory of the Father; when we are glorified, we are not deified; yet our glory shall be so great that men and angels shall stand wondering what God hath done to us. But now Christ is God-man in one person, and that mystery is now to be discovered to the uttermost, the union of the two natures in his person; and therefore he must have such a glory as never creature was capable of, nor can be. He doth not only appear in the text as 'our Saviour,' but as 'the great God.' Guess at it again we may by other appearances of God. When Christ came to give the law, his voice shook Mount Sinai, that Moses trembled and quaked at the hearing of it: Heb. xii. 21, 'So terrible

was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.' Guess at it by the light at Christ's birth, that came from heaven, and shone round about the shepherds, so that they were exceedingly afraid: Luke ii. 9, 'The glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.' Guess at it by the glimpse of his divine glory which Christ gave us in his transfiguration: Mat. xvii. 2, 'His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light,' when his disciples fell upon their faces, and could not endure the shining of his garments. So by the appearance of Christ to Paul that was struck blind for three days: Acts ix. 3, 'And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.' And by the terror the prophet Isaiah felt when he saw God in vision: Isa. vi. 5, 'Woe is me, I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' Because of some relics of corruption, therefore was it terrible and formidable to him. But this glory, though it shall be very great, yet it shall be comfortable to the saints, for sin and weakness shall be done away.

[2.] Especially if you consider his office. He is a judge of all the world, and therefore he shall come with all things that are becoming such a judge. He shall sit upon a visible throne, where he may be seen and heard of all. You know, in earthly judicatories, when great malefactors are brought to trial, the whole majesty and glory of the nation is brought forth; the judge comes in gorgeous apparel, accompanied with the flower of the country, nobles and gentlemen, and a great conflux of people, to make it the more magnificent. So here Christ, the judge of all the world, comes becoming the judge of the world that sits upon a throne of glory and majesty: Mat. xxv. 31, 32, 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with them, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations.' All the world shall be summoned before him. Thus for his personal glory.

2. In regard of his attendants, who are angels and saints, this appearance must needs be very glorious.

[1.] There are angels, multitudes of them, that come with Christ, and with such a glory as cannot be conceived of: Mat. xxv. 31, 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him.' Mark the emphasis of the expression, 'All the holy angels shall come with him.' When a prince removes, the whole court removes with him; so when Christ removes out of heaven, the whole court of heaven removes with him. As Chrysostom saith, Heaven now shall be left void; all the angels shall come out with Christ, that they may be present at this great act. Those blessed mansions shall be forsaken for a while, that they may be present with the judge of the world. Look, as the angels were present at the giving of the law, so also will they be present when the sentence of the law comes to be executed. Thrones, principalities, powers, and dominions, angels, however distinguished, were all made by Christ; he is their head, and they are given to Christ by his Father, as he is Mediator, to be his servants in the mediatory office. And therefore Christ always useth angels. In his conception the angel Gabriel came to Mary. At his nativity, an host of angels came down to acquaint us with the glad tidings of

salvation. In his passion, he was comforted by an angel; at his resurrection, there were angels at his grave; at his ascension, he was carried to heaven by angels; and in the government of the church, in the present dispensation, Christ useth angels more than we are aware of. These principalities and powers are conversant about and in the church; and in the last day's act he shall come with his holy angels. Whether these angels shall then visibly appear, I dispute not; certainly their attendance upon Christ is partly as a train, to make his appearance more full of majesty, and partly because Christ hath a ministry and service for them. Partly as a train to Christ, and to make his appearance more full of majesty. They that waited upon Christ at his ascension will now come to wait upon him at his coming to judgment. Public ministers of justice are made formidable by their attendance and officers. Christ will come like a royal king in the midst of his nobles; and partly because they have also a ministry and service at that day; they are to 'gather the elect from the four winds,' Mat. xxiv. 31. The angels love to be conversant about the saints. They that carried their souls to heaven shall now be employed to bring their bodies out of the grave. The holy angels shall conduct the souls of those that die in the Lord to heaven: Luke xvi. 22, 'The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' So also those angels shall now be employed in bringing their bodies out of the grave. They are still serviceable to the saints, and this is the last office of love they can perform to them, therefore they do it cheerfully. And to the wicked, their office is to force them into Christ's presence, and to bind them up in bundles, as tares for the fire, Mat. xiii. 40, 41. Also, the angels have this ministry and service, to be employed as witnesses; they attend now upon the congregation, to observe your behaviour; therefore the apostle disputes concerning unseemly gestures: 1 Cor. xi. 10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels.' They are privy to our conversations, and able to give an account of our lives. In the assemblies there are more meet than are visible; devils meet, and good angels likewise, to observe your carriage, that they may give account to God. And no sooner shall the sentence be pronounced, but it shall be executed. In a condescension to our capacity, God is pleased to represent the work as done by the ministry of angels. We can understand better the operations of an angel than the operations of Almighty God, because they are nearer to us in being, and are of an essence finite and limited.

[2.] The saints, they are his attendants too. Some shall come from heaven with Christ, others shall be 'caught up in the air to meet the Lord,' 1 Thes. iv. 17. Certainly the wicked shall be left still to tread upon the earth. And this contributes much to the glory of the day, because when Christ appears we appear with him in glory; we shall be like him, we shall suddenly attain to that fulness of glory that their hearts could never conceive of. Oh! what a glorious day must that needs be when so many suns shall meet together! Every one of the elect shall shine more than the sun. Then our spiritual empire and dominion begins; we come to share with Christ in the glory of his kingdom, to be associated with him in judging of the world. Do not then please yourselves with fancies of temporal happiness. 'The

upright shall have dominion over them in the morning,' Ps. xlix. 14. When is that? After they have slept their sleep of death, then God's saints and servants, that are now scorned, censured, and persecuted, in the morning of the resurrection, when they awake to meet with Christ, then doth our glory begin. We are all for a while to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. But look upon all the draughts of the last judgment, and you shall find this method; sentence begins with the godly, but execution begins with the wicked. The books are opened, the godly are called, and they are first acquitted, that afterwards they may join with Christ to judge the world: 1 Cor. vi. 2, 'Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world.' The first process is with the godly, that their faith may be found to praise; but first the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment: Mat. xxv. 46, 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal;' that by others' misery they may be more apprehensive of their own felicity.

3. Another thing that makes the day glorious is his work and powerful executing the work of the day. Jesus Christ is to gather the wicked together, dragging them out of their graves with horror; then to extend and enlarge their consciences, that all their doings may come to remembrance; and then to cast them into eternal darkness, to chase them with the glory of his presence into hell, dragging them out of their graves with terror: Rev. vi. 16, 'They said to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.' They are ashamed to look Christ in the face, whom they have slighted, despised, neglected in the world. Then they shall be ashamed to see the godly preferred; as Haman did fret to see Mordecai put upon the king's horse, and led through the city with triumph, so they are envious to see the preferment of God's children. Then they are cursed out of Christ's presence, and go away yelling and howling, and are led away to their final state, as Haman's face was covered, and then led away to execution. Now Christ hath the most glorious conquest over his enemies that ever he had; now he shows himself like a king, in punishing his enemies and rewarding his friends. In punishing his enemies, stubborn knees shall bow to him; it is not done fully till now. Isa. xlv. 23, there is a decree, 'I have sworn by myself, the word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.' It is a prediction of Christ's sovereignty, and it is ratified with an oath; all God's holiness and glory is laid at stake that it shall be accomplished. Now this prophecy is twice alleged in the New Testament: Phil. ii. 10, 11, 'At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess.' There it is made the fruit of Christ's ascension; what is *swear* in the prophet, there is *confess;* they are both acts of worship, and given to Christ. Presently God gave him this power upon his ascension, for his ascension was his solemn inauguration into the kingly office. Christ was a chosen king, and anointed from all eternity. While he was here in the world he was a king, but when he ascended up on high, then he was a crowned king, and God undertook to make

good this prophecy, 'That every knee should bow to him;' as David was anointed by Samuel, but crowned at Hebron. But some will say, We do not see that all things are put under him; there are damned spirits that resist his counsels, and there are wicked men that rebel against his laws; every knee doth not bow, and every tongue doth not call him Lord. But wait a little, the work is a-doing. Christ's royal office receiveth several accessions of glory and degrees of perfection, till the day of judgment, and then it is discovered in a most imperial manner. The apostle quoteth this place to prove the day of judgment: Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 'Why dost thou judge thy brother? and why dost thou set at nought thy brother? We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.' How doth he prove that? 'For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God;' implying that at the day of judgment this promise shall be fully made good. This is the consummate act of his regal office; then devils and wicked men shall all be made to stoop to Christ. Christ's kingdom is a growing kingdom: Isa. ix. 7, 'Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.' Not only of his government, but of the increase of his government; then it is at its full strength. Therefore it is called 'the day of the Lord;' 2 Peter iii. 10, 'The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night.' Then Christ discovereth himself as Lord in all his royalties and greatness, and makes his enemies shake before him. Then also he shows himself to be a king to his people: Mat. xxv. 34, 'Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand.' Mark the special title that is given to Christ when he invites the saints into his bosom; then we come to receive from Christ the most royal donative and highest fruit of his kingly office.

Thirdly, The consequents of that day. I shall name three—sending of persons judged to their everlasting state, giving up the kingdom to his Father, and burning the world.

1. The sending of persons judged to their everlasting state, the elect into glory, and the wicked into torments. For the elect: Mat. xxv. 34, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Oh! you have been too long absent; Come, blessed children, come into my bosom; come, possess that which was prepared for you before you had a being in the world. And then for the wicked, by a terrible ban and proscription they are excommunicated and cast out of the presence of the Lord: ver. 31, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' A terrible ban and proscription! As Haman's face was covered when the king was angry, and so he was led away to execution, so the wicked banished from Christ's presence are accursed to all eternity, and so enter into their eternal state. Now from this sentence, either of absolution or condemnation, there is no appeal; it is pronounced by Christ as God-man. On earth many times God's sentence is repealed. God may speak of the ruin of a nation, but free grace may interpose: Jer. xviii 7, 8, 'At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to

do unto them.' *Deus mutat sententiam, non decretum*—In the world, though God doth not change his decrees, yet he changeth his sentence many times; the sentence shows what might be, the decree shows what shall be. But now this sentence shall never be reversed. Now is the day of patience, then of recompense; the day of patience is past. It is said, Luke ii. 14, 'Peace upon earth.' God may proclaim war against a soul or people, that he may awaken them to look after their peace; but this is a sentence that shall never be changed. The execution is speedy. Here many times the sentence is passed, but 'not speedily executed against an evil work,' Eccles. viii. 11; but here Christ's sentence presently begins, and the wicked in the very sight of the godly are thrust into hell: Mat. xiii. 30, 'Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn;' which doth awaken the grief and envy of the wicked, when they shall see others gathered into the great congregation, and themselves thrust out. And then the godly have a deeper sense of their own condition. When contraries are put together, they do mutually illustrate one another; so when we see the misery of the wicked, this matures our apprehensions, and makes us have larger thoughts of our deliverance by Christ. And then the sentence is accomplished upon the whole person, and that for ever. Upon the whole man, 'Go ye cursed,' and, 'Come, ye blessed;' both body and soul share in the reward and punishment. And then the sentence is eternal; it remains for ever. Why? For the reward is built upon an infinite merit. The Lord Christ's blood is of an infinite value; the virtue of it lasts to all eternity to secure heaven to us. And the punishment is eternal, because an infinite majesty is offended. In short, God is never weary of blessing the godly, and never weary of cursing the wicked, and accomplishing his judgment and displeasure against them.

2. The next consequent is the resigning and giving up of the kingdom to the Father. You have it described, 1 Cor. xv. 24–28. I suppose this giving up of the kingdom is not taken for the resigning of his kingly office; for Christ still holds the government, and wears the crown of honour to be the head of the church. But *kingdom* here is put for 'the subjects of the kingdom.' He shall finish the present manner of dispensation, and present all the elect to God, and give them up as a prey snatched out of the mouth of the lion; and this is called presenting his spouse to God: Eph. v. 27, 'That he might present it to himself a glorious church.' Christ hath shed his blood, and washed her clean, and decked her with all the jewels of the covenant; and then he shall present her to God; and the form of surrender you have, Heb. ii. 13, 'Behold I and the children God hath given me.' Behold, here I am, and all thou hast given me; there is not one wanting. Oh! what a glorious sight will this be to see the great shepherd of the sheep leading his flock into their everlasting folds, and all the elect following Christ with their crowns of glory upon their heads, singing to the praise of the Lamb, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' &c. To see them with harps in their hands, triumphing thus in the salvation of God, all enemies gone, and the church lodged in everlasting habitations! Besides, consider the acclamation and

applause of the angels. Oh! how should we strive to be one of this number!

3. The next consequent is the burning of the world; that is described at large, 2 Peter iii. 10–12, how that fire shall come out from God, and burn and devour all things, and melt the very firmament. Certainly that fire is to be taken literally, for it is opposed to water, the first water by which the world was destroyed. Now by this fire I conceive the world shall not be consumed, but renewed and purged, because in the everlasting state God will have all things new. He will not only have the bodies and souls of the saints new, but will have new heavens and new earth; for it is 'a deliverance from the bondage of corruption,' Rom. viii. 21. If the world shall be no more the habitation of the saints, yet God will renew the world, that it may be a continual monument of his power. Now this burning of the world some place it in preparation before the day of judgment; but I conceive it is a consequent, for it seemeth to be an instrument of vengeance on the wicked. I will not say, with the schoolmen, the feculent and drossy part of this fire is reserved for the torment of the wicked in hell, but in general it shall be the instrument of God's vengeance upon them; so much is asserted, 2 Peter iii. 7, 'The heavens and earth that now are, by the same word are kept in store, and reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and the perdition of ungodly men.' There are some that say this fire shall begin the day of judgment. *Et causam dicent in flammis*—The wicked shall plead their cause in flames; but this were to execute before the sentence. Sodom's fire was dreadful, but nothing to this burning. It was a dreadful sight when God rained hell out of heaven, and the poor tormented creatures ran screeching and yelling to and fro because of those flakes of fire and brimstone; but this fire shall come out of the throne of the Lord: Dan. vii. 10, 'A fiery stream issued and came out from before him,' to consume his adversaries, and to remain in hell with them for evermore, which will be much more dreadful. God hath *diluvium ignis*, as well as *aquæ*, a deluge of fire as well as of water. As one saith very wittily, As at the first he drowned the world *propter ardorem libidinis*, because of the heat of lust, so in the end he will kindle a fire to burn the world *propter teporem charitatis*, because of the coldness of love. The object of your adulteries will be burnt; God will have nothing impure in the everlasting state, the world shall be purged with fire. Thus you have seen how the appearance of Christ will be glorious.

II. Why the appearance of Christ will be so glorious.

1. To recompense his own abasement. His first coming was in humility; he came riding upon the foal of an ass, but now on the clouds; they are as it were his royal chariot. Then he came with fishermen, a few apostles to be his messengers, but now he comes with angels. Then he came in the form of a servant to be judged; now he comes as the Son of God, to be the judge of all the world. When the day of judgment is spoken of, Christ is called the Son of man: Mat. xxv. 31, 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory;' Mat. xxvi. 64, 'Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven;' and Dan.

vii. 13, 'Behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.' Why so? He that was the Son of man, that came in such a mean condition at first, shall then be glorious, and so it taketh off the scandal of his present estate. He that appeared in so low a condition, that was betrayed, crucified, spat upon, pierced, dead, buried, then shall be crowned with glory and honour. When he came to teach us righteousness, he came as the Son of man: but when he comes to reward righteousness, then he comes as the Son of God.

2. That he might show himself to be fully discharged of sin. The glory bestowed upon his human nature by God the Father noteth his plenary absolution as our surety. We hear that he is taken up into glory, that God hath acquitted him, that 'he was taken from prison and from judgment,' Isa. liii. 8; but then we shall see it with our eyes, when the Father sends him from heaven with power and great glory. At the first Christ came like a man, charged with sin, in the garb of a sinner; therefore it is said, Rom. viii. 3, 'God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh;' but then, Heb. ix. 28, 'He shall appear the second time without sin.' The first time the world looked upon him as one that was forsaken, stricken, and smitten of God; but then he comes as one that is honoured of God: his second coming shall make it evident that he is discharged of the debt which he took upon himself. The apostle doth not say, Those that look for him shall be without sin, but he shall be without sin. The discharge of our surety is enough; it is a sign the debt is paid.

3. He comes in great glory, that he may be as a pledge and pattern and cause of our glory. Christ's coming is still suited to his work. There is his first coming, and that is in humility, for we fell by pride; he came to redeem us, therefore he comes humbly and lowly, in the form of a servant, as one that came to suffer, not to ruffle it in the world, and tread upon the necks of kings. Then there is his spiritual coming into the heart to sanctify it; this coming is invisible; it is with great power, but hidden. But when he comes to glorify us, his coming is suitable to his work, that is visible in power and great glory; therefore it is said, Col. iii. 3, 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.' Christ is to have all first, and we at secondhand, when he comes in grace: John xvii. 10, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.' So we must be glorified at secondhand; first Christ, and then we.

4. Christ comes not simply to glorify us, but to bring the saints to heaven with the more state. O christians! remember Christ thinks he can never do you honour enough. Christ doth not send for us, but he will come in person: John xiv. 3, 'I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.' Look, as the bridegroom comes with the youth and flower of the city, to bring in his bride in state, so Christ brings the flower of heaven, all his holy angels, to conduct us in state to our everlasting mansions.

5. He comes in glory, that all creatures might see his glory to the full. Men and angels were made for this spectacle, that they might behold the glory of Christ. It was evidenced in part at the resurrection:

Rom. i. 4, 'And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' But that was but a private and more covert declaration to the Jews; and when it was published to the world in the gospel, many believed not. We have the spiritual evidences of it to faith, but not to sense and sight. But now the personal union shall fully and undeniably appear, which before appeared but in part; he is now declared to be the great God.

6. His appearing shall be glorious, because then Christ shall have the full conquest over all his enemies. Some of his enemies are still let alone for our exercise; Satan is not destroyed. The infernal spirits are held with the chains of an irresistible providence, and shall then be brought trembling into the presence of Christ: Jude 16, 'The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, to the judgment of the great day.' They are now in expectation of greater doom and terror: Mat. viii. 29, 'Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?' The good angels come forth as Christ's companions, the evil angels as his prisoners. The saints shall judge angels as well as men: 1 Cor. vi. 3, 'Know ye not that we shall judge angels?' Christ will have his people come and set their feet upon the necks of their enemies; for the present God hath a ministry for them; but though the devils now tempt, trouble, and molest the saints for their exercise, yet then the saints shall trimph over them, when they shall be brought like captives into Christ's presence.

Use 1. For information in two things—

1. That humility is the way to glory. This lesson we learn from the two comings of Christ, first in an humble manner, and then in a glorious manner. The devils aspired after greatness; they would be great and not good. The fallen angels set us an ill copy, but Christ came to set us a better. He came not from heaven to teach us to make worlds and work miracles, but to teach us to be humble and lowly: Mat. xi. 29, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.' The way to spiritual preferment is to be low and vile in our own eyes; as the ball that is beaten down riseth the higher.

2. We learn what cause we have to be patient under present abasement. Jesus Christ is contented for a while to lie hid, and not to show himself in all his glory till the end of the world. In the days of his flesh he was trampled upon by wicked men; and now he is in heaven, he is despised in his gospel, in his cause, and in his servants, though his person be above abuse; but he is content to tarry till the day of manifestation, when he will appear in all his glory; so should we.

Use 2.

1. Here is comfort to the godly. To you Christ's appearance is glorious, but not terrible; it is as light, but not as fire; the trumpet sounds, but it summons you to be crowned. The sign of the Son of man shows your Lord is come; it is as the shadow of the husband before his person appeareth: this is your Jesus. Certainly they that have an interest in him will not be afraid of him; for his angels are your guardians, his saints your companions; his appearance is to pro-

nounce your pardon; a crown shall be set upon your heads in the face of all the world. That which is so formidable and dreadful to our thoughts in itself is all comfortable to a child of God. Christ comes as God, but still in the human nature, as your brother. If he be glorious it is for your sakes, that you might be like him; he comes as a pattern of your glory.

2. Here is terror to them that lie in their sins. How can they hear of these things without astonishment? You that despise the still voice when God speaks to you by the angel of the church, what will you do when you hear the great trump which will be an alarm to death and execution? Your avenger is come. Christ's sign is not light, but terror to you. If you tremble not, you are worse than Felix, an heathen, for Felix's heart trembled when he heard of judgment to come, Acts xxiv. 25; he had a more tender conscience. Nay, such as do not, they are worse than Satan; for the devils fear and tremble, James ii. 19. Loose and carnal persons scoff at that at which devils tremble. It is storied of a king that wept when his brother came to him: being asked the reason, Oh! saith he, I that judge others must be judged myself! Shall not I tremble at the great trumpet that shall awaken the dead? Oh! take sanctuary in grace.

3. Here is advice to all. It is a good check to sin; it stays the boiling of the pot. Remember, when thou art in the career and heat of thy lusts, 'for all these things God will bring thee to judgment,' Eccles. xi. 9. Whenever thou sinnest, thou art entering into the lists with Christ, as if thou wert stronger than he. But man, canst thou grapple with him? Then it is an engagement to repentance. When Jacob heard Esau was coming with a great power and force against him, he sends to make peace with him. You have heard that Christ comes in a glorious manner, and will be terrible to his enemies. Let us compromise all difference between us and God. Oh! go and make peace with him. It is Christ's own advice: Luke xiv. 32, 'Or else while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and desireth conditions of peace.' And repent, saith the apostle, 'that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,' Acts iii. 19. Then it is of use to make you constant in walking in the fear of the Lord: Eccles. xii. 13, 14, 'Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man: for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.' Especially it is an engagement to faithfulness in your calling, especially ministers: 2 Cor. v. 9, 'Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' Again, it urgeth you to keep the commandments; Christ will bear you out: 'Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,' 1 Tim. vi. 14. And then he presseth to diligence; he comes with crowns in his hands to reward all that are faithful to him: 1 Peter v. 4, 'And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away;' 2 Tim. iv. 1, 'I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearance, and his kingdom;' 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?' The day of judgment respects our callings, especially as ministers; Christ's officers must give an account; and in whatever condition God hath set us in, wherein he expects a trial of our faithfulness, we are to consider what we must do.

SERMON XVIII.

Of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.—TITUS ii. 13.

I COME to the description of the person who shall appear, who is described by a title of power and a title of mercy and love, because in Christ's person there is greatness and goodness mixed; for he is called 'the great God;' there is his attribute of power and majesty; and then there is a comfortable name and title, 'Our Saviour.' That both these titles do belong to the same person, the fathers have abundantly, proved against the Arians. In the original there is but one article, *τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν*, 'that great God and our Saviour.' We have just such another expression, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 'He shall deliver up the kingdom to that God and Father,' *τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρὶ*; that is, to God even the Father. So here 'the great God and Saviour,' that is, the God that is the Saviour. Besides, there is another argument that the words must be referred to the same person, because it is never said anywhere the Father doth appear, but only Jesus Christ, and therefore the appearance of the great God must needs be applied to Jesus Christ.

I shall handle these titles conjunctly and severally.

I. Look upon them conjunctly and together, and there you may observe the mingling of words of power and words of goodness and mercy in Christ's style and title. I observe it the rather because it is often found in scripture. But for what reasons are these titles of mercy and power thus mingled and coupled together?

1. For the comfort of the saints, to show that Christ in all his glory will not forget himself to be a Saviour. At the day of judgment, when he comes forth like the great God with all his heavenly train, then he will own us, and will be as tender of us as he was upon the cross. The butler in his advancement, when he was at court and well at ease, forgot Joseph in prison; but Christ in his advancement doth not grow shy and stately. We may have boldness in the great day, for he will not only come as 'the great God,' but also as 'our Saviour.' We have the like expression, Heb. viii. 1, 2, 'We have such an high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens.' And what follows? 'A minister of the sanctuary.' Jesus Christ certainly had a gracious welcome into heaven, and was exalted by the Father; but even now he is our faithful agent in heaven. This is made to be the excellency and height of his condescension, that he came in the form of a servant, in the fashion of an ordinary man, poor and despic-

able. Then he came to do the church service, and now he is gone to heaven in all his glory; still he is there as a servant, as one that is to negotiate with God for holy things, to tender our prayers to the Lord, and to pass our blessings to us; this is Christ's employment in heaven.

2. To show the mystery of Christ's person, in whom the two natures meet; there is not only the majesty of the Godhead, but also the human nature by which he claims kin of us. I observe it because the scripture takes notice of it: Isa. ix. 6, 'To us a child is born, to 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.' What a mixture of titles is here! He is called 'a child,' yet 'the everlasting Father;' 'Wonderful,' yet the 'Counsellor;' one that is intimate with his people, he gives sweet counsel to them. He is called 'the mighty God,' and then presently 'the Prince of Peace.' Christ's person is the greatest mystery and riddle in the world; he is God and yet man. He is, as the apostle saith, Heb. vii. 3, 'Without father and without mother,' as Melchizedec; yet he had both father and mother, a father in heaven, and a mother upon earth. He was without mother as to his divinity, and without father as to his manhood. Another place where the same method is observed: Zech. xiii. 7, 'Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my fellow.' He is called 'the Man,' but yet God calls him 'his fellow;' our brother, and God's son. There are so many mysteries that meet in Christ's person, that under the law he could not be figured and represented by one sacrifice, Lev. xvi. 15, 21. There were two sacrifices chosen to represent Christ; there was the goat to be slain for the sin-offering, and then the scape-goat; one was not enough, because there are in Christ two natures—a God that could not die, and a man that could not overcome death. The goat that was slain showed he was crucified in the flesh, and the goat that was let go showed that he did yet live by the power of God: 2 Cor. xiii. 4, 'For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God.' Or as another apostle hath it: 1 Peter iii. 18, 'Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.' There was his human nature as he was man, that he might die to answer the goat that was slain; then his divine nature that he might live and overcome death.

3. To compare his two comings, and to show that Christ doth not forget his old work. His first coming was in humility, to save, not to judge: John xii. 47, 'I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.' So 1 John iv. 14, 'We have seen and do testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world.' But then his second coming is in more majesty; then he comes as a God to judge. To consider him as a severe judge, that would make our heart tremble; but to consider him as a Saviour, that is comfortable; then he remembers his old relation for the elect's sake. In short, he is 'the great God, and our Saviour,' to show his double work and office at the last day; he is 'a Saviour' to his own people when he comes to show himself to be 'the great God,' to punish the wicked that would not accept of grace and salvation.

4. To give us a taste and pledge both of his willingness and ability to do us good. He is a mighty God, and yet a Saviour: certainly

there is a difference between God and man. If we pardon and do good, it is out of need, because we dare not do otherwise; but Jesus Christ is the mighty God, strong enough to revenge, yet our Saviour, gracious enough to save and pardon. The coupling of these words shows that Christ is not a Saviour out of necessity, but good-will. Men forbear their enemies out of policy, not pity: 2 Sam. iii. 19, 'These men the sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me.' Power makes us cruel. Who finds his enemy, and slays him not? 'If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?' 1 Sam. xxiv. 19. Among men observe it, and you will find the weakest are most pitiful and merciful. Why? Because they need pity and commiseration themselves from others. But now Jesus Christ, that hath the greatest power, hath also the greatest mercy and the greatest love. He is the mighty God, but yet the Prince of Peace. He will be a mighty God rather in saving than in destroying; though he hath all power in his hands, yet he will exercise it in acts of mercy. We abuse our power to acts of oppression and violence. Oh! when shall we learn of Christ to be mighty and yet saving; there cannot be a happier conjunction than when greatness and goodness, power and good-will, are met together. Remember, power is only given us to do good with it; and to do good is some resemblance of Christ. What a comfort is this to the faithful, that Christ is 'the great God,' and also 'a Saviour,' both able and willing to do them good, and to bestow abundance of grace upon them!

5. To show what Christ is to the saints. Whenever he shows himself a Saviour, there he doth also show himself to be a mighty God. Together with acts of grace and favour there are issued out acts of power and strength; there is a concomitant operation of power, together with an act of pardon and grace. I find the scripture speaking of this; he pardoneth as a strong God: Micah vii. 18, 'Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity?' &c. In the original, who is אל which signifies a strong God like unto thee: and so Junius renders it. So Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, 'The Lord, the Lord God,' אל, the strong God, 'merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.' Moses plainly alludes to it: Num. xiv. 17, 18, 'Now I beseech thee let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression.' Whenever God shows grace in pardoning sin, he shows power also in subduing sin. So Ps. lxii. 11, 'God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongs to God.' And presently, ver. 12, 'Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy.' Both these are dispensed together. Those that come to God for relief are under a double trouble—distempered affections as well as a guilty conscience; therefore know for your comfort, mercy and power belong to God, and in the dispensation they usually go together: 2 Peter i. 3, 'According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness.' Christians, if you go to God aright, you go to him not only for life, that you may be respited from destruction, but for godliness; not only for acts of grace, but for acts of power; as wrath and power are suited to the reprobate, so mercy and power to the godly.

6. To show that Christ is not only a desirable friend, but a dreadful

adversary. You must close with him as a Saviour, or else you shall find him to your cost to be a mighty God. You must submit to him or be destroyed; you must accept of mercy or feel the power of his wrath. And thus in scripture Christ is represented with a golden sceptre and with an iron mace, to dash his enemies in pieces like a potter's vessel. You must touch his golden sceptre, or feel the weight of his iron rod. He that saveth can punish, and crush as well as comfort. Again, we read of a banner of love and of a flying roll of curses; and therefore, as there is mercy and sweetness in Christ, so he is represented as a dreadful adversary. Usually we presume on God's mercy and fear man's power, but this should not be so. Oh! observe the counsel the Lord gives: Isa. xxvii. 5, 'Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me.' Blessed God! who is able to grapple and deal with thee in thy strength? but we overcome by yielding. Let us humble ourselves betimes; that is taking hold of his strength, and making power our friend. It is an allusion, not to a wrestler, for so how can our hands be strong and our hearts endure in the day he shall deal with us? but to a suppliant; when a parent or master is ready to strike, the child takes hold of his arm, and seeks terms of peace, and entreats him to pacify his wrath; so saith the Lord, Make strength your friend, then his power, which otherwise would be your enemy is engaged to you.

7. To preserve that mixed affection which best becomes the present state we are in. Our state is mixed, and we act best under a mixed affection. God would have us not only love him, but fear him; and therefore he is represented as a mighty God as well as a gracious Saviour, that we may come to him with reverence, and yet with confidence. That is the proper temper of a gracious spirit in all our addresses to God: Ps. ii. 10, 'Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.' Fear mixed and tempered with love is most regular, so is love that is guided with fear; therefore, when you pray to him, and worship him, and serve him, remember he is the 'great God;' but lest that should breed bondage and dejection in your spirits, remember he is also 'our Saviour.' How sweet would this be, if we could but make use of both these titles whenever we have to do with him! Our affections should be mixed as Christ's titles are. It is said of the church, Acts ix. 31, 'They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.' This doth well together—fear God and rejoice in God. Do not dally with a Saviour, and please yourselves in cherishing a loose comfort, when you neglect duty, and are touched with no awe of God; and then do not indulge a legal dejection; the 'great God,' whom you dread and reverence is your 'Saviour.' Therefore are the titles of Christ mixed, to beget a sweet temperature of fear and love. So much for the conjunct consideration of the words.

II. Let us come to handle them apart particularly, but briefly—

First, Of the style of his power, 'The great God.' Here is a pregnant testimony of the deity of Christ.

Doct. That Jesus Christ, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is the great God.

He is called 'the great God,' partly in opposition to those λεγόμενοι θεοὶ, that are only called gods, the vanities of the gentiles. There are

many that are called gods: 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6, 'For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' And partly in opposition to the gods of man's making; so the devil is gotten to be a god: 'The god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not,' 2 Cor. iv. 4. So we read of those 'whose god is their belly,' Phil. iii. 19. As the strength of men's desires run out, so they set up many gods, either Mammon or Bacchus. And partly in opposition to those representative gods, magistrates, who are called gods: Ps. lxxxii. 6, 'I said ye are gods.' They resemble God in their power and sovereignty, and administration of justice, and large opportunity of doing good. But the chief reason why Christ is called 'the great God' is to show that he is not inferior to the Father; to remove the scandal of his abasement; he is not a God by courtesy or grant, but by nature, equal in power, and majesty, and glory, to God the Father.

To confirm this I shall prove—(1.) That considering his work, he ought to be God; no inferior mediator could serve the turn; (2.) That he is God, and able to perform this work.

First, Consider his work, and so he ought to be God. The work of the Mediator could be despatched by no inferior agent. Consider the Mediator in all his offices, as prophet, priest, and king.

1. For his prophetical office. As a prophet, he was to be greater than all prophets and apostles. It is above man's capacity to be the great doctor of the church. In regard of his outward work, the discovery of the gospel, and of the riches of God's grace, it could be made by none but he that was in the bosom of the Father: John i. 18, 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' None could tell us what bowels, what affections, what purposes of grace the Father had concerning sinners, but Christ that was in his bosom: Mat. xi. 27, 'No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.' As an external lawgiver in the gospel, Christ, the great doctor of the church, ought to be authentic, a lawgiver from whose sentence there is no appeal, a lord in his own house: Heb. iii. 4–6, 'For every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house.' Moses was but a servant, who received the external law from Christ upon Mount Sinai; it was Christ whose voice shook the mount, Heb. xii. 26. But chiefly in regard of his inward work, as he is to be a fountain of wisdom to all the elect: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom.' Men may teach the ear, but Christ must teach the heart. Blind men cannot see the sun though it shine ever so clearly. Light has come into the world, but darkness comprehends it not; we must have eyes as well as light, now it is only divine power can open the eye of our understanding, and give us spiritual illumination.

2. As for his kingly office a finite power would never suffice for that. Christ is to break the force of enemies, to raise the dead, to pour

out the Spirit, to bestow grace and glory; all these are Christ's donatives as king of the church. As a king he is to be an original fountain of life to all the elect: 'As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me,' John vi. 57. All these things are the glory of God, which he will not give to another, and they cannot be performed by any but God. The creatures are limited; they have not such a vastness in them, that out of their fulness we might receive grace for grace, as we do from Christ: John i. 16, 'Of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace.'

3. For his priestly office, this shows he ought to be God. Of this there be two acts—his oblation and intercession.

[1.] For his oblation and sacrifice, he must offer up himself, one for all, and that but once, and that to expiate sin, and procure the favour of God for ever; now who could do this but God? He must offer up himself; he must be priest as well as sacrifice, therefore must have a power over his own life, to lay it down, and take it up; and that no creature hath; for whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. And thus had Jesus Christ an absolute power of life and death over that nature he assumed; therefore it is said, Heb. ix. 14, 'Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.' Then one must be offered for all: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'If one died for all, then were all dead.' Therefore that person which suffered was to be virtually all those for whom he suffered, that is, infinitely as good and better than all. Look, as they said to David, Thou art better than ten thousand of us, so Jesus Christ, that was given one for all, must be such a person as is better than all men. A general given in ransom will redeem thousands of private soldiers; so the worth of Christ's person made him equivalent in dignity to the worth of all those whose persons he sustained. In all ages his death is a standing remedy; God had more satisfaction than if angels and men had been made a sacrifice. And mark, it was done but once. The wages of sin was eternal death; now something there must be to recompense and countervail the eternity of the punishment, and nothing could counterpoise this but the infiniteness and excellency of Christ's person; therefore we are said to be redeemed by the blood of God: Acts xx. 28, 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood;' that is, with the blood of that person that was God. It was necessary he should come out of his sufferings, for if he were always suffering we could have no assurance that God was satisfied. If our surety were not taken from prison and judgment, how should we know the debt was paid? Isa. liii. 8. How shall this be reconciled, that he is to suffer but once, and but a while, and yet to do that which should countervail eternity? It was because of the value of his person, as a payment in gold takes up lesser room than if paid in silver. Then his aim in all was to expiate sin, and nothing but an infinite good could remedy an infinite evil. The person wronged is infinite, so is the person suffering; and then he was not only *ἀντίλυτρον*, a ransom to redeem us from hell, but *ἀντάλλαγμα*, a price given to God, to purchase for us heaven and eternal glory. An ordinary surety, if he pays the debt, he frees the debtor from bonds, and hath done his work; but Jesus Christ was no ordinary surety; he was to bring us to grace and favour with God, and to merit heaven for

us; now such a person as could lay an obligation upon God must needs be infinite.

[2.] Then for intercession, the other act of his priesthood. He that intercedes with God must be God, to know our wants and necessities. As the high priest had the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast and shoulders, Exod. xxxix. 8–14, so Jesus Christ hath the names of all the elect; he knows their desires, wants, conflicts; he is to negotiate with God in behalf of all believers, that he may despatch blessings suitable to their state. Now who can do this but God, who knows the hearts and tries the reins? Who could know our needs, our wants, our thoughts, sins, prayers, groans, desires, purposes, throughout all the world? Who can wait upon our business day and night, and continually interpose, that wrath do not break out upon us, but such an all-sufficient Saviour as he is?

Secondly, That he is God, and so fitted for this work. In times of delusion it is good to settle foundations, and give you grounds of faith. It may be a discourse upon the godhead of Christ men may think unnecessary: 1 John v. 20, 'This is the true God and eternal life;' Isa. ix. 6, 'The mighty God;' and here in the text he is called 'the great God;' Rom. ix. 5, 'God blessed for ever.' These proofs are so pregnant that they need no illustration. And certainly he is not God by grant or courtesy, but it doth unavoidably follow, if he be God, he must be so by nature, for the Lord will not give his glory to another. Nay, Col. ii. 9, 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' that is, essentially; not only divine qualities, such as are infused into us, but the whole essence of the Godhead was in him as in its proper residence. Again, Phil. ii. 6, 'Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' It was not a usurpation of another's right. And you know this doctrine Christ himself preached: John v. 18, 'Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.' Certainly when Christ said God was his Father, he did not mean it in an ordinary sense, as he is our God and Father, but as his eternal everlasting Son. Thus Christ is the great God.

Use 1. Let us observe the love of Christ in becoming man, and let us improve it.

1. Observe it. Men show love when they have another's picture about their necks. What love did Christ show when he took our natures! To see the great God in the form of a servant, hanging upon the cross, this is wonderful condescension. Christ's incarnation was a glorious contrivance: 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.' If God had not revealed it, it would have been blasphemy for us to think it. Angels stoop to see it, the prophets studied it again, how should the saints admire it! Among the friars they count it a mighty honour done to their order if a great prince, when he is weary of the world, cometh and taketh their habit, and dieth in their habit. Certainly it is a mighty honour to mankind that the Son of God should take upon him the nature of man, and die in our nature, and that the Word should not only be made flesh, but be made sin, and made a curse for us.

2. Improve it.

[1.] Let us be desirous to be made partakers of his nature, as he is of our nature: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye may be partakers of the divine nature.' Christ's partaking of our nature was his abasement; the sun of righteousness went backward; but our partaking of the divine nature is our preferment.

[2.] Let us use ourselves more honourably for Christ's sake. The Philistines would no more tread on that threshold on which their idol Dagon fell, 1 Sam. v. 5. Shall we defile that nature which the Son of God assumed? Certainly 'every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour,' 1 Thes. iv. 4.

Use 2. Here is an invitation to press us to come to Christ, or by Christ to God, Christ is worth a thousand of us. We are to seek a match for our master's Son. Our way to win you is to tell you what he is, that those who have given up their names to him may keep themselves as pure virgins till his coming: 2 Cor. xi. 2, 'I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ.' Now, that you may be wrought upon, I will tell you what he is. He is God-man in one person; he is man, that you may not be afraid of him; and God, that he may do you good. He is the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the heir of all things, the Saviour of the world, a proper object for your faith: 1 Peter i. 21, 'Who by him do believe in God, who raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.' He knows your wants, and is able to supply them; yea, 'he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him; Heb. vii. 25. Though we are unworthy, yet he needeth no portion with us; we can bring nothing to him, but he hath enough in himself, I am God all-sufficient; as Esther had all things for her purification given her at the king's cost. Nay, it is danger to neglect 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.' It is God wooeth you; he will take you with nothing; you bring him nothing but necessity, but he will pay all your debts. Nay, nothing can hurt you as long as he is on your side: Rom. viii. 31, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' Do not leave, then, till you can say as Thomas, John xx. 28, 'My Lord and my God.' Take him, but give him the honour of a God, adoration, invocation, faith, and love.

Use 3. Direction.

1. If we would see God, let us look on Christ as we look on the sun in a bason of water. Christ is the character of his Father's person: Heb. i. 3, 'Who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.'

2. If we would see sin without horror and despair, let us look on Christ; all the heavenly powers could not bring us into favour with God again.

Secondly, For the title of mercy and love. Christ is a Saviour as well as the great God. How is Christ the Saviour? Take it thus, positively as well as privatively; he doth not only free us from misery, but gives us all spiritual blessings: 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.' As he frees us from misery, so he gives us everlasting life: John iii. 16, 'That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Then he is a saviour, not only by way of deliverance, but by way of prevention; he doth not only break the snare, but keeps our feet from falling; he not only cures our diseases, as a physician when we are sick, but he leads, guides, and keeps us as a shepherd. We do not take notice of preventive mercy. How many times might we fall if we had not a saviour? Prevention is better than escape; better never meet with danger than be delivered out of danger. There is an invisible guard; we are not sensible of it, but the devil knows and is sensible of it: Job i. 10, 'Thou hast made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side.' Again, he is a saviour by way of merit and by way of power; not only to rescue us from Satan, but to redeem us to God. If a man would deliver a condemned person, it is not enough to take him by force out of the executioner's hands, but he must satisfy the judge. Thus hath Christ done, not only delivered us from the power of darkness, but God in Christ is well-pleased; he hath satisfied his Father's wrath. Again, before his exaltation he redeemed us, then he deserved our salvation, and afterwards he works our salvation. When he was upon earth he was a saviour by merit, therefore it is said we have salvation by his death: 1 Thes. v. 9, 'God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us.' And after his exaltation he works out our salvation, and so we are saved by his life: Rom. v. 10, 'Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' Living and dying he is ours, that so living and dying we might be his. Again, he saves not only for a while, so as we might be lost afterwards, but for ever; therefore it is called eternal salvation: Heb. v. 9, 'And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.' He saves us not only from temporal misery, but from hell and damnation; he saves not only the body, but the soul. Nay, he saves not only from hell, but the very fear of it: Heb. ii. 15, 'And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' He not only delivers us from the hurt of death, but the fear of it. He doth not only give us heaven, but hope, and frees us from bondage and despair. He not only saves us from the evils after sin, but from the evil of sin. So Mat. i. 21, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins;' and there is the chief point of his salvation. In short, he not only saves us in part, but to the utmost: Heb. vii. 25, 'Wherefore he is able also to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him.' He not only gives us grace at first, but all things that are necessary to life and godliness.

Use 1. Bless God for Christ, that he hath taken the care of our salvation into his own hands. He would not trust an angel with it, none was fit for it but him: Isa. lix. 16, 'He saw, and there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him.' Christ did as it were look down from heaven, and say, Alas! there are poor creatures like to perish for want of a saviour; I will go down and

help them myself. Look, as when Jonah saw the storm, he said, 'Take me up, and cast me into the sea, and then shall the sea be calm to you,' Jonah i. 12; so when the Lord Christ saw the tempest raised, he said, Cast me into the sea. 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God,' Heb. x. 9. The storm was raised for Jonah's sake, but we raised the storm, and yet Christ would be cast in to appease it; therefore bless God for Christ.

Use 2. Get an interest in him. Oh! be not quiet till you are able to say, Our Saviour. You can take no comfort in the great God until the next title follows, and you can call Christ your Saviour; but that is matter of joy and comfort: Luke i. 46, 47, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.'

But what shall we do that we may apply this?

1. Reject all other saviours: 'Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,' Acts iv. 12. Mark, when God threatened a deluge to sweep away the old world, there was no safety but in the ark; if the world had devised other ships, yet they would not hold out against the flood; so whatever you do, unless you close with Christ, and are grafted and implanted into Christ, as members of his body (for he is only the saviour of his body), you are not safe. But especially take heed of making a saviour of self, that we are wont to set up instead of Christ, of setting up the merit of thy works, and the power of thy nature; the one renounceth the humiliation of Christ, the other his exaltation. Be at a loss till you close with Christ, for Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. The sinking disciples cried, 'Lord, save us, we perish,' Mat. viii. 25. It is long ere God bringeth us to this. We never look after Christ till we are ready to perish and be undone. Why should we make choice of a saviour but in case of danger? Faith necessarily implies this, a renouncing ourselves, not in words, but in the temper and frame of our hearts. You cannot practise swimming on shore or on the firm land, but then we strive to swim when we are ready to perish in the flood; so when you are utterly lost in yourselves, then you will look after Christ.

2. Be earnest with God for an interest in Christ, and for the manifestation of it. Cry out with David, Ps. xxxv. 3, 'Say to my soul, I am thy salvation.' You must choose Christ as a Saviour. Faith is a consent to take Christ as God offers him; you must consent to the articles of the covenant of grace, that you will have no other Saviour but Christ: Lam. iii. 24, 'The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.' And go to God that he would ratify your choice by his consent; desire God that he would say, Amen, that Christ might be thy Saviour. You had better be a beast than a man if you have not an interest in this salvation. The death of a beast is the end of his woe and labour, but then yours begins. The greatest part of salvation is to be delivered from evil to come; therefore be earnest with God, that your interest in this salvation might be cleared up.

SERMON XIX.

Who gave himself for us, &c.—TITUS ii. 14.

IN this paragraph I have observed—(1.) The teacher; (2.) The lesson; (3.) The encouragements to learning. The teacher is the grace of God. The lesson is the whole duty of our heavenly calling. The encouragements to learning are twofold—some taken from the hope of eternal life, and some from the end and effect of Christ's death. I have finished the former, and now come to the latter sort, taken from the end and effect of Christ's death. So that, whether we look forward or backward, we still meet with obligations to obedience. Forward, there is a glorious and blessed hope; backward, there is a great obligation established upon the creature, 'The Lord Christ gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity.' Certainly there is a lawful use of hope that hath a great influence upon grace, but the great principle of the gospel is gratitude and thankfulness to Christ; therefore let us look upon this second encouragement. We enter upon other services out of hopes, but we enter upon Christ's service out of thankfulness and gratitude; it is an ingenuous service.

In this verse you have—

1. Christ's act—'He gave himself for us.'

2. His aim, 'To redeem us,' &c; and this is expressed partly by the privative part, 'To redeem us from all iniquity;' and partly by the positive part of it, 'And purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Here is redemption and sanctification. I observe it the rather because both parts are suited to the exhortation. There was the privative part, 'Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts;' and suitably hereunto we are 'Redeemed from all iniquity;' then the positive part, 'Living soberly, righteously, godly.' So Christ did not only die to free us from hell, but to make us holy; where we have the inward constitution, 'To purify unto himself a peculiar people;' and the outward conversation, or the sign and manifestation of it, 'Zealous of good works.' All these things are arguments to enforce the matter in hand. There is the act of Christ. Shall Christ die for us, and we cherish his enemy? Shall he be our Saviour, and we hug and cherish that which is contrary to him, worldly lusts and ungodliness in the heart? Then his aim, he died to free us from the bondage of sin; therefore they that would have their sins live are said to put their Redeemer to shame, and make his kindness void. Then Christ died to make us a peculiar people, and shall we live as the rest of the multitude do? We expect great benefit from him, therefore certainly we must be holy, and not pick and choose how we would have him a Saviour unto us.

I begin with the first thing, Christ's act, 'He gave himself for us;' that is, to be an expiatory sacrifice. He gave himself to die for us: John xvii. 19, 'I sanctify myself for their sakes;' that is, set apart myself as a sacrifice;' 1 Tim. ii. 6, 'Who gave himself a ransom for all.'

The point is, Christ's willingness to suffer for the fallen and lost creature.

1. I shall demonstrate it by some expressions by which it is discovered.

2. Give the grounds why Christ gave himself by such a willing resignation to be our propitiatory sacrifice, to be a ransom to God.

1. For the expressions of his willingness; and there I shall begin with his eternal longings to be with the sons of men before ever there was hill or mountain in the world: Prov. viii. 31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.' Mark, long before ever the world was, Jesus Christ was feasting himself with the thoughts of his own grace, and what he would do for men. He desired the making of the world, and fixing the bounds of our habitation, that he might be with us; there was his end. Angels were the workmanship of his hands as well as men; nay, in their frame and constitution they were more noble creatures than man; yet Christ doth not say, My delight was to be with angels, but with the sons of men. I was thinking of the day I should come into the world, and die for men, and purchase exceeding grace for them. The next expression is Ps. xl. 7, 8, when God's decree came to be expressed and made known to the church, see what Christ saith, 'Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.' For the understanding of this place, you must know the divine justice is there introduced as proposing its demands; God in his justice, as it were, speaking thus to Christ, Son, I am weary of sacrifice and burnt-offerings: hitherto I have showed myself gracious to the world, whilst burnt-offerings stood; now I resolve to show myself just; as the apostle explains this, Rom. iii. 26, 'To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just.' As long as God accepted of burnt-offerings, he was a God of patience and forbearance, and not willing to execute his wrath upon creatures; burnt-offerings served the turn. But, saith God, the world shall know, though I pardon, yet I will be just; therefore now you must take a body, man's blood is tainted, and you must be formed in fashion like one of them, and stand in the sinner's stead. I shall expect from you satisfaction for every elect person; you must give your cheeks to the nippers, and your back to the smiters; you must be tempted by the devil, hunted and baited by men, to be responsible to my just wrath. The decree is passed, a body is prepared, you must take it, and go down to the sons of men; you are the sinner in the law if you take this body. These were the demands of God to Christ. Now, saith Christ, 'Lo I come to do thy will.' Father, I am willing to stand in their stead, to accept of all, to be responsible to thy justice. So when Christ was come in the flesh: John iv. 34, 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.' What was the work for which God sent Christ? Sad work, to make reconciliation for sinners, to die in their stead; and yet, saith Christ, 'This is my meat.' Look, as a hungry man prizeth his food, so doth the Lord Christ value and prize his work, nay, infinitely more. Christ himself was then hungry, and had sent to the market to buy provision, but he had now met with other meat to eat, he was dealing with a poor lost soul. Nay, we have not yet the

full of the expression, for Christ seems to speak there by way of excellency; this was his choice dish, the diet that suited with his appetite. God hath vouchsafed us great store of creatures, but some meats we relish better than others; as Isaac loved his venison, that was meat for his tooth. And when we come to a feast, every one saith of the dish he most affects, This is my meat; so Christ seems to speak, 'My meat,' by way of eminency; that is the dish I affect, that my soul longs to taste of; it is to do my Father's work, and to be employed for the salvation of sinners. Nay, yet further; Christ seems to speak by way of appropriation, 'My meat;' that is, mine alone; he alone tasted of this cup. At this table none eat but he, none was to taste of his Father's wrath but he, none was to drink of this bitter cup but he. Again, Luke xii. 50, 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!' The baptism Christ speaks of there was the baptism of blood, to make a laver of his own blood. He was about to make a bath for sinners, to wash our garments white; and he thought he never could soon enough empty his veins, and go to the last work wherewith our redemption was to be accomplished, to close up all with his death: I am straitened and troubled in spirit till the time come. Another emphatical expression we have, Luke xxii. 15, 'With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.' Why was Christ so earnest to eat that passover? Because it was the last; it was a passover that was sauced with gall and vinegar, much more sharp than that which the Jews offered him upon the cross; it was the immediate forerunner of his agonies and bitter sorrows in the garden; yet 'With desire have I desired it.' It is a Hebraism: Oh! my soul vehemently and earnestly hath longed for this time. Another expression we have, Mat. xvi. 22, 23. Peter had dissuaded Christ from suffering: 'Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee.' Christ rebuked him, 'Get thee behind me, Satan;' compared with Mark iv. 10. With the same indignation that he rebukes the devil tempting him to idolatry, he rebukes Peter dissuading him from suffering. His heart was set upon the work of our redemption, therefore Peter is thus rebuked. Another expression of his willingness is his bidding Judas hasten his work: John xiii. 27, 'What thou dost, do quickly.' Certainly it was not out of an approbation of his sin, but a testimony of his love; the sooner the better. Christ, when he considered that poor creatures had souls to save, and all was not finished; thought the traitor was too slow, for he desired to get his body upon the cross, and finish all his work for our salvation. Again, his behaviour at his death showed his willingness. Christ had the command of legions of angels, but would not suffer one disciple to draw his sword. He might have prevented all, and have withdrawn himself from their fury, for he foreknew what would befall him. He had been discoursing with his disciples, and encouraging them to bear the trial patiently, yet doth not forsake the place of his usual resort; he goes to the garden where he knew Judas would betray him, being willing to despatch all. One expression more we have, which gives you an account of his patience in suffering: Isa. liii. 7, 'He was oppressed, he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.'

The poor sheep when under the shearer's hands is meek and dumb, and the lamb goes to the slaughter without howling and crying; so doth the Lord Christ go to the altar quietly without struggling.

II. For the grounds of this willingness. They are his own love and his obedience to his Father's will. Sometimes it is said that Christ gave himself, and sometimes it is said that God the Father gave Christ. Christ gave himself: Gal. i. 4, 'Who gave himself for our sins.' God the Father is said to give him: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.' In some places it is made an act of his own personal love: Gal. ii. 20, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me; and Eph. v. 25, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.' At other times it is made to be an act of obedience: Phil. ii. 8, 'He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross;' and John x. 18, 'This commandment I received of my Father.' Indeed there was a concurrence of both, of love in Christ, and obedience to his Father.

1. There was a love to us. Christ was drawn to this work with no other cords but his own bowels. It was love that brought him out of heaven, and love nailed him to the cross, and love laid him in the grave, and made him free among the dead. If you ask, Upon what errand came the Son of God out of the bosom of the Father? I answer Upon a design of love. Of what sickness he died? I answer—Of love; not by constraint certainly; though he died a violent death, it was merely by consent: John x. 18, 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself;' Rev. i. 5, 'To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.'

2. There was his obedience to God. As Jesus Christ was God, so by one and the same will doth the Father give Christ, and the Son give himself; for the Father's will is his will: they are one in essence, therefore one in will, and one in operation; and what the Father doth, the Son doth, because of the unity of essence: John v. 19, 'What things soever the Father doth these also doth the Son likewise.' But this is not all; consider Jesus Christ is mediator; so there is a consent of obedience to the Father, and so as the Father appoints he presents himself as the price and sacrifice for sin. *Homines, non propter homines, sed propter Deum dilexit*—He loved men, not for men's sake but God's. The meaning is, the goodness of the creature is not the cause of Christ's love, but his love to God; and that gives us sure ground of hope. Christ loves us not for our own sakes, but for his Father's sake.

Now give me leave to show why it was necessary that Christ should give up himself; partly out of love, and partly out of obedience.

1. It was necessary that he should give up himself out of obedience, partly that his love might be rational. The Lord is a God of judgment, a wise God, and all he doth is with reason. Now the only supreme reason why Christ loves us is the will of God and the command of his Father. Solomon saith, Prov. xvii. 18, 'A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend.' How is that? That is, before his friend asks or desires it: it is a fault to be over-forward and prodigal of favours. It is a rational love that is in Christ, and partly he doth it out of obedience, to preserve a respect to God the Father. Christ loves us for his sake, and therefore

we should love God in Christ the more. And partly it is the wisdom of God that the reasons of love should lie without man himself, and be found among the divine persons, because of the Father's good-will and command.

2. It was convenient that Christ should give himself out of his own love, partly that Christ might be a fit mediator. It cannot stand with God's justice to punish an innocent person for a nocent, unless he himself be willing; therefore, that Christ might be a mediator, he had a will of his own, otherwise God could not in honour exact the debt of Christ, but that there was a voluntary susception; he took it upon himself. The Lord Christ, when he condescended to the Father's motion, when by his own will he gave up himself, and set himself wholly apart to be our Redeemer, God might justly require the debt of him. When Paul would take Onesimus' debt upon himself, Philemon might justly require it of him: Philem. 18, 19, 'If he have wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on mine account. I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.' Or I may illustrate it thus: In the case of Jonah, the mariners were loath to throw him overboard; but when he saw the tempest, and said, 'Cast me into the sea, and there shall be a calm,' then they took him up and cast him in. So when the Lord Christ saw the tempest of his Father's wrath that was rising against sinners, he saith, Cast me into the sea. Indeed there was a difference; the tempest there was for Jonah's sake, but this was for our sakes: 'I saw there was no intercessor, therefore my own arm brought salvation.' The Father's ordination had no place or room without Christ's voluntary susception and undertaking. And partly too to set off the worth of his love. Willingness and freeness commends a kindness, and makes it great. What more free than a gift? Therefore his passion was voluntary. Extorted courtesies lose their value, therefore Jesus Christ gave up himself to be a sacrifice for us. But the chiefest reason is this, Christ willingly offered up himself, that all things might come freely and sweetly from his Father to us, that so God might 'rejoice over us to do us good,' as the expression is, Jer. xxxii. 41. All a wicked man's blessings seem to be extorted from providence; they have them not from the heart of God ,but from God's anger, as the murmuring Israelites had quails. But now, that we might have mercies from God's heart, and not from his hand only, that mercy might come from love, and all run in a free channel to us, and as a gift, therefore did Christ give himself.

Object. But did not Christ pray that the cup might pass from him? And did not he fear, and his human nature stagger and recoil at the greatness of his sufferings? We read of 'prayers, tears, and strong cries,' Heb. v. 7; and therefore how was Christ so willing?

Ans. Christ's prayers were rather for our example and comfort than to decline the suffering: Heb. iv. 15, 'He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' He was to show himself true man, and therefore was to have human love, human abhorrences, and human aversations. He was to put on all the innocent passions of our nature; it was not convenient Christ should suffer as a stock and dead lump of flesh. In short, in his sufferings Christ was to discover a double relation—he was to act the part of a private person and of a

public person. Of a private person, to show the verity of his human nature; and of a public person, to discover his willingness to die for the elect. Now he doth both these. It is the nature of man to shun that which is grievous and painful to him; he was to look upon his sufferings as contrary to the perfection and liberty of his human nature, and so he was to pray, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' But now, as a public person and as mediator, so he was extremely willing to do this office of love for us. The innocent passions of his human nature discover the greatness of his sufferings, they made his manhood recoil and stagger, as being amazed at the dreadfulness of that he was to suffer. And though his private human nature be allowed to speak, 'Father, let this cup pass,' yet his public relation hath a casting voice, and his submission as a public person showeth his willingness to endure these sufferings; therefore he saith, 'Not my will, but thine be done,' and freely yields up himself. These fears of Christ certainly were no shrinking from the work, but only a natural consternation and retirement from what is dreadful. Christ's fears were a part of that fire whereon our sin-offering was to be burnt and roasted; and therein he showed his willingness, that he freely gave up himself to be scorched with those dreadful apprehensions of God's wrath. For it is very notable his agonies came not upon him before he pleased; for it is said, Mat. xxvi. 38, he went into the garden, and then began to be sorrowful. Christ could have kept it off longer, and brought it on sooner. And then his tears were but the overflowing of his love; he had an ocean in his heart, and suffered it to flow out in his eyes; it was part of the deluge wherein he would drown the world of sin; therefore these do not disparage, but increase his willingness.

Use 1. To press us to thankfulness. Here are many circumstances—the giver, the gift, the manner of giving, the end of giving and the persons to whom.

1. The giver, and that is Jesus Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever. Usually men make a market of their courtesies, they give to them that can give again and make them recompense; but he is that blessed Lord to whom nothing could accrue from us. In short, the Father gave him, and he gave himself. There is infinite love in that God the Father gave him: John iii. 16, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.' It tells you not how, but leaves you to wonder and admire at it. I would represent it a little to you, and therefore let us measure it by created affections. The affections of the Virgin Mary to Christ is the fittest glass I can represent it by. From her he took his substance, that had the interest of an earthly mother. Now, how was she troubled! What commotion was in her bowels! The Holy Ghost expresseth it: Luke ii. 35, 'Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.' She was like one wounded to the heart when she saw Christ hung upon the cross, yet he took but his human body from her. If there was such a commotion in the bowels of the Virgin Mary, the mother of the Lord, what then was it for God the Father to give up his only Son? His love was infinite, yet he gave up Christ. We read of some fathers who have much denied themselves. Abraham offereth Isaac, Jephthah offereth his daughter, Lot would have given his daughters to save his

guests. These are but obscure shadows of the Father's giving up of Christ, in whom he took infinite complacency and contentment. And then bless God for this willing condescension of the Lord Christ, that his heart was so taken with the motion the Father makes to him: Son, you must be responsible to my justice, and take a body. Christ replied, 'Lo, I come;' and Isa. liii. 11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.' To bring sons to glory cost the Lord Christ much travail of soul; but, he saith, All this is well enough; if he shall see the fruit of it, It is enough, I am satisfied; this is enough for all the temptations in the wilderness, enough for all the agonies in the garden, enough for all the sorrows on the cross, if a few creatures might be saved and brought to God. And consider, the Father's giving, and the Son's giving, they are not contrary, and do not destroy one another. The Father's love doth not lessen Christ's, but commend it, that he hath the same good-will to us as the Father hath. Jesus Christ as mediator is the servant of God's decrees. Many times the servant hath not the same affection to the work as the master hath. But it is otherwise here; God's heart and Christ's heart is set upon the work. God sets him apart to be a mediator, and Christ sets himself apart to see what he can do to save creatures. Oh! bless the Lord. Thus for the giver.

2. The gift, 'He gave himself,' not an angel. Among all the treasures of heaven and earth, there was nothing more excellent and precious than the Lord Christ. He doth not give gold and silver, but himself to die for us: 1 Peter i. 18, 19, 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, &c., but with the precious blood of Christ.' And how doth he give himself? Certainly his whole self, body and soul. His godhead was engaged in this work, though that could not suffer: 'He shall make his soul an offering for sin,' Isa. liii. 10. Christ's soul was to stand in our souls' stead. His soul was heavy to the death, as well as his body abused, mangled with whips, and exposed to sufferings. And the Godhead itself assisted; all was interested in it. So that look, as when the sun shines upon a tree, though you cut the tree you do not cut the sun, so the Godhead stood by but suffered nothing. Christ suffered not only death but desertion. The soul's forsaking of the body at death was nothing so heavy as God's forsaking of the soul, when he cries out, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat. xxvii. 46. Many forsook him; his disciples left him; they all fled; but Christ complains not of this; but there was the suspension of the wonted joys of the Godhead, and that troubled him; this was the passion of his passion. The moon loseth no brightness when it suffereth an eclipse by the interposition of the earth, but shines as bright as ever; so the Lord Christ lost nothing, but only there was an eclipse of God's countenance, and this was the terror and anguish of his soul.

3. Consider the manner of giving, it was free and voluntary, without reluctancy, which was the great argument of his love; freely and willingly he gave up himself: Gal. ii. 20, 'The life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.' Faith pitcheth upon this circumstance, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me,' to urge us to the spiritual life.

4. Consider for what end it was: Eph. i. 2, 'He gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.' The sacrifice that was offered for the whole congregation was to be killed without the camp, and the blood to be brought with sweet perfume to the mercy-seat; so the Lord Christ comes out of heaven to be killed on earth, and then is gone to heaven to present his sacrifice to God as a sweet perfume. He gave himself to be a ransom for us, to die a shameful and accursed death on the cross; he gave himself to be substituted in our room and stead. The sadness of every loss is according to the measure of enjoyment. Life died, righteousness was made sin; oh, blessed exchange!

5. Consider for whom he doth it. The apostle saith it was for us, not for angels. Though they did far exceed man in excellency of nature, yet God would not treat with the lost angels; they were never recovered; but he gave himself for us men. Nay, not only for us that were his creatures, but that were his enemies, vile and unworthy sinners: Rom. v. 8, 'God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' A man would even die for a good man, though there be but a few such persons in the world; but here the just dies for the unjust: 1 Peter iii. 18, 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' Now this commends his love indeed, in that it was for us vile miscreants, dust and ashes. Adam sold us for a thing of nought, an apple, and so the Lord might have condemned us, cast us off, and created another world of nobler creatures than the present race of men, or might have redeemed us at a cheaper rate. Let all this quicken us to thanksgiving.

Use 2. Exhortation. If Christ hath given himself it presseth us—

1. To accept Christ, and entertain him in our hearts. Shall Christ give himself, and will not we accept the gift? It is true, when he gave himself for us, he gave himself to God the Father; as you know the price must be paid to the creditor. Satisfaction is made to the judge. But as he gave himself for us, so he gives himself to us, and thus he is offered in the gospel. Therefore it is said, Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for our sins.' In the gospel God holds out Christ, and makes an offer. Sinners, will you take him? Shall Christ offer himself thus, and shall not we esteem and value this gift, and entertain it in our hearts with all thankfulness? Certainly we do not know what a gift Christ is, and therefore we do not prize it: 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, and he would have given thee living water.' Here is the best gift ever God can give. If we knew Christ, our affections would not be so cold. God is represented in scripture with two hands, and he hath gifts in his right hand, and gifts in his left hand. There is Jesus Christ, grace, pardon, and salvation, and all that is dear and precious; these are the blessings of his right hand. In his left hand there are riches and honour, estate, lands, houses, supplies of the present life. Now, art thou a goat or a sheep? one that shall stand at God's left or right hand? Thou art known by thy choice. All that are for the world run for a worldly portion and neglect Christ. We count those children foolish who

prefer an apple before a jewel. So here the Lord sets out to us Christ and the things of this life, and men prefer the base contentments of the world before Christ. Therefore let us accept of Christ if he hath given himself for us.

2. It exhorteth and presseth us to a spiritual consecration, to give up ourselves to Christ: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' Jesus Christ gave himself as a sin-offering, and we must give up ourselves as a thank-offering unto God. Now, let me tell you your giving up yourselves is a far other manner of giving up than Christ gave up himself. You never keep yourselves so much as when you give up yourselves to God. All the receiving is on our part. God would have us give up our hearts to him. How? That we might be made better. Better be given up to God than left to ourselves. Christ gave up himself to be crucified, but we give up ourselves to be glorified. And Jesus Christ gave up himself voluntarily, there was no necessity lay upon him; but woe unto us if we give not up ourselves to God, there is a necessity laid upon us; we do but give God his due and his own, but Jesus Christ had power over his life, to lay it down, and take it up, for he was an absolute master of his life; but we are dependent, under an obligation; therefore our giving is but to make our relation to God more explicit. And again, Jesus Christ could sanctify himself; he was priest, altar, and sacrifice, and brings all out of his own store; but all we have is from God. It goeth under the name of our deed, but the sacrifice, fire, and altar all come down from heaven; yet the act must be done by us.

And here take these two cautions—

[1.] You must do as Christ did, give up your all, body, soul, estate, goods, good name, life, parts, interest, relations; write upon all, Holiness to the Lord; there must not be a hoof reserved; for these things are but trifles in comparison of what Christ parted withal for us. Some stick at one thing, some at another; some divide the body and the soul. In times of safety, when the public profession of religion is honourable, then men will give up their bodies to Christ; their eyes shall be lifted up in prayer, and their tongues shall speak well of Christ, but their heart is not given him. In times of trouble, then they could give God their souls; but profession is suspended, the body must be spared and excused. And then in the soul, some make an untoward division between conscience and affections; fain they would have Christ to pacify and satisfy their conscience, but they give their hearts and affections to the world. Some could give up their parts for Christ. Oh! they could plead for him, and do some good act of kindness, but not a penny of their estates. Christians, you must not thus stand hucking with God, and play Pharaoh's trick, but all must be given up. The devil knows, when we divide, the whole will fall to his share. It would be sad if God should deal with you as you deal with him, and glorify no more than you give him, take the body into heaven, and leave the soul in hell.

[2.] You must not retract your vows. It is dangerous to alienate things once consecrated, to say with him, 'I go, sir, and went not,' Mat. xxi. 30; or as Ananias, to keep back part of the money for which he

sold his possession, and yet the thing was in his own power. But you are not in your own power; it is not indifferent whether you will give up yourselves to Christ or no, but it is a duty; and therefore live as if thou wert not thine own master, but act for Christ, think for Christ, and do for Christ; it is not an hard law. Consider what Christ did: 'Christ pleased not himself,' Rom. xv. 3. He had a private will as well as you, but he denied it, and yielded to the public will. Christ did not obey his private will to the prejudice of his public, therefore let it not be grievous to renounce your will: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if Christ 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. It presseth you again to a like readiness in Christ's service as the Lord Christ showed in the service of our souls. Why should we be so backward to come to the throne of grace, when Jesus Christ was not backward to go to the cross? We go grudgingly when he went so willingly to suffer for us. When the business was propounded to him, he said, Ps. xl. 7, 8, 'Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.' So when there is a warm suggestion upon your hearts: Ps. xxvii. 8, 'Thou saidst, Seek my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' said Paul when he surrendered himself up to God, Acts ix. 6. If Christ was longing, When will the world be made, and the bounds of their habitation fixed, that I might dwell with them? Oh! we do not long for heaven as Christ longed for earth. He could expect nothing but hard usage, grief, and death; he came to taste the vinegar and gall, and we do not long to taste of the feast of love. If love brought down Christ to us, why cannot it carry us up to God? When you are backward to believe and pray, let it shame you that Christ was so willing. And in the Lord's supper, let it shame us that we have less appetite to feast our souls with the benefits of the cross than Christ had to endure the death of the cross. Can we say with Christ, 'With desire have I desired to eat this passover?' Here is a cup of consolation tempered with Christ's hand, and we have no earnest groans after it. Christ could say, 'It is my meat to do the will of God;' and certainly it should be so to us. In the Lord's prayer, 'Thy will be done,' immediately goes before a petition for daily bread, to show it should be more desirous[1] for us to do God's will than to eat our daily bread. Christians, when will you learn of Christ? We plead and stand disputing every inch with God. When you feel any reluctancy and regret of spirit, remember Christ offered up himself willingly. Christ's work was sad work, but he did not say, It is a hard work, and is like to cost me dear, and I shall meet with an unthankful world, and my doctrine is like to be despised among the nations; he pleaded none of these discouragements. Oh! when shall we learn to do as Christ, not to reason, but run the ways of God's commandments? Ps. cxix. 10, 'With my whole heart have I sought thee.' It is not obedience if it be not willing: Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' When difficulties arise, consider Christ's torment and suffering abated nothing of his love: John xiii. 1,

[1] That is, 'desirable.'—ED.

'Having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.' In the midst of his agonies he still said, Luke xxii. 42, 'Not my will, but thine be done.' Let us be content not only to do but to suffer: 2 Sam. xv. 26, 'Behold, here I am; let him do to me what seemeth good unto him.'

Use 3. Here is encouragement in believing.

1. In troubles of conscience. Christ willingly offered up himself; he went as a lamb to the slaughter, therefore he is 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world,' John i. 29. Willing sacrifices are acceptable to the Lord; he loveth a cheerful giver. God had no respect to Cain because he offered with a grudging mind. The sacrifice that came to the altar struggling was counted unlucky; if the beast did roar, or bleat much, or showed much reluctation, it was an ominous sign. More particularly the great aggravation of sin is the willingness of it; not the grossness of the act so much as the propension and bent of the will. If thou hast been a willing sinner, and art now troubled about it, here is a willing saviour; he suffered as earnestly, and with as much strength of desire, as ever you committed sin: Luke xxii. 15, 'With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.' Stop the mouth of conscience by considering the burning desires of his hearty good-will, with what desire, haste and speed, with what vehemency he did long to suffer.

2. In your prayers and addresses for mercy. He that gave himself for us will he not give us anything? He that was ready to die, will be ready to help; 'Lo, I come,' Ps. xl. 7. So when we call upon him: Isa. lviii. 9, 'Thou shalt call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am;' Rev. xxii. 12, 'Behold, I come quickly.' He giveth the same answer to our requests as to the Father's commands. Wait with hope. Christ, that gave himself for us, will give himself to us.

SERMON XX.

That he might redeem us from all iniquity, &c.—TITUS ii. 14.

I COME to handle the second encouragement, namely, that which is taken from the merit of Christ's death. And therein—

1. Here is Christ's act, 'He gave himself for us,' to be an expiatory sacrifice and ransom for souls.

2. I come to the second branch, and that is Christ's aim, 'He gave himself;' but why? 'To redeem us from all iniquity,' &c. Here is the privative and positive part of this deliverance; first redemption, then sanctification.

The privative part we must first take notice of, and that is redemption, a phrase which the apostle useth here to enforce us to a denial of ungodliness and worldly lusts.

Here I shall first handle the nature of redemption in general, and then particularly show how we are redeemed from iniquity.

I. For the nature of redemption; it is the great gospel privilege, and therefore needs to be explained.

To redeem another, it signifies to free them from any distress, especially from captivity and bondage. The word will be best explained with respect to the customs and the figures of the law of Moses, for certainly from thence it was taken. Now under the law there was a twofold redemption—such as was immediately made to God, or else to man.

1. To God. I observe that there was a kind of ransom that every man was to give for his soul: Exod. xxx. 12–15, 'When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number, then they shall give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague amongst them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary; an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and upward, shall give an offering to the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls.' Whenever they were numbered by head and by poll, that the plague might not break out among them, they were to give a ransom for their souls, which showed that all our souls were forfeited by sin to God, and it was in God's power to take them when he pleased; therefore every man was to give this acknowledgment. And some conceive the plague which fell out in David's time for numbering the people was for want of giving this ransom to God. Now the poor and rich were both to give equally the same ransom, the poor to give no less, and the rich no more, viz., half a shekel, to show that all souls before God are equal; the debt was equal, and that the price of Christ's blood was equal. We were all forfeited to God, but all the elect have an interest in the same redeemer. This will somewhat explain the mystery.

2. In that law there was another redemption that was to be made to man, and so there was a twofold redemption figured in the legal dispensation.

[1.] There was a redemption of the inheritance, or of the person of the brother that was waxen poor, and so through poverty had sold himself or sold his land: Lev. xxv. 25, 'If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold;' and vers. 47, 48, 'And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by thee wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family, after that he is sold he may be redeemed again, one of his brethren may redeem him.' The Goel, or the next of kin, was to redeem both the land and person so sold. All this noteth our state by nature. We forfeited our inheritance, and sold ourselves to work iniquity; there was a voluntary forfeiture on our part, and we could not redeem ourselves, for we were waxen poor; and when we had sold ourselves, all of the kindred were altogether waxen poor, and could not redeem us: Ps.

xlix. 7, 8, 'None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.' Therefore Jesus Christ comes from heaven, and takes flesh, that he might be of our blood and kin, and so *jure propinquitatis*, as being next of blood, he had a right to redeem and help us, when we had forfeited ourselves, and were become slaves and vassals of sin and Satan.

[2.] There was the redemption of captives. I confess I do not find express mention in the law of this kind of redemption, though some types of this captivity there were, and therefore here we must allude to the customs of all nations. Therefore I shall show—(1.) To whom we were captives; (2.) The manner of redeeming captives both among the Jews and all nations.

First, To whom we were captives; to God, to Satan, to sin.

1. To God. We were the prisoners of his justice and wrath, and therefore called 'Prisoners in the pit in which there is no water,' Zech. ix. 11. It is a description of our natural bondage. In our original state we were God's creatures, but in our degenerate and fallen estate we are God's prisoners.

2. We were captives to Satan as God's executioner, given up to his power, that he might blind, harden, and lead us to all manner of sin by a just tradition: 2 Tim. ii. 26, 'That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.' Natural men are at the will of another. As Christ told Peter, John xxi. 18, 'Another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not,' so Satan leads and carries us up and down, but it is there where we would ourselves be; we consent to this bondage, and are acted by the spirit of the devil, and are at his beck. Nay, that is not all; but we are also given up captives to Satan, that we might be tormented by him; therefore he is said 'to have the power of death,' Heb. ii. 14. The devil, as God's executioner, hath a great power over carnal men, to stir up bondage, and fear, and horrors of wrath, and to take them away to torment, though not as he will, but as God willeth. Satan is our keeper, as God is our judge; and conscience, which was made to be God's deputy, is as it were Satan's underkeeper, stirs up fear, and holds us in chains of darkness.

3. We are captives to sin. Every natural man is a slave to his own lusts: Titus iii. 3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures.' Man in his natural state is a slave to his own affections. For the explaining of which let me tell you, while man was in his original state and condition, his actions were to be thus governed; the understanding and conscience were to prescribe to the will, and the will according to right reason, and conscience was to stir up the affections, and the affections according to the counsel and command of the will were to move the spirits and the members of the body. This was the order settled in man's nature before the fall. But now by corruption there is a woful change and disorder, and the head is where the feet should be. The bodily spirits move the affections, the law in the members prescribes many times to the law of the mind, carnal pleasures move the affections, and the affections carry away the will by violence, and the corrupt bent of the will blinds the understanding, and so man is led headlong to his own destruc-

tion; and therefore the apostle saith that carnal men are sold under sin: Rom. vii. 14, 'I am carnal, sold under sin.' As captives in war were sold to be drudges to those that bought them, so man by nature is sold to be a drudge to his own lusts, and to be at the beck of every carnal and unclean suggestion. Here is the captivity of man by nature, there is the judge, and that is God, to whose wrath we are subject; there is the prison, that is hell; there is the keeper of the prison, that is Satan; and there are the ropes and chains by which we are bound, and they are partly our sins: Prov. v. 22, 'His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.' And partly the terrors of conscience, for the devils are said 'to be reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day,' Jude 6, which signifies the horror that is upon the damned spirits, expecting more judgment from the wrath of the Lord, and at the judgment of the great day. The devils, that are most sensible of their estate, as being actually in torment, are said to be held in those chains of darkness; and we as their fellow-prisoners are held in the same chains, though in the time of God's patience we do not feel it.

Secondly, Let us come to the way of redeeming these captives. Among the nations there is a fourfold way of redeeming captives—either *gratuita manumissione*, by free deliverance, or else *permutatione*, by way of exchange, or else *violenta ablatione*, by way of force and arms, or else *soluto lutro*, by paying the price or ransom. The two last are most proper to this case, taking away by force or paying a ransom, though to me the former also have their place.

1. By free dismission on God's part, that holdeth in the present case; we are freely dismissed, namely, as there is nothing done on the captive's part to free himself. It is said, Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' Mark there is a redemption in Christ, a price paid, but no human satisfaction made. Free grace found out the remedy not excited by any works of ours.

2. For deliverance by way of exchange, that seems to have some place here, for Christ was substituted into our room and place so far as would stand with the dignity of his person, and he was made a captive that we might go free from the wrath of God, though he was never in bondage to sin; so it is said, 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He was made sin for us,' that is, a sin-offering; and he was made a curse for us: Gal. iii. 13, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' He was substituted into our room and place. Saith Austin, *Suscepit sine malis meritis pœnam, ut nos sine bonis consequeremur gratiam*—He did not deserve the punishment, as we do not deserve the glory; only he took our chains and our bonds upon himself. In ecclesiastical story mention is made of one Pambo, a monk, a charitable man, after he had given all his goods for the redemption of captives, and had nothing left but his bible; Nay, says he, I will give this away also that hath taught me to give other things; and when that was gone, Socrates reports of him that he gave himself, he went in their stead to stay as a pledge for them. This I have brought as a shadow, and some kind of weak adumbration of Christ's love to men; he himself would become the ransom, and be put in our place and room, that we might go free.

3. Another way of deliverance is by force and powerful rescue, and thus Christ hath redeemed us, as we were under Satan's power and held under sin. As Abraham rescued Lot when he was taken captive, Gen. xiv., so did Christ make a rescue of us when we were led captive by our own lusts, or rather (for this was the type of it) as God by a mighty hand recovered Israel out of Egypt. Egypt signified the kingdom and power of darkness; so we are said to be snatched and recovered out of the kingdom of darkness: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.' By a powerful rescue hath God snatched and taken us out of our spiritual Egypt, out of our natural bondage. The blood of the passover was sprinkled on the door-posts, as the blood of Christ on our hearts, which is a mark of preservation. On the devil's part our captivity was a mere tyranny and oppression; for when God was once satisfied, Satan had no more power by right over us; and therefore Christ redeems us from the devil by force and violence, he needs not make satisfaction to him. Therefore it is notable that in the sufferings of Christ there was not only the Lord's own hand and counsel, but also the powers of darkness had a hand in them; therefore it is said, Luke xxii. 53, 'This is your hour, and the power of darkness.' Though the devil did not immediately afflict Christ, as some divines hold, though I dare not positively assert it, yet by his instruments, the Jews, he crucified him, and therefore justly for this injury done to Christ was his power made void. When Christ did something to God, he was doing something to the devil; he triumphed over principalities and powers by his cross: Col. ii. 15, 'Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.' Thus the elect, the prisoners of hope, are called out and set free.

4. Another way is by paying a price and ransom: 1 Tim. ii. 6, 'Who gave himself a ransom for us;' Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood.' His blood was the price paid to God. Though Satan held us captive, yet the satisfaction must be made to God, because man had not sinned against the devil, but against God; and therefore to him it belonged either to condemn or absolve us, and let us go free; therefore Christ gives satisfaction to God, and by that means he dissolves the power of Satan; for God being satisfied, Satan hath no power over us. Thus you see we are several ways redeemed, freely as to ourselves, by way of price and satisfaction as to God, Christ being substituted in our room and place, but by way of power and force as to Satan. Thus I have discovered our redemption by Christ with allusion to the figures of the law and custom of nations.

II. I shall more particularly show you how we are redeemed from iniquity. We were under a double bondage of sin—the guilt of sin and the power of sin, both which made our condition slavish. The latter is chiefly understood, yet I shall speak a little of both. We are redeemed from the guilt of sin by Christ's satisfaction, from the power of sin by his Spirit.

First, From the guilt of sin. Redemption is made mainly to consist in remission of sins: Col. i. 14, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin. So Eph. i. 7. The apostle in both places explaineth wherein it mainly consists. Now concerning this part I note—

1. That it is the ground and pledge of all the rest. Sin being pardoned, the power of the devil is abolished, the wrath of God removed, the guilt of eternal death is taken away: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sin;' so Luke xxiv. 47, 'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.' Repentance is the beginning of all new obedience, and remission of sins is the seed of eternal life; all duties are included in repentance, and all blessings in pardon. The gospel is nothing else but a doctrine of repentance and remission, so that the devil cannot hold us as his captives, nor sin rule in us as in slaves. This is the ground and pledge of the rest.

2. Sin being pardoned, we are freed from the penalties of sin, viz., the evils after sin. Sin hath a long train of judgments, all which are done away when sin is pardoned. It will not stand with the honour of his mercy to forgive the debt and yet to require payment; it is a mocking to say, I forgive the whole debt, and yet to expect part of payment. Certainly God forgiveth us our debts, as we are bound to forgive others; so we are bid to pray, Mat. vi. 12, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' Now we are bound to forgive them wholly, and not in part. It would not stand with God's justice to exact the debt twice—of us and of our surety: Isa. liii. 4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.'

Object. But we are still subject to corruption and misery, the miseries of the present life, and death hereafter.

Ans. 1. As to miseries. The afflictions of God's people seem to be punishments, but are not, and differ as much as a punishment and a medicine. God acts the part of physician, not of a judge; he burneth us, cutteth us, puts us to pain, but not to do us hurt; not to satisfy vengeance, but to better our hearts. *Hic ure, hic seca, Domine! modo parcas in eternum.* Our afflictions are troublesome to the flesh, as punishments are; we cannot expect full security or total exemption from them. Again, they come not by chance. Affliction doth not spring out of the dust, but they come by special dispensation. As punishments also they do not come by chance; sin is for the most part the occasion of them. God chasteneth them because they have sinned, as we quench a brand plucked out of the burning; or he warneth them that they may not sin again. The chastisements of the godly serve for examples, as well as the punishments of the wicked. But they are not properly judicial acts to satisfy the law; as a judge taketh no notice of the repentance of the delinquent, but of his fault. They are acts of love, and a part of God's family discipline. Brambles are not pruned, but vines: Heb. xii. 6, 'For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' Bastards are left to live more at large. Again, they are for the exercise of grace, not for the destruction of our persons. A judge doth not punish offenders because he loveth them, but because the law requireth it. If corrections were punishments, wicked men should have the greatest share: Heb. xii. 10, 'He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' A judge looketh to the good of the commonwealth, to keep authority, and the majesty of government, not the benefit of the

malefactor: 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.' The godly are punished here, that they may not be condemned hereafter. The scripture everywhere maketh it a part of our blessedness: James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation;' Phil. i. 29, 'Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake,' ἐχαρίσθη. They are dispensations of love.

Ans. 2. For death. This was the primary effect of sin, yet it remaineth: Gen. ii. 17, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' But the curse of the law is become a blessing of the gospel; death is ours: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 'Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, &c., all are yours.' Adam might have lived here happily for ever, but Christ hath provided a better place for us; there is a deep gulf, which cannot be passed but by death; our present earthly nature is not fit for that happy state: 1 Cor. xv. 50, 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.' If Christ could have contented himself with giving us an earthly paradise, death had not been necessary. That state in the garden was an innocent and happy, but an earthly state; these bodies of ours, that need meat and sleep, would have sufficed for the earthly garden; but we expect a greater benefit, and therefore we must be contented with the way and passage. Sense and reason telleth us that these bodies which we now carry up and down are not fit for that state; we must lay what we received from Adam in the grave, that when it is purged and renewed, we may be like to Christ. The grain liveth not except it die; the shed and old house is pulled down that God may raise a more glorious structure. If all believers should be rapt up into heaven and changed, miracles would be multiplied without need. It is no punishment to lose our corruption and mortality.

3. The next proposition is this, that the fairest part of this redemption is hereafter, then our happiness in Christ is perfect. Luke xxi. 28, 'When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh;' Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' Then we are past gunshot, and out of harm's way. We are fully redeemed from the guilt of sin when there is no monument of God's displeasure left. We must be like our head in all conditions. We are not fully freed from the relics of sin till the resurrection, that we may have new matter to glorify God when we come to heaven. Old Adam is not quite abolished till God be all in all.

Secondly, He hath delivered us from the power of sin. He paid the price on the cross; therefore it is said, Rom. vi. 6, 'Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' When Christ lay a-dying, sin lay a-dying, and bled with him on the cross; then was grace purchased; and therefore faith should look upon sin as dead and actually crucified; it is done in the mystery. And then he ascended, and poured out the Spirit now to accomplish this work. God is satisfied, and Christ's work lieth now with Satan and our own hearts.

1. For Satan. He is dispossessed and cast out at conversion: Luke xi. 21, 22, 'When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in safety; 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 spoils.' Then Christ taketh away the prey. The devil may trouble us, but he is but a tyrant cast out, he can no more reign. And by preserving grace he keepeth possession. Christ will not lose ground when once he hath got footing: Rom. xvi. 20, 'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly;' as Joshua called unto his companions, chap. x. 24, 'Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings.'

2. As for our own hearts. He breaketh the yoke and sets the will at liberty, and maketh us free for God: Rom. vi. 17, 'But God be thanked, ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.' It was a willing bondage, but now we are made a willing people; then our consent was voluntary, now our resignation is so too. There are indeed some relics of corruption and opposition left; there are inward monuments of the fall as well as outward, as there are some grudgings of a disease after a cure; but in heaven all is perfect, and even now there is not a willing subjection, but a resistance made to sin.

Use 1. To exhort us to thankfulness to our Redeemer. Remember your former bondage; it is a woful captivity to be under sin. Those that are under sin are under the curse of the law and the tyranny of the devil; we could have no boldness with God as a father, nor look him in the face; the law is against us, God is the judge, Satan the jailer, our own consciences an underkeeper. Our fears of death, judgment, and hell are a part of our bondage; but now what cause have we to bless God! Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' Then to be under the power of sin is a woful bondage, to be at the beck of every lust and carnal suggestion. Men rejoice in their bondage; they think there is no such life as to live at large and to do as we list; but the more liberty we take in sin, the greater slavery: the work is drudgery, and the reward is death: 'Sin hath reigned unto death,' Rom. v. 21; 2 Peter. ii. 19, 'While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.' It is the saddest judgment to be given up to our own will, to be given up to Satan, to be given up to self. What a slavery is this, when we see mischief and know not how to avoid it! Conscience is held a prisoner; we cannot see a vanity, but the heart lingereth after it, and groweth sick, as Ahab for Naboth's vineyard. Duties of godliness are esteemed an heavy task; the law of God is impelling to duty, and the law of sin impelling to evil. What thanks is due to God for delivering us from so great a bondage!

Use 2. To press us to avoid sin. Mortify the lust and prevent the action; let it not reign in the heart, nor be discovered in the life and conversation. Christ died 'that the body of sin might be destroyed,' Rom. vi. 6; and he died 'to redeem us from our vain conversation,' 1 Peter i. 18. Consider, when sin remains in its power, and while

you serve sin, what dishonour you do to God, and what disadvantage it is to yourselves.

1. The dishonour you do to God, to all the persons in the Godhead. To the Father, by making void the whole plot of redemption. This was the eternal project and design, as it were, of God the Father, the wise counsel his wisdom found out to remedy the fall of man. Jesus Christ was ordained before all worlds to redeem us from our vain conversation: 1 Peter i. 20, 'Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world.' The Lord projected this way of restitution from all eternity, that this course should be taken to destroy sin. Now will you go about to make all this void? Then you wrong God the Son, and that many ways. You disparage the worth of his price, as if it was not sufficient to purchase grace, and so seek to put your Redeemer to shame. Nay, you disparage the purity of his person, for you were redeemed with the blood of Christ as a lamb without spot and blemish. Nay, you disparage the greatness and extremity of his sufferings. It cost him dear to purchase grace and deliverance from sin, and you slight it, and make nothing of it. Then you rob him of the greatness of his purchase; he bought us with this great price that we might not be our own and live to our lusts. Such as are bought with money are theirs who bought them: 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are his.' Did Christ pay our debts, and shall we, like desperate prodigals, do nothing but increase them by our sin? Then you disparage the Holy Ghost, the Spirit whom Christ doth shed abroad to accomplish his work: 2 Cor. iii. 17, 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' The great work of the Holy Ghost is to free us from the bondage of sin. Have you the assistance of such a Spirit, and can you not resist carnal motions? and are you taken with every vain delight, a fashion, a sensual bait? Thus consider what a dishonour it is to God to let sin live if Christ died to redeem us. You do as much as in you lieth to defeat the project of God the Father, the purchase of the Son, and the work of the Spirit.

2. It is a disadvantage to yourselves. You cut off your own claim, and declare you have no interest and share in Christ if sin live, for he came to redeem us from iniquity. We cannot have an interest in any part of Christ's redemption till this be, for all these go together. God's anger is not appeased, the devil's power is not restrained; the law's curse is still in force as long as sin lives. You can have no comfort if you be not freed from sin; the wrath of God is against you, and hell is your portion; nay, if you are not redeemed from all sin, for he redeems us from all iniquity. A bird that is tied by the leg may make a show of escape, but it is fast enough; so though many may abstain from gross sins (for they that commit such show plainly they are acted by the spirit of the devil), yet if one sin remains unmortified, it enthralleth as well as many; but if it reigns in the soul, you have no interest in Christ.

Object. You will say, Why should we mortify? why should we trouble ourselves about this? Christ hath done all this.

Ans. No; Christ hath redeemed us from all iniquity, but his redemption doth not make void, but oblige our endeavours; for he

undertook as God's surety that sin should be destroyed, and as our surety that we should not serve sin: Rom. vi. 6, 'Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' There is a work on God's part; he undertook for the pouring out of grace; and on our part, that we should be watchful, and strive against sin, and watch against all occasions of it; and he hath given us encouragement so to do. *Non pugna sublata est, sed victoria*—It is not the conflict against sin that is taken away by Christ, but the victory of sin. Look, as when the Israelites had a promise that God would give their enemies into their hands, the meaning was not that they should not strike a stroke, but they were to fight the battles of the Lord; so when Christ hath redeemed us from iniquity, yet we are to use all spiritual means of mortification, to subdue the lusts, and to prevent the act of sin. It will be our great condemnation, when we have so much help, that still sin should remain. Certainly he is very lazy that will not ply the oar that hath both wind and tide on his side; and when the Lord Christ hath purchased grace and the Spirit, yet we will not endeavour against sin: 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage,' Gal. v. 1.

Use 3. Direction. Whenever you are troubled with your sins, and lusts are too hard for you, go to Christ. It is his office to redeem you from your iniquity and the tyranny of sin; therefore when you feel any corruption stir, go and complain to him, as Paul did, 'I cannot do the things I would,' Gal. v. 17. Go to Christ for help; he was sent for this purpose to redeem you from iniquity and dissolve the devil's work: 1 John iii. 8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' It is his office to purge the church, to set us at liberty, to destroy Satan's power, to free us from our passions and corruptions; therefore go, complain to him of the strength of your sins, for he will help you.

Use 4. Comfort in our conflicts. You are sure of a final victory before you enter into the combat: erelong we shall be out of the reach of temptation, and the Spirit shall be all in all.

Use 5. Examination.

1. Art thou sensible of thy natural bondage so as to grieve under it? As the apostle, Rom. vii. 23, 24, '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. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' If it be not thus with thee, redemption by Christ will never be precious. There is sighing and weariness, they lay their sad estate to heart, as the church hung their harps upon the willows; it is the grief of their souls that their lusts held them in captivity. The children of God complain more of the relics of sin than wicked men do of the full power of it.

2. Hast thou any freedom? Sense of bondage is a good preparative, but it is not enough. All Christ's subjects are kings; they rule over their own lusts; though not freed from them altogether, they strive against them, and keep them under. And there is not only a freedom from ill, but a freedom to good: Ps. cx. 3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' They do not serve God by constraint,

but are free to good, and serve God with as great cheerfulness as before they served their lusts: Rom. vii. 22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man.' They consult with the word of God, which was before their bondage and terror; they have an ability and strength to do that which is good; there is a new life in them, yet so as they are still excited by the Spirit.

Use 6. It informeth us what is true liberty, not to live at large: John viii. 36, 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.' Not to have power and sovereignty over others, not to exercise command and authority over others, but to subdue our lusts; not to be left to ourselves to do what we please, that is the greatest bondage: Rom. vi. 20, 'When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness;' but to do the will of God: 1 John iii. 5, 'And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin.' He died to take away sin, and to make us like himself, that the world might know that he was a pure and holy Saviour.

SERMON XXI.

And purify unto himself a peculiar people, &c.—TITUS. ii. 14.

IN this latter branch I observed Christ's act and then his aim. His act, 'He gave himself.' His aim and intention; and here is the privative part of deliverance, 'To redeem us from all iniquity.' This I have finished.

I come to the positive part, 'And purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' He never communicates his blessings where he doth not bestow his grace. He did not only free us from hell, but from sin. It is well for the godly that Christ came to take away the proud and carnal heart, to take away corruption and iniquity, which is their greatest eyesore. But this is not all; there is a positive blessing. Christ did not only come to deliver us from sin, but communicate grace, 'That he might purify to himself a peculiar people.'

Two points I shall open to you—

1. That whomsoever Christ maketh his people, he first purifieth them, or by purifying them maketh them his people.

2. Those that are purified are reckoned his treasure or peculiar people.

Doct. 1. That whomsoever Christ maketh his people, he first purifieth them, or by purifying maketh them his people.

Here I shall show you—(1.) The necessity; (2.) The manner of it.

First, The necessity of this purification.

1. In regard of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Every person in the Godhead, in the dispensation of grace, hath a distinct personal operation. Election is ascribed to the Father, redemption to the Son, and effectual application to the Holy Ghost. Now every one of these operations respects holiness. Election: Eph. i. 4, 'According as he

hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy, and without blame before him in love.' Redemption: Eph. v. 25, 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.' Sanctification: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' It is for the honour of every person that their intention may not be frustrate; and chiefly upon this ground, because by this means they would justify and honour their personal operation to the world. Those that are chosen by the Father must be of a choice spirit. Christ will not be the head of an ulcerous body; he will not be like Nebuchadnezzar's image, 'whose head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay,' Dan. ii. 32, 33. A beautiful head upon a negro's body is monstrous. We are vessels formed and set apart for the master's use. Those that are under his forming come new out of the forge. Unclean vessels can never be used to any good purpose unless they be washed and sweetened. They are to be looked upon as God's choice, Christ's purchase, and the Spirit's charge. Or if you will have it in other relations, they are God's children, Christ's members, and the Spirit's temples. God's children must resemble their Father; Christ's members must be like their head; and the Holy Ghost will not dwell in a defiled temple.

2. With respect to themselves, and their relation to one another, they must be purified: 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing that ye have purified yourselves in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.' The purification of our own souls maketh us to love purity in others, for similitude is the ground of delight and complacency. No man can delight in the purity of others unless he be in some measure purified himself. Holy men are only fit for this communion and society; others 'go in the way of Cain,' Jude 11, 'Who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother: and wherefore slew he him? because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous,' 1 John iii. 12. Carnal professors, that creep into the church unawares, are full of envy, strife, and wrath. How can we edify one another in the holy faith unless we be first holy? A man would think they should be purified to the love of God; nay, but they must be purified to the love of the brethren.

3. With respect to the world. A distinct body should have a distinct excellency. They are a people distinct from the world, they are set apart for God: Ps. iv. 3, 'Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' They are a chosen generation. Many other societies excel the church for strength, policy, and worldly pomp; but holiness and purity is the church's badge: Ps. xciii. 5, 'Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever.' God's peculiar people must have a peculiar excellency upon a double ground—

[1.] Because of likeness to God: Exod. xv. 11, 'Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness.' It is God's glory, and therefore the church's. God is rich in mercy, but glorious in holiness: his treasure is his goodness, but his honour is his holiness and immaculate purity; as among men, their wealth is distinguished from their honour.

[2.] Because all the ordinances hold it forth, especially the ordinance of initiation. So that it is the greatest hypocrisy in the world to pretend to be God's people and not to be holy, because they wear the badges of holiness; they all come in by the washing of water. Men forget their baptism: 2 Peter i. 9, 'He hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.' Men that are only whited over with the name of christians, and sin is still new and fresh, as an old thing they forget the effect of their baptism; that a washed man should be so foul and noisome still, sure they forget, or do not know what it is to be baptized into Christ.

Secondly, The manner how he purifieth them. There is on Christ's part the Spirit and ordinances, and his merit reacheth to both; and on our part faith.

1. On Christ's part.

[1.] The Spirit is necessary: Titus iii. 5, 'He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' The Holy Ghost applieth all the grace which the Father intendeth and Christ hath purchased. We are usually said to be saved by the blood of Christ; that was the merit and price. There was a grant on God the Father's part: Rev. xix. 8, 'To her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen clean and white.' An authentic act passeth in the court of heaven that we shall have fine linen, as Esther had garments out of the king's wardrobe. But this is founded on Christ's merits. The stream in which we are washed flowed out of Christ's heart: 1 John i. 7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' But then the Holy Ghost, as the executor of Christ's will and testament, worketh and applieth all. The merit of the creature is excluded by Christ's merit and the Father's grant; the power of the creature is excluded by the work of the Spirit; he worketh with a respect to Christ's blood. As in the cleansing of the leper, the bird was to be killed over running water, Lev. xiv. 5, so in the cleansing of the sinner there is the merit of Christ and the work of the Spirit: 1 Cor. vi. 11, '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.' If we come to the Father, the Father sends us to the Son, otherwise he could not look upon us; the Son sends us to the Spirit; the Spirit sends us to Moses and the prophets.

[2.] The ordinances: Eph. v. 26, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.' These are the ordinances that are specially consecrated, and to which Christ's merit reacheth; he hath not only procured the gift of the Spirit, but a blessing on the means, that we may use them with confidence. The word helpeth us by way of declaration and offer, and baptism concurreth sacramentally by way of signing and sealing, and so it is a means to confirm and provoke the faith of a receiver to lay hold on this grace. The ordinances are an help to call to mind baptism. It is not good to balk the known and ordinary means of grace. Christ hath purchased a treasure that cannot be wasted: John xvii. 19, 'And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.' When you come to hear, you come to receive the fruits of Christ's purchase.

2. On our part there is required faith, which also purifieth: Acts xv. 9, 'Purifying their hearts by faith.' Christ's blood cleanseth, the

gospel cleanseth, baptism cleanseth, the Spirit cleanseth, faith cleanseth; all these are not contrary, but subordinate. Neither Christ nor the word nor the Spirit worketh without an act on our parts; as under the law the priest was not only to wash and cleanse the leper, who herein represented God, but also after the sprinkling of the priest he was to wash himself: Lev. xiv. 8, 'And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean;' to show that some work is required on our part. The work of faith is to apply, to wait, to work by reflection, and to stir up love.

[1.] To apply the promises of God, the offers of grace in the word, and the blood of Christ, and all these to purge out corruption. It applieth the blood of Christ, urgeth the soul with it; he died to purchase that grace which thou wantest. The water and soap cleanseth, but the hand of the laundress must apply it, and rub the clothes that are washed. This is called sprinkling the conscience with the blood of Christ: Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' We should thus argue with ourselves: Surely Christ died to sanctify sinners; his death cannot be in vain. Grace is bought at a dear rate; in the offers of the word, God maketh a tender; why should I not accept of it? Heb. iv. 2, 'For unto us was the word preached as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.' But we do not say, What shall we say to these things? By faith the plaster is laid on the sore.

[2.] In the use of means it waiteth for the sanctifying virtue of the blood of Christ, and looketh upon them as ordinances under a blessing: Isa. xlv. 24, 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' It casts out the net at Christ's commandment: Micah vii. 19, 'He will turn again, he will have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depth of the sea.' They see an all-sufficient mercy and power, and they wait till God manifests himself.

[3.] It worketh by reflection, and so stirs up love: Gal. v. 6, 'Faith worketh by love.' It sets love on work, and by little and little drieth up the fountain of sin. Shall I love that which God hateth? Jer. xliv. 4, 'Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early, and sending them, saying, O do not this abominable thing that I hate.' Faith representeth God pleading with us, and beseeching us by all his bowels in Christ. Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Do I thus requite the Lord for all his kindness to me? There is an exasperation against lusts; the soul saith, Get ye hence: Hosea xiv. 8, 'Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?' The soul hath its expulsive faculty, it is at the beck of love, and love is stirred up by faith; and when it cannot expel sin, it mourneth and groaneth under it as its burden.

Use 1. Are you thus purified? Have you passed this laver? The priests under the law, before they went to the altar, they first washed in the great laver. You are not his people till you are sanctified. Esther was purified before she was brought to Ahasuerus, Esther ii.

Christ telleth Peter, John xiii. 8, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.' Though he took human nature, yet he owneth no relation to any but the sanctified: Heb. ii. 11, 'For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.' The devils cannot say, He is bone of our bone. But what though he took your natures? This is not enough; he will disclaim you if you be not sanctified. I took flesh, but not for you; I died, but not for you. There is a double notion of purification in this place; it noteth cleansing and dedication. There is a difference between them and others, and between them and themselves. Whereas I was blind, now I see. I could before discourse and hear sermons for notions, but now my conscience is more serious, I am more freed from bondage, I have a more distinct hope towards God in Christ; my will is not obstinate and unpliable to the counsels and motions of the Holy Ghost; my affections are reduced to a better temper as to earthly things. Thus examine yourself. Is anything washed off?

Use 2. Information. It informeth us that we are all polluted by nature, for we need to be purified ere we are Christ's people. Nay, it sticketh to us; we change our skin, our outward conversation, but no other laver will wash our hearts but Christ's blood. If we had eyes to see our natural filth, we should loathe ourselves more than we do. We are all infected with self-love and fleshly natures: Titus iii. 3, 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.' But we are partial to ourselves, we have no spiritual eyesight. Sin is of a defiling nature. You abhor dirty nasty creatures; all of us are polluted with sin. God that is a Spirit hath other affections; he doth not abhor a creature because of his sores, but because of his sins. We judge by the senses: Ps. xiv. 3, 'They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no not one.' So we are in the eyes of God, who is a pure Spirit. Sin maketh us odious and loathsome to him; but we that have bodies abominate things that are sensibly unclean.

Use 3. Let it stir us up to purify ourselves yet more and more.

1. See yourselves in the glass of the word. They that have most light do most complain of the filthiness and impurity of their hearts; not because there is more defilement, but more light. Sluttish corners are not seen in the dark. Carnal men are loath to see their own faces, they will not come to the light. We love a flattering glass, but a searching ministry is hated. You have not looked in the glass enough till it hath stirred up shame, sorrow, and self-abhorrence. Raging against conviction argueth the heart is bad. When men cannot endure to see themselves, but think all is clean and well, it is a sign of a secure careless spirit. If we keep ourselves from foul sins, we do not think of our odious natures.

2. Desire cleansing; as Peter, John xiii. 9, 'Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head;' or David, Ps. li. 2, 'Wash me throughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.' Sin is a deep stain, hardly got out; let it keep us humble. God carrieth on his work by degrees.

3. Use God's means: Zech. xiii. 1, 'In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness;' Rev. vii. 14, 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, which have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' The church knoweth no other laver, and the effect of it you receive in the ordinances.

4. Keep yourselves clean by a constant watchfulness: James i. 27, 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep yourselves unspotted from the world.' The world is a dirty place; you will soil your garments; therefore you must avoid all appearance of evil. Hate the garment spotted with the flesh. We cannot keep at too great a distance from sin; a bold use of our liberty showeth the heart hankereth after sin, as a raven hovereth within the scent of the carrion.

Doct. 2. Those that are purified are reckoned to be God's treasure and peculiar people.

The word in the original which we translate *peculiar people,* is λαὸς περιούσιος, the Vulgate renders it *populus acceptabilis,* an acceptable people, but not emphatical enough. Περιούσια signifies wealth, plenty, treasure, that which we have above our necessary substance; yea, not only treasure, but the principal part of it, that which is locked up in the cabinet, and takes up but a little room, as jewels. The expression is taken out of the Septuagint, and alludes to those places in the Old Testament where God calls his people his jewels or special treasure: Exod. xix. 5, 'Ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people;' which is rendered by the Septuagint, λαὸς περιούσιος ἀπὸ παντων ἐθνων. And you have another expression, 1 Peter ii. 9, 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar (or purchased) people:' λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν, *populus acquisitionis,* or *possessionis;* a people of possession, such as God counts his heritage, his jewels: Mal. iii. 17, 'They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.' The word imports any choice and precious thing; that God loves those that are purified as a covetous man loves his treasure or a proud man his jewels and honours.

Give me leave to illustrate it by a few scriptures, where the world and the saints are compared. The world are said to be 'not a people,' 1 Peter ii. 10. How so? Not for want of prowess, or policy, or pomp, or worldly splendour, or civil arts or crafts; many times in these things they excel the church; but they are said to be 'not a people,' that is, in God's account and esteem they are but a confused heap of nations spilt upon the earth by a general and looser providence. In Isa. lv. 5, there is another emphatical expression; 'Behold, thou shalt call nations that thou knowest not, and nations that know not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God.' It is spoken to Christ; it is a strange expression. Is there any *terra incognita,* any land that is unknown to him? The meaning is, which thou hast no more taken notice of, nor taken care of, than a man doth of those whom he never knew; a people of no esteem and respect with God, as if he had taken no notice that there were any such in the world. So Acts xvii. 30, 'The times of this ignorance God winked at.' In the original it is

ὑπερίδων, he overlooked them. The Vulgate reads it *despiciens*, he did despise them; and our old translation is better than the new, 'God regarded them not.' It is usually taken to signify God's indulgence, that he did not deal so strictly with the world, because they had so little means to keep them from sin; whereas the scope carrieth it quite otherwise in another sense. God overlooked, or lightly passed over those times, not caring what became of them that then lived before they were his peculiar people; he overlooked and regarded them not, but let them go on in their sins, though not unpunished. Thus you see foreigners to the church are strangers to God, and wicked men are as if they were not; not in regard of God's general providence, so they are sustained and regarded: he preserves man and beast; not in regard of calling them to an account for their sins; they that are sometimes called 'no people,' are at other times called 'the people of his curse;' but in regard of value and esteem; as to special communion with him, they are not at all.

But now look upon the terms that are bestowed upon the church and godly. Those that are purified, James i. 18, they are called 'the first-fruits of his creatures.' Under the law the first-fruits were the Lord's portion; so all that are regenerated and called to grace are the Lord's portion. Œcumenius glosseth upon the place. The world is but *κτισμα*, his creature, but the church is *κτῆμα*, his possession; the world are his goods, and they are his treasure. The vast territories of the blind world are but as a common and heath, which God doth not look after, but the church is as a garden enclosed, in regard of his love and special dispensation. Heretofore this was the privilege of Israel, to be God's portion; it was confined to them; and that is the reason of that expression, Isa. xix. 25, 'Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance,' or portion. God made all people, but he chose these for his delight and habitation. It was confined to them heretofore, but it is not confined now; the people of any nation may be preferred to this estate. Those that are purified, wherever they are, they are the Lord's treasure and people.

But why doth the Lord esteem them as his peculiar people? I shall give reasons with respect to every person of the Godhead.

1. Because of God the Father's choice; he hath picked and culled them out of the world, and therefore he esteemeth them above all others. See what the apostle saith, 1 Peter ii. 9, 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.' Therefore a peculiar people, because a chosen generation; they are set apart, singled out of the world for himself. So Ps. cxxxv. 4, 'The Lord hath chosen Jacob for himself, and Israel to be his peculiar treasure.' He hath culled them out, and left all the world besides; God's choice puts a value upon things. Common gold and silver is not of such value as that which was consecrated and dedicated to God; nay, gold and silver was not so good as goat's-hair that was consecrated to the uses of the tabernacle. The dedication of a thing to a holy use enhanceth the price of it. Now those that are chosen are consecrated and set apart by God for himself: 'The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself,' Ps. iv. 3; and therefore of greater value than all the world, because designed by God to be his portion.

2. Because of Christ's purchase; they are bought at a dear price:

1 Peter ii. 9, 'A purchased people;' that is the marginal reading. The saints are valued, not from themselves so much as in Christ; he hath put honour upon us, as Adam put a disgrace upon us. Adam sold us for a trifle, but Christ did not redeem us at so cheap a rate: 'Ye are redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, &c., but with the precious blood of Christ,' 1 Peter i. 18, 19. We prize that which cost dear. Christ was given in ransom for us, therefore doth God prize us.

3. Because they are vessels of the Spirit's forming. God delighted in all his creatures; they were all good, the product of the Spirit's incubation: Gen. i. 2, 'The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water.' But much more doth he delight in the new creature, his workmanship in Christ, Eph. ii. 10; partly because there is more goes to form the new creature than the old, and partly because their being is more noble than the beings of all other creatures in this lower world.

[1.] There is more goes to form them; there is discovered more wisdom, more power, more goodness. The new creature discovers more of his power than the old. It was a wonderful thing the making of the world, and disposing of the creatures into so many several forms and ranks, a mighty effect of God's power; but as there was no help, so there was no let or hindrance; nothing to oppose God's work, as nothing to facilitate it. But when God comes to frame a new creature, there is a spirit of rebellion and opposition. Then more of his wisdom. The gospel is a better theatre whereupon to see God than the world. In the world there is much of his wisdom, but much more in the mystery of grace, and in all his transactions to bring man to a purified state; therefore here is his special delight. Then for his mercy, goodness, and love. A great deal of love God showed in making angels out of nothing, but in some sense there is more love shown in sanctifying man; for in the former there was no hindrance to his goodness, but here wronged justice interposed, and put in something by way of bar against us; yet notwithstanding the demerit of our sins, he would take us into his favour. In the creation God showed himself to be φιλάγγελος, a lover of angels; but in redemption φιλάνθρωπος, a lover of man: Titus iii. 4, 'After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared.'

[2.] Chiefly because of the life they live. The new creature hath a more noble being than all the creatures in the world, and lives a more noble life. Put the whole world in the balance, and it is not worthy to be compared with the new creature. Those that are purified and sanctified, the world is not worthy of them: Heb. xi. 38, 'Of whom the world was not worthy.' Look, as the life of reason excels that of sense, and the life of sense that of vegetation, the life of beasts is better than the life of plants, and the life of man better than the life of beasts, so doth grace excel reason, and the life of saints is a more noble being than that of men. I confess if you go upward, we cannot say the life of glory as much excels the life of grace as the life of grace excels the life of reason; there is a greater difference between the life of reason and the life of grace than between the life of grace and the life of glory, or between a carnal man and a child of God than between the most

glorified saint in heaven and the weakest believer on earth. The difference between glory and grace is gradual, but the difference between the carnal life and the spiritual life is essential. Glorified saints, and saints here living the life of grace differ only in degrees, but the life of grace and the life of nature differ in kind. There is more difference between a toad or beast and a man than between a child and a man. Grace and glory differ but as a child and a man, only in degree; but grace and sense, and grace and reason, differ as the life of a toad and the life of a beast from the life of a man.

Use 1. Information.

1. That we should not value men by their secular interests, but by their relation to God. The Lord doth not call the potentates of the earth his treasure, as he doth his holy ones: Prov. xii. 26, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' Men may be mighty in the world, yet base and vile in God's esteem, Dan. iv. 17. He gives kingdoms to the basest of men. It is notable, in the prophetical visions of the great monarchs of the world, they are compared to wild beasts. Alexander the mighty yet is called the goat of Græcia. Paul calls Nero a lion. They that brave it in the world as if they were gods upon earth, yet in the Lord's account they are but beasts. But now the saints are the precious 'excellent ones of the earth,' Ps. xvi. 3; therefore we should not value men by their outward greatness: James ii. 1, 'Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.' If you have relation to Christ, he puts a glory and excellency upon you; you are his treasure. Saith Tertullian, *Non ex personis fidem, sed ex fide personas*—We must not measure the faith by the person, but the person by his faith. They are fools that despise and vilify those upon whom God sets the greatest price, and admire those that are of lowest esteem with God.

2. It informeth us that the judgment of God and the judgment of the world are very contrary. The world counts the saints the filth, the scurf, and off-scouring of all things, and God calls them jewels and treasure. Alas! with God carnal men are nothing, worse than nothing. It had been better for them, saith the Spirit of God, that they had never been born; and they are viler than the earth. The blind world knows not how to value the stamp and seal of the Spirit. When God hath impressed his own image, the world knows not how to value them; but God values them; these are coins and medals God will keep in his own treasure. Certainly they are worthless souls that despise them, that count purity a disgrace. It hath always been the world's fashion to crucify God in effigy, in his picture: to despise, oppress, and scoff at them that bear his image and resemble him, and malign and scorn the lustre of holiness.

3. It informs us how much it concerns us to be holy and purified, for those he counts to be his treasure. God's church is his heritage, but every one that lives in the church God doth not count them to be his jewels. Many claim acquaintance of him by virtue of offices and ministration in the church, yet they are disclaimed and disowned by God: Mat. vii. 22, 23, 'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will

I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' The Holy Ghost brings in some that had great gifts and employments in the church; and as when a man entertaineth another with strangeness, we use to put him in mind by some tokens, so carnal professors put Christ in mind as it were by some kind of tokens. Do you not remember that we prophesied in your name, &c., and we were employed in special offices in the church? No; verily, I know you not: he disclaims and disowns them.

4. It informs us that it is dangerous to molest, oppress, and persecute the godly, those that are purified, because they are God's peculiar ones; you meddle with the apple of his eye, and to destroy them is sacrilege. Israel is a holy thing: Jer. ii. 3, 'Israel is holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them saith the Lord.' Sacrilege hath been always deadly; robbing of temples among the heathen hath been always observed to be fatal to those that attempted it; the Lord by his wise providence was pleased to suffer the devil to follow them with tempests and punishments, to keep up the notion of a divine power, which is the fundamental principle and ground of all religion. So when you oppress and destroy the people of God, and malign them, you devour that which is holy, which will prove fatal and deadly. Look, as he told the governor, Acts xxii. 26, 'Take heed what thou doest, for this man is a Roman;' so God is very tender of these kind of men; they are his jewels, his treasure; take heed how you use them.

Use 2. Exhortation, and that both to carnal men and to God's people, who are his peculiar ones.

First, It exhorts carnal men to put in for a share in this great privilege, to be one of God's peculiar ones, those that he counts his treasures and his jewels. Let me first exhort, then direct.

1. I shall exhort you by these considerations, how God will own his peculiar people above all the world besides, and how he doth value them above all the world.

[1.] How he owns them; privately in their own consciences; he owns them in his ordinances; he owns them publicly in his providence; and most publicly he will own them in the day of judgment.

(1.) He owns them privately in their own consciences. God's holy ones are said to be sealed by the Spirit: Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' God sets his own seal upon them, to signify his right and property in them. As a man marks his sheep, or a merchant seals his wares to declare his right and property, so all that are God's they are sealed by his Spirit and they bear his mark. As the worshippers of the beast have the mark of the beast, so the people of God have the Lord's seal; he owns them. There is the Spirit's witness to tell them God is theirs, and there is the Spirit's work to cause to become God's. The Spirit witnesseth to them by impressions, and tells them, God is your salvation, and seals them by expressions, and makes them choose God. There is a mutual appropriation: Cant. vi. 3, 'I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine.' He chooseth them for his peculiar people, and they choose him for the peculiar treasure of their souls. Whom have they in heaven but God? and who doth God regard in the world but they? They have his privy-seal in their own consciences.

(2.) He owns them in his ordinances, so as to maintain communion with them, as he doth not with others. When others pray, God takes no notice that such a prayer is made; they hear, but cannot say God owns them. But now he owns his people in their approaches: Isa. lviii. 9, 'Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.' God doth as it were say, It is the voice of my people; what would you have? here I am, ready to help you, and to give you grace. No king will do so much for his favourites as God will do for his people: Zeph. iii. 10, he calls them 'his suppliants.' This is not a peculiar privilege for some peculiar saints that they are thus honoured of God and answered by him in prayer, but all are a peculiar people, and God hath affections and blessings enough for them all. When the wicked come and pray, God takes no notice of them, as if no such men were in the congregation: Isa. i. 15, 'When you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear.' They have no visits from the Spirit, nor sensible returns of prayer. It is sad to come to ordinances, and God to take no notice of us; when the Spirit of God comes into the congregation to bless the worshippers by head and poll, and you are left out of the account, and passed over. You know what is said in the law, Exod. xxix. 42, 43, 'At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord; where I will meet you, to speak there unto you; and there I will meet with the children of Israel.' God did not only promise to meet with Moses, but with all the congregation; and certainly the services of the church now are not less fruitful than the services of the tabernacle. When God's people come together, God meets with them, and talks with them, and sends them away with gifts of grace and spiritual increase, for they are his suppliants, and his peculiar people.

(3.) God owns them in the course of his providence sometimes with outward blessings. Thus God set up Abraham as a mark of envy to the nations about him. As Benjamin's mess was five times as much as the rest, so many times in outward blessings God owns his people. But I cannot much press this; but the aim of providence principally concerns them: Rom. viii. 28, 'All things work together for good to them that love God.' All things may seem to work against them, but they work for them. It is a mercy that God takes notice of them, and visits them day by day: Job vii. 18, 'That thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment.' Brambles are not pruned and pared as vines are. Wicked men, they are as sheep whom no man taketh up, God doth not look after them. But God's children may take notice how the special care of providence serves their special necessities; and particularly as to their afflictions; they do not spring out of the dust, but every day God is mindful of them, and ordereth such dispensations to keep them in order; whereas wicked men are only under the general care of providence; they cannot discern such particular love and aim at their good and spiritual welfare.

(4.) He will own them before all the world at the last day, 'I will confess them,' saith Christ, 'before my Father which is in heaven,' Luke xii. 8. These are the fruits of my purchase; he will present them to God: Heb. ii. 13, 'Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.' But wicked men are disclaimed: then will I 'profess unto

them, I never knew you,' Mat. vii. 23. Oh! how will their faces gather blackness when Christ shall disclaim all acquaintance with them. I never had any real and familiar converse with you, in public or private worship.

[2.] How he values them. He doth not stand upon other nations for their safety, either to preserve them or to divert the destroyer from them; as for instance, when God, raiseth up some furious instrument, that is *flagellus Dei*, the scourge of God to pull down and waste; God finds work for them abroad to save his people; and therefore he saith, Isa. xliii. 3, 4, 'I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.' He let the sword go into other countries to save Judah, that was his heritage; if the sword must drink blood and eat flesh, let it go to Egypt, Ethiopia, Seba, into idolatrous countries. He puts other nations in their stead, and counts them as a little chaff, to save the Jews. And then the highest among the nations (which is another argument) are rebuked for their sakes. God plucked the sceptre out of the hands of kings, and the diadems off from their heads: Ps. cv. 14, 15, 'He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not my anointed;' meaning those that are anointed with his grace. God will rebuke the mightiest potentates. Again, though they are never so despicable, yet countries whom God hath doomed to destruction hath he saved for their sakes. It is a notable expression of God to Lot, Gen. xix. 22, 'Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither.' These are the blessings in the cluster that keeps the vine alive, which otherwise would be destroyed; the chariots and horsemen of Israel; nay, they are the pillars of the whole world; the creation would not continue a jot longer if God had not a peculiar people. As the ship tarries till all the passengers be entered, then they hoist up sails, God's providence only tarries till all the elect be gathered and his jewels shall be made up, then the world shall be no more. There are some few hidden ones that keep up the world, and preserve the course and frame of nature. Now, will you not put in for this privilege to be of that number? You must pass the great river and be washed before you can come to serve and minister in holy things to God.

2. For direction.

[1.] You must earnestly desire this privilege: Ps. cvi. 4, 5, 'Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest to thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.' This should be the greatest ambition of your souls, that you might be one of God peculiar ones; as Theodosius counted it a greater honour to be a member of the church than to be emperor of the world; and Moses, Heb. xi. 24, 25, 'when he came to years,' μέλας γενόμενος, when he was grown great, that is, when he had ability to judge, 'he 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.' The honour of Pharaoh's court was nothing so lovely to him as to be a member of God's people, and

to enjoy communion with the saints, though with great affliction and reproach.

[2.] Whenever you are brought in to be one of that number, you must take an oath of allegiance to God, for so do all his people; they take hold of the covenant of God. See Deut. xxvi. 17, 18, 'Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice; and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments.' God will bind you fast when you come to partake of this privilege; it must be by solemn consecration, and by covenant to walk in all his ways and in all his statutes. So Deut. xxix. 12, 13, '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: that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.' There is a covenant by which God and the church do own one another. If you expect protection and provision for this life and for a better, give God the hand and take hold of his covenant. Jesus Christ hath all manner of relations to the church. All titles you know to a crown are either by purchase, conquest, or by covenant, or consent of nations, thus Christ will be king of the church by covenant and by consent; you must take an oath to him of allegiance to him, to be faithful to him, to observe all his ways and statutes, that so you may become his people.

Secondly, The other branch of exhortation is to God's people, to walk as his peculiar ones, and to carry yourselves as becometh the people of God.

1. Praise him for enrolling you in this company: Ps. cxxxv. 3, 4, 'Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant: for he hath chosen Jacob to himself, and Israel to be his peculiar treasure.' To quicken you, consider what you were; you were not a people, God raised you up from the very dunghill to this preferment; remember your past estate. Look, as old Jacob considered what he had been when God preferred him, Gen. xxxii. 10, 'With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands;' so do you say, I am a worthless creature, it is God that hath taken me into grace, praised be the Lord that hath chosen me. Then consider how many are left to perish in the wide world. Some live out of the church's pale that never heard of Christ, and many others have only a loose general form of christianity. Oh! blessed be God that hath chosen me to be of the number of his peculiar people. It is said, Zech. xiii. 8, 'And it shall come to pass in all the land, saith the Lord, that two parts shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein.' We pass through many bolters before we come to be God's peculiar people, as the corn is ground, bolted, searched before it comes to be fine flour. There are many nations have not the knowledge of God, and others live in the church but are carnal; and I to be one of his peculiar people, an invisible member of Christ's mystical body, oh! what a privilege is this! And then what moved him to all this? Nothing but his own free grace. Thus Moses debates the

case with Israel: Deut. vii. 6–8, 'For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord hath not set his love upon you, or chose you, because ye were more in number than any people (for ye were the fewest of all people); but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.' Therefore praise the Lord.

2. Improve it for confidence: Zech. xiii. 9, 'And I will bring a third part of them through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.' In time of great affliction, then it is time to plead our peculiar interest in God, as the church doth, Isa. lxiv. 9, 'Behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.' It is a ground of audience and confidence. Interest is the sweetest argument that we can use in prayer: Ps. cxix. 94, 'I am thine, save me.' He is worse than an infidel that doth not provide for his own family. Now what ground of confidence is this, Lord, we are thine; therefore cast yourselves upon God.

3. Carry yourselves as a peculiar people to him. Wherein?

[1.] You must not be contented with common mercies. Every distinct society hath distinct privileges. Now the elect are a peculiar people, and therefore should look after peculiar privileges. A man may have outward things; and here is nothing peculiar, no argument of God's special love. Castaways may have these things: Ps. cxix. 132, 'Look then upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto them that love thy name.' Look not upon me as thou usest to do on the world in general, but as thou dost on thy own people. You must have renewing mercies, and sanctifying mercies, a holy heart, be kept from sin, and conformed to God. Other mercies a man may have and go to hell; therefore be not satisfied with them. Luther protested to God he would not be put off with estate and the favour of the world, and with increase of honour and esteem. Alas! the multitude may have these things, it is their happiness: Ps. iv. 6, 'There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.'

[2.] Be not contented with common graces. Thus far a man may go, and not be saved. As, for instance, there are moral inclinations in heathens, and they make conscience of gross sins. It is not enough to keep from theft, drunkenness, adultery; a heathen would discover those sins by the light of nature, and by such arguments and reasons as nature suggests would avoid them. And then hypocrites may have flashes of comfort, glances, wishes, and good moods; though they have no constant delight in communion with God, yet they have superficial hopes, and are much taken with evangelical strains and tenders of the gospel; they have a desire to keep their consciences quiet and peaceable; but you should labour for uprightness and special graces. Carnal men desire to be secure rather than sincere, that they may have some

delectations and superficial tastes; but you are to look after 'things that accompany salvation,' Heb. vi. 9. In the original it is τὰ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας, things that have salvation in them; you should be contented with no grace but that which is an undoubted pledge and evidence of heaven, not a loose hope of the gospel.

[3.] Be not satisfied with a common conversation. How is that? Partly thus: You must not live according to ordinary privileges and ordinary hopes: you must discover self-denial, as one trained up in the school of Christ. It is an accusation the apostle brings against the Corinthians, 1 Cor. iii. 3, 'Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?' When men pretend to be God's peculiar people, and have nothing singular, but are given to worldly cares, vile passions, and corrupt affections, as other men are, this hardens carnal men. A christian should live like a wonder in his place, by discovering much self-denial and mortification in his conversation: Mat. v. 46, 'For if ye love them which love you, what reward have you? do not the publicans the same?' It is the greatest hypocrisy that can be in the world to profess to be a peculiar people, and to deny yourselves in nothing, but do as others do; we should live at another rate, and be more holy, more charitable, more heavenly.

[4.] Do not live according to ordinary examples. We may not frame and fashion ourselves to the guise of the world, because we are the Lord's peculiar people: Deut. xiv. 1, 2, 'Ye are the children of the Lord your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead; for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.' Dead fishes swim with the stream; a christian should live in a counter motion to the world. You cannot do as others do, for you profess yourselves to be distinct. Especially we should consider this in times of general defection, not to run away from God: Micah iv. 5, 'For all people will walk, every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.' When every man sets up a distinct religion (that is the meaning of it), then the peculiar people of God should hold together, and show forth special zeal, and special strictness in the ways of God, in times of coldness, indifferency, and neutrality in religion: Josh. xxiv. 15, 'And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, 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.'

SERMON XXII.

Zealous of good works.—TITUS ii. 14.

I COME to the last circumstance, the outward manifestation of Christ's purifying, that he might make us 'Zealous of good works.'

I shall consider it partly as the note of evidence of God's peculiar people, and partly as it falls under the aim of Christ's death.

Doct. Zeal for or in good works is a note of God's people and a fruit of Christ's purchase.

Here I shall inquire—(1.) What good works are; (2.) What it is to be zealous of good works; (3.) In what respect and place we are to put this zeal, or how it stands in order to the death of Christ.

I. What good works are. I shall show the kinds of them, and the requisites to them.

First, The kinds of good works. Good works, for the matter of them, may be distributed into four sorts or ranks—*opera cultus*, acts of worship; *opera vocationis*, works of our own particular function and calling; *opera justitiæ*, works of righteousness; *opera charitatis*, works of mercy.

1. *Opera cultus*, acts of worship, both internal and external; external, to pray, hear, read, meditate, to be much in communion with God. So for internal acts, as faith, and repentance, and love. All these are good works, and fitly placed in the first rank; of these we must be chiefly zealous, because our happiness lies in communion with God. It is notable Daniel would not omit prayer for one day, though he was forbidden by the king, and in danger of death: Dan. vi. 10, 'Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went to his house; and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.' Certainly they have little zeal in them that care not to be frequent in communion with God, and call not upon his name. These are the chiefest parts of those good works we must press and exhort you to, where we are to be the more punctual, because the offence is immediately done to God. If we do not works of mercy and justice, there the offence is done to men; but neglecting the works of piety and godliness, the offence is done immediately to God, who is very jealous of being defrauded of his worship; and a failing in the least circumstance is a sin of a high nature; witness Uzzah slain for touching of the ark, and the fifty thousand slain at Bethshemesh for looking into the ark. And there is a notable instance of Daniel, as he would not omit prayer, so neither the opening of his casement. A man would have thought, being in imminent danger of his life, he might have dispensed with that circumstance. Why would he open his casement? I answer—Because Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, required this ceremony as an act of faith; they were to pray towards the place where the house of God was, which was a type of Christ, to show their eye and heart should be to Christ whenever they call on God; therefore would he not dispense with opening his casement. Danger of life should not diminish our zeal here. These good works must be done

with all exactness and care; God very precisely requires them. It is notable that will-worship is only in the duties of the first table; in love to our neighbours there is no place for superstition and will-worship. That may be done at one time that is not to be done at another. But in the expressions of our love to God, there precepts are immutable, we are to be exact. God here would not leave us at liberty, and be at the creature's finding; he knows his own institutions are the best means to keep up and preserve a respect and honour to himself, therefore here we must be punctual.

2. There are *opera vocationis*, the works of our calling. Every man should labour in that work to which he is called. Though such works be for our own support, yet God is pleased to interpret it as an act of obedience, by which he is glorified. Thus christians may honour God in the meanest calling. Servants in their relation are said to make the doctrine of God comely: Titus ii. 10, 'That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.' Though they be in the condition of slaves, as then they were, bought and sold like beasts in the market, yet the apostle speaks to them, You may adorn the gospel of God. It is good to be profitable to human society in your way and place; for that is the account Paul gives of Onesimus, speaking of his former and present estate: Philem. 11, 'Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and me.' It is a great honour to God when we are faithful in the work of our relations. God tries us by the duties of our personal calling, what honour we will bring to him there. Public acts of worship may be counterfeit, as prayer, hearing, receiving; but here is a constant and daily trial, whether we have grace or no, whether we have only our good moods, or a constant spring of grace in our hearts; and therefore he that is not good in his relation and calling is nowhere good, for that is the sphere of his activity; there he is to glorify God, and to discover the power of godliness. It is notable, when John had preached a sermon of repentance, his hearers came to him, and said, 'What shall we do?' Luke iii. 10; as possibly you may say, What are these good works? And he presseth them to duties proper to their relations. To the publicans: 'Exact no more than that which is appointed you,' ver. 14. To the soldiers: 'Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages,' ver. 15.

3. There are *opera justitiæ*, works of righteousness; as to give every man his due, to hurt none, to live without wrong to any, or wreck of or breach upon our own consciences: Acts xxiv. 16, 'Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.' These are good and profitable to human society, and the credit of religion is much concerned in them; hypocrites, that abound in worship, and are zealous for the institutions of Christ, most commonly are here defective; they are not just, righteous, and conscionable in their dealings; therefore they are strictly required: Micah vi. 8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy?' God requires it of all, but especially of men professing piety, because making conscience of justice and equity in their dealing is both an argument of their sincerity and an ornament of their profession. God will have the world know that religion is a friend to human society.

Indeed there are some that would be accounted religious persons, yet live as if the whole second table were to be blotted out, and so they prove a stain and blot to their religion. Men judge by what is visible, and therefore, when you break all restraints of honesty and conscience, you disparage your profession: Neh. v. 9, 'Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?' Our adversaries are watchful, therefore keep up the credit and renown of religion, do justice, deal righteously, for that is the case in hand. Austin asserts, and so do the fathers generally, the primitive glory of the christian religion, that none were so just, so good in their relations, so true and faithful to their trust, as the christians were. *Dent exercitum talem, tales imperatores, &c.*— Let them show such magistrates, such people, such merchants, such soldiers, as the christian religion affords.

4. There are *opera charitatis et misericordiæ*, works of charity and mercy; as to relieve the poor, to do good to all, to help others by their purse, estate, counsel, admonition but especially to do good to them that are good: Gal. vi. 10, 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' These are usually, and by a proper term, called 'good works.' Therefore Dorcas is said to be 'full of good works and alms-deeds,' Acts ix. 36; and 1 Tim. vi. 16, 'Charge them that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.' It is not a thing left arbitrary to you, but laid upon you as a part of your charge and duty. It is a due debt you owe to God, if not to the poor; and we are thieves, not only in robbing and taking from others, but in not giving to others; and therefore the Holy Ghost useth that expression, Prov. iii. 27, 'Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.' It is due by the law of God to those that are in distress. When God casts us upon objects of pity and christian commiseration, there is something due. By virtue of God's command the poor are a kind of owners, and charity is a part of righteousness. Christians, you are stewards, and to dispense the estate you have according to the master's command. An unfaithful steward, that keeps all to himself, is a thief. A nobleman hath need of money, and sendeth to his steward; Go to my steward, and demand such a sum: will he deny him his own when his lord hath need of it? God hath commanded to give when he sendeth to you. How doth God send to us but in the course of his providence? We are one day to give an account, and what a sorry account shall we make! So much for pomp, so much for pleasure, so much for gorgeous apparel, so much for riot and luxury, and so little for the master's use. If a man to whom the care of children is committed should feed dogs and whelps, and neglect the children, what a sorry account would he give of his trust! God hath demanded his right by our poor brethren; he hath made them his proxies. Our bounty reacheth not to God himself, therefore he offereth them to our pity; what we do for them he accounteth as done to himself. Acts of mercy are required, that we may acknowledge God's property; it is our rent to the great landlord of the world. It is an honour put upon you; you are as gods to them to relieve them and comfort them. He could give

without thee, but he trieth thee, and will have thee interested in the act. It is a great honour to religion; the world is taken with bounty: Rom. v. 7, 'Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die;' Titus iii. 14, 'And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.' Let not others, that have not such high motives, or such glorious advantages, be more forward than ours.

Secondly, There are the requisites to a good work; there is the state of the person, and the uprightness of our principle, and the end and rule of our actions.

1. The state of the person; the person must be in Christ. Do we gather grapes off thorns and figs off thistles? We expect good fruit from a good tree. The person must first be in Christ, as the apostle saith: Titus iii. 8, 'These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.' When the foundation of faith is first laid, and that is the root, then good works flow kindly, as the fruit that grows upon this tree. So in the text, first 'a peculiar people,' and then 'zealous of good works;' the leper under the law, till he was cleansed, all that he touched and all he went about was unclean; so till you are purified and cleansed by the work of grace passing upon your hearts, all that you do is abominable and filthy in God's eye. A natural man cannot be acceptable to God, nor perform an act of pure obedience, for he is an enemy: and therefore his gifts are giftless gifts, ἔχθρων δώρα ἄδωρα. This method the apostle lays down: Eph. ii. 10, 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' First his workmanship created in Christ; there is the fitness and preparation for good works. Works materially good may be done by God's enemies out of the strength of an unrenewed will, for carnal ends, without any respect and love to God; therefore first we must be reconciled to God; first we stir up men to love God, and then serve him. Will you have the graft or scion bear fruit till it be set in the stock? So can we bear fruit to God until we are planted in Christ? All the issue that is born before marriage is illegitimate; the acts are but bastard acts, and our graces are but bastard graces, till we are contracted to Christ.

2. The principles of operation must be right for the constitution of good works. These principles are faith, love, and obedience. Faith receives help from Christ, love inclines the heart, and obedience sways the conscience. In every good work these are the true gospel principles. Obedience sways the conscience by virtue of God's law, love inclines the heart out of gratitude and thankfulness to God, and faith expects help and supply from Christ. In short, every good work is an action commanded by the law, but arising from faith in the gospel; it is done out of conscience and because of God's command, but yet willingly, because God is so good in Christ, and faith gives both help and encouragement. Without faith whatever is done is but sin; without obedience, it is but customary; and without love, it is but legal, and no evangelical work.

3. As the principle and operation, so the end must be right, to glorify God in whatever we do; not to gratify interest, that is carnal; not barely to promote the welfare of nature, that is but an act of natural

self-love, aiming at his own preservation; not to pacify God, that is legal, and so a renouncing of the merit of Christ. So that every act of duty must be made a branch of gospel obedience arising from gratitude, that God may be glorified.

4. Those are good works which are commanded by God and conformable to the rule laid down in scripture. As sin is *ἀνομία*, a transgression of the law of God, so a good work is a conformity to the law of God. That is a good work which is agreeable to that rule that is the proper measure of good and evil: Ps. cxix. 6, 'Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments.' A strictness beyond the word, or besides the word, is a bastard and an apocryphal holiness, and but counterfeit coin, which is not current in the kingdom of grace.

II. What is it to be zealous of good works?

1. We should be forward and cheerful in well-doing. Zeal is *ferventior amoris gradus*, a higher degree of love; the more love, the more forward in acting. Certainly zeal will readily set us a-work to do all we do willingly, freely, and cheerfully, as the apostle intimates, 2 Cor. ix. 2, 'For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.' It is not zeal to stand hucking and disputing every inch with the Spirit of God. You are not only called to the bare practice of good works, but you must be first and most forward, and leaders of others; watch opportunities to do good, and take hold of them when they are offered. We should be glad of an opportunity offered, wherein to discover our affection to God and our hatred to sin. This is zeal to be willing and forward.

2. To be zealous is to be self-denying and resolute notwithstanding discouragements. Zeal is a mixed affection; it consists partly of love and partly of indignation; and so when I am zealous of a thing, I love that thing, and shake off and hate all that lets and hinders it. Zeal sets us a-work, and holds us to it notwithstanding discouragements. Zeal will not stick at a little labour and charge; the more resistance, the more glory. God's children are glad that they may not serve God with that which cost them nothing; as David professeth, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24, 'I will not offer a burnt-offering unto the Lord my God of that which did cost me nothing.' Certainly men are not zealous, and their hearts are not set upon the ways of God, when every slight excuse will serve the turn, and every little profit draws them away, and every petty business doth hinder them, and break off communion with God, and every slender temptation doth interrupt and break off all their purposes and resolutions to duty and obedience, be it prayer, charity, or acts of righteousness. We must be resolute, for Gal. iv. 18, 'It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.'

3. To be zealous of good works imports diligence and earnestness to advance piety to the highest pitch when we are not contented with any low degrees of obedience, but would fain carry out a godly conversation to the uttermost, to do it with all our heart. Is he zealous that is contented with a little charity, with a little worship only? Sloth and idleness will not stand with zeal: Rom. xii. 11, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' Thus it will be when we are

seething hot in spirit, as the word τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες signifies. A large affection cannot be contented with mean things and low degrees of holiness; nor lay a dead child in the room of a living one. This the apostle calls 'being rich in good works,' 1 Tim. vi. 18. One or two acts will not serve the turn. Thus Dorcas is said to be 'full of good works,' Acts ix. 36. How full? It is not an allusion to the fulness of a vessel that is full of water, or a chest full of clothes, but to the fulness of a tree laden with fruit: James iii. 17, 'Full of mercy and good works.' Those that are planted into this noble vine, Jesus Christ, are full of good works.

4. To be zealous of good works is to be constant to the end. The fire on the altar never went out, but it was always maintained and kept in; so we must never let the fire of zeal go out. Zeal is not like fire in straw. Alas! sudden fervours are soon spent; they are but free-will pangs, the birth of an unrenewed will; but it is like fire in wood, that casts a lasting heat: Gal. iv. 18, 'It is good to be zealously affected always.' Not at first only for a fit or pang; that doth not come from sanctification; therefore you should keep up your fervour. Watch against all decays, especially in age. The motions of youth are very vehement, for youth is full of eager spirits, and seems to be all on fire; but many times these motions are not so sincere; but the actions of age are more solid, though many times they want vigour and heat. Therefore strive to keep up your zeal: Gal. v. 7, 'Ye did run well, who did hinder you?' Carnal men, when their first heats are spent, give over; they grow cold, careless, and indifferent in matters of religion. But shall all these heats and desires of reformation be in vain, and shall we give over at length? In worldly things we will not give over when we have been at great cost; but shall all that is past in religion be in vain? Gal. iii. 4, 'Have you suffered so many things in vain, if it be yet in vain?' His meaning is, It is not like to be in vain, it will but tend to your greater condemnation. An adulteress is punished more than an harlot. It is more dishonour and ingratitude to God to tire at length.

III. The respect and place of zeal in good works; it is a note of God's people, and a fruit of Christ's death.

1. It is a note of God's people. *Unumquodque operatur secundum suam formam.* There is in the new creature a propensity and inclination to good works. As all creatures are created with an inclination to their proper operations, such a willing tendency is there in the new creature to those actions which are heavenly. As sparks fly upward and a stone moves downward, so the new creature is carried to obedience and holiness from a free principle within. The nature of everything is the principle of its motion. Faith will discover itself; therefore we read of 'God's fulfilling the work of faith with power,' 2 Thes. i. 11. Hope is called lively, from the effect: 1 Peter i. 3, 'He hath begotten us to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' Love constraineth: 2 Cor. v. 14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' Good works are a note of the new creature: 'We are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,' Eph. ii. 10. As an artificer sets a mark upon his workmanship that he might know it, so God sets a visible mark upon his servants; he doth not make a new

creature for old works. Good works are *christianæ fidei quasi testes*, witnesses that you can bring to evidence the truth and power of grace. Luther saith, Good works are faith incarnate; that is, faith is manifested by them, as the Son of God was manifested in the flesh. They are witnesses to the world, to yourselves, and unto God that you are his. They are signs and witnesses to the world. This is the badge by which God would have his peculiar children known; not by pomp and worldly splendour, not by any outward excellency, riches, greatness, and estate, but by zeal to good works. There are no barren trees in Christ's garden; it is not for the honour of God, for our heavenly Father would be glorified in his servants' bringing forth much fruit: John xv. 8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.' God standeth much upon his honour. Now it is for the honour of God that all which are planted and grafted into Christ should be full of good works. And they are testimonies to ourselves: 2 Peter i. 10, 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' Some copies add διὰ τῶν ἔργων, make your calling and election sure by good works; certainly it may be collected from the context. He bids them, ver. 5, 'add to their faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge,' &c., and so they might come to make their calling and election sure. Graces are not discerned by their habits, but by their acts and exercise. Look, as in a tree, the sap and life is hid, but the fruit and apples do appear, so zeal of good works is that which appears, and so it manifests and clears up your condition. This is the great note of difference between us and the profane; they are zealous for the devil's kingdom, factors for hell: John viii. 44, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do.' They are known by their works; they are earnest for Satan, zealous for the devil, follow sin with earnestness, 'and do evil with both hands earnestly,' Micah vii. 3. It is the difference between us and civil men, but unregenerate; they are like cypress trees, fair and tall, but fruitless, of a comely life, but none of these good works are to be found in them. It is the difference between us and hypocrites; a hypocrite, like a carbuncle, seems to be all on a fire, but when you touch it, it is quite cold; so they pretend to religion, talk much, but have no true regular zeal, no spiritual warmth. It is notable our Lord himself proves his divine original by his works: John x. 38, 'Though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.' So is this the sensible evidence you are in Christ and Christ in you. Graces are not always evident in feeling, but in fruit; the effects cannot be hid. Then they are signs and evidences to God himself; the Lord will look upon them as marks and evidences of his people. Look, as the destroying angel was to be guided by a sign, Exod. xii. 12, 13, by the sprinkling of the door-posts, not that he needed it, but because God would have it to be so, so the Lord suits his dispensations, and guides them by a sign. It is true God in his gifts is arbitrary, but in his judgments he proceeds by rule, according to our works. At the last day God will judge you not by your profession, but by your practice, what you have done; he will not say, You have prophesied in my name, you have eaten and drunk in my presence; but, You have fed me, clothed me, visited me. That the faith of the elect might be found to praise

and honour, he will have works produced. Not that God wants evidences of our sincerity, but he will have all the world know we have not been unfruitful. A man that expecteth to be posed is preparing to answer, and would give something to know the questions aforehand. Christ hath told us what are the questions upon which we shall be examined and taxed at the day of judgment; he will say, Have you fed and clothed my people? have you ministered to their necessities? have you relieved them with spiritual counsel and admonition? have you been good, holy, and just? Therefore let us provide to give an answer, that we might not be ashamed at the last day. Thus this zeal for good works hath the place and room of a witness; to God, as the rule and measure of his process; to ourselves, as the ground of our assurance; and to the world, as the great vindication of the honour of our profession.

2. It is a fruit of Christ's death; partly by way of obligation, for certainly God hath not been at all this cost and labour for nothing; he did not project the sending of Christ, and Jesus Christ did not so give up himself in the work of redemption for nothing, but to inflame us to a great height of piety. They that live at a low rate of holiness cross and disgrace the whole design of the gospel; they are not apprehensive of the love of God in giving Christ, nor the love of Christ in giving himself. Our redemption was carried on in such a way, not only that the comfort, but also the duty of the creature might be raised to the highest. Partly, again, as Christ hath purchased the gift of the Spirit to fit us for good works, yea, to make us zealous in them: Titus iii. 5, 6, '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.' Now the Spirit dwelleth in our hearts to set our graces a working: John iv. 14, 'The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' So John vii. 38, 39, 'He that believeth on me, as the scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him shall receive.' The Spirit is not a fountain sealed up, but flowing forth. The Spirit of God is a mighty Spirit, and comes in upon the soul not only as a gentle blast, but as a mighty rushing wind; he comes not only in the appearance of a dove, but of cloven tongues of fire, Acts ii. He comes as a Spirit of power to quicken and awaken the soul to great heights and fervours in obedience. Look, as men acted by Satan, the unclean spirit, are restless in evil, and carried headlong as the herd of swine into the sea, so those that are acted by the Spirit of God are much more carried on with great earnestness in the ways of God. The devil hath not such advantages to work upon his instruments as the Spirit of God hath upon us. The devil works and operates in all the children of disobedience: Eph. ii. 3, 'The Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.' But the devil cannot work but by man's consent, neither can he work immediately upon the soul, but only by the senses and by the fancy, but the Spirit of God can work immediately upon them in whom he acts. Therefore being acted by him, they must needs be zealous and earnest; for the Spirit of God *nescit tarda molimina*, knows no slow motions. The soul in itself is dead and slothful, and apt to yield to laziness and

delays; but when we are acted and quickened by the mighty Spirit, then 'draw us, and we will run after thee,' Cant. i. 4. When the Spirit puts forth its force upon the soul, such as are drawn by the Holy Ghost, they are not in jest, as carnal men are, but in earnest; they do not dally with religion, but make it their great business to surprise heaven, and carry on constant communion with God: Mat. xi. 12, 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.'

Use 1. Information.

1. That grace is no enemy to good works. Libertinism is ancient and natural. Christ died to improve piety, not to lessen it, but to raise it to the highest, to make us zealous of good works, that we might be carried on to heaven with full sails; therefore he that grows looser, less watchful against sin, less diligent in the exercise of holiness, less frequent in communion with God, less humble and penitent after committing of sin, offers the greatest abuse to grace that may be, and perverts its natural use. There is no freezing by the fire; we may freeze indeed by painted fire, that may make us contract chilliness and drowsiness, but true grace is a fire that warms and inflames our affections. Christ came to make us more cheerful and lively, but not slack, careless, and cold.

2. It informs us what little reason the world hath to cry out upon zealots, for Christ died to make us ζηλωτὰς, 'zealous of good works.' Men that are only contented with a brain religion, speculative notions, they cannot endure heats and fervours; they would have a religion to talk of, but not to live by; therefore they are cold and indifferent; and when the children of God offer a holy violence to the kingdom of heaven, they become a matter of scorn and opposition to them. And besides, formal men cannot endure to be outstripped, and therefore malign what they will not imitate; as those that are at the bottom of the hill fret at those that are at the top; and men of a lazy and slow pace envy them that are more zealous, strict, and holy: but they have little cause to envy them, for Christ died to make us zealous of good works.

3. It informs us, if we would expect any benefit by Christ's death, we must be zealous of good works, and more warm in the service of God. A cold christian will have but cold comfort. For whom did Christ die? For those that are zealous of good works: Mat. xi. 12, 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.' It is an allusion to Exod. xix. 23, 24, where there was a rail about the mount of God, that the people might not break through; but when John the Baptist began to discover the grace of God, and pointed to the Lamb of God, then the kingdom of God suffered violence, men began to break through and press upon God; there is a free access to God, and men are earnest and will not be denied entrance: Mat. v. 20, 'Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.' It is not cold prayers, and yawning devotions, and drowsy wishes, when men are half asleep, that will serve in this case; heaven is gotten by force, and surprised by onset and storm; it signifies breaking through the rail, and all restraints that are set to keep us off from God.

Use 2. To stir us up to this zeal of good works. In a dead and drowsy age we need an alarum. Knowledge hath now devoured

practice in these decaying times. Seneca complains men are altogether studious for filling their brains, not warming their hearts; and when once men became more learned, they were less good. The world is altogether for storing the head with notions, empty and airy strains; so that if Christ should come amongst us, he would find few zealous, but a company of lazy christians that live at a low cheap rate of christianity. High-flown we are indeed in our fancies, in notions and pretences, but low and flat in practice and conversation. Usually thus it is in the time of the church's prosperity; like a river, it loseth in depth what it gains in breadth. Then it hath many friends, but their love is not so strong nor so hot as at other times. Salvian complains, *Multiplicatis fidei populis, fides diminuta est; et crescentibus filiis, mater ægrotat, &c.*—When professors were multiplied, their faith was lessened; and as a mother grows the weaker the more children she bears, so doth religion grow weaker and weaker; when every one takes up a cold profession, they learn formality one of another. And he goes on, *Quantum copiæ accessit, tantum disciplinæ recessit;* as a large body is less active. *In audito genere processus et recessus, crescens simul et decrescens*—When the church increaseth in multitude, and decreaseth in vigour and strength, it loseth in spirit what it enjoyeth in temporal felicity. Thus it often falls out with the church of God that, when religion is fair, many take up the profession; but alas! it is but weak and spiritless, without any life and vigour. Therefore, in such a drowsy age and dead times, we need alarums and quickening excitations to awaken our zeal again for solid piety, for those good works that are commended to us in the scripture. Therefore let us inquire what kind of enforcements and considerations are likely to be most operative to press us to this zeal and care of good works.

1. Consider how violent and earnest carnal men are in the ways of sin, and shall they serve Satan better than you serve God? Oh! consider, you have a better master, better work, and better wages; their master is the devil, their work is the basest drudgery, being slaves to their own lusts; and their wages are suitable, their reward is everlasting damnation, and a separation from the presence of the Lord. How active are wicked men for the kingdom of darkness! how zealous and earnest to ruin themselves, as if they could not be damned soon enough! Isa. v. 19, 'They draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope.' The meaning is, they would sin though it cost them a great deal of pains and sorrow, and though they could not sin at a cheap rate. The prophet doth not say they were drawn into sin as into a gin and snare, but they themselves did draw on sin; it is horrid work, yet they delight in it, toiling and tiring themselves as beasts at a plough; they were sinful, though it cost them sorrow and pain. There is no corruption but it puts you to some self-denial. Luxury is costly, and he that loves wine and oil, saith Solomon, will be poor. Pride, we say, will endure the cold, and vain-glory will expose a man to danger and ruin. Worldliness encroacheth upon pleasantness and the comforts of life; a worldling will 'rise early, sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrows,' Ps. cxxvii. 2. With what earnestness and unwearied diligence do carnal men pursue after a few trifles! How do they lay out all their wisdom and all their sagacity

about worldly things: Luke xvi. 8, 'The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.' As children are busy about toys and puppets, so they cumber themselves about much serving, and all their life is but care and disquiet, and a constant self-denial: Ps. xxxix. 6, 'Surely every man walketh in a vain show, surely they disquiet themselves in vain.' They make a great deal of stir and bustle, and many times, when all is got, what is it? A sorry comfort, and that which must be left on this side the grave. Thus wicked men are active and restless in their way. So for idolatry; with what cost and diligence do men promote false worship, and compass sea and land to make a proselyte; they will give rivers of oil and thousands of rams; they do not stand at pains and cost. God bids the prophet look upon this sight (as indeed it is worthy of a christian consideration): Jer. vii. 17, 18, 'Seest thou what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods.' What a busy diligence is here to promote their false worship! Fathers, children, husbands, wives, they all put their helping hands to the work, and find some employment or other. Where will you have a family so earnest and zealous to set up the work of God? Oh! how can you look upon such a spectacle as this without shame, that a lust should have more power with them than the love of God with you? Is it not a shame that Amnon can be sick for Tamar, and yet you cannot be sick for Christ, as the spouse was for her beloved? You have high motives, nobler employment; your work is the perfection of the creature; the noblest faculties are exercised in the noblest way of operation; your rewards are more excellent, and you have greater advantages and helps. Shall they take more pains to undo their souls than you do to save your souls? We read in ecclesiastical story, when Pambus saw a harlot curiously dressed, he wept, partly to see one take so much pains for her own eternal ruin, and partly because he had not been so careful to please Christ, and to dress up his soul for Christ, as she was to please her wanton lover. Christians, whenever you are cast upon such a sight or spectacle, when you come by a shop, and see men labour and toiling out their hearts, and all this for temporal gain, doth it not make you blush and be ashamed that you are so negligent and careless in the work of God?

2. Consider you yourselves have been violent and earnest in the ways of sin, and will you not do as much for God? How may every one say, When I was a wicked and carnal man, I followed it with all my heart, and shall I do less now in a state of grace? The apostle hath a notable expression, Rom. vi. 19, 'I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.' Mark how the apostle brings it in with a preface, *ανθρώπινον λέγω*, 'I speak after the manner of men;' that is, men in common sense and reason judge it equal that they should be as diligent to come up to the height of sanctification, and as zealous of good works, as ever you were to come up to the height of sin and were zealous for hell. Should you

not have as much care to save yourselves as to ruin and damn yourselves? You made haste to do evil, as if you could not be damned soon enough; now in reason you should be as zealous for God as for Satan. Heretofore we could riot away the day, and card away the night; and shall not some days be spent in fasting and prayer? Shall every hour be begrudged that is bestowed upon God? You will say, It is good reason God should be served as well as the devil; but the flesh is weak, and how shall we be able to serve God? But, says the apostle, 'I speak according to the weakness of your flesh.' It is an equitable, modest, and just proposal that I make, and with condescension to your infirmities, that you should be as earnest and zealous for God, and to grow in grace, as ever you were zealous to increase your guilt and sin. Formerly I never ceased till I got to the top, till I was so wicked that I could hardly be more wicked; why should I not now labour to grow in grace? Can conversion be right when sin had more of our thoughts than ever God had? The apostle's rule holds thus, so much time, so much cost and care, so much love and delight as hath been spent in sin, so much must be spent in the service of God. Oh! say then, Why should I not be as earnest to grow in grace, to be as zealous and holy as I can? It is observed of Paul that in his natural condition he was mad against Christ: Acts xxvi. 11, 'I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.' Look upon him converted, and see, is he not as earnest and mad for Christ as ever he was against him? 2 Cor. v. 13, 'For whether we be beside ourselves, it is for God.' Do but look back and see what a drudge you have been to sin! with what zeal and self-denial you hazarded your souls! Oh! your pace was swift and furious, like Jehu's march, and will you be cold and slow in the work of God? Nay, it may be this is your case to this very day, you are very busy and painful to undo your souls. Oh! this active industry that is misplaced and misemployed, if the object were but changed, would do well for heaven. Who would pay as dear for hell as for heaven? Who would pay as dear for glass as for jewels? What a stir is there to serve a lust? Half of this, through the blessing of God, might have conduced to save a soul.

3. It may be you have set out late, and then it is but reason you should mend your pace, and be earnest and zealous for God: 1 Peter iv. 3, 'The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, whilst you lived in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.' Oh! it is enough, enough! Travellers that tarry long in their inn ride faster in an hour when they set forth than in two before. You have tarried long, therefore put forward. We see that slow plants bring forth the most fruit, as if nature would recompense the slowness with the plenty; so you that were long ere you were called to God, what reason have you to be diligent and earnest, and zealous in the work of the Lord? You will think this concerns some that are called in the doting time of their age, but all men set forth too late. If we consider God's eternal love, we should be ashamed that we began no sooner. God loved us before we were: 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting

to everlasting to them that fear him,' Ps. ciii. 17; from one eternity to another. God loved us before we had a being, before we were lovely; and when we had a being, he loved us when we knew not that he loved us. We were transgressors from the womb, defiled and polluted creatures in our birth and original; and afterwards we knew how to offend and grieve him before we knew how to serve and love him. If we have any gratitude to God, we should be ashamed that we began so late. God began early with us; from all eternity he was our God; as long as God is God, he is our God; therefore now we should mend our pace, and double our diligence, and be more earnest and zealous in the ways of God.

4. Consider what Christ hath done in purchasing our salvation. It was no play and sport to redeem the world. Christ was not in jest when he yielded up himself to be tempted, to be persecuted, to be crucified, to be exercised with bitter agonies; and is all this expense and cost for nothing? The temptations of Christ and the sorrows of his cross they all show that it is no easy matter to bring a soul to heaven; and therefore shall not we be zealous? Carnal and careless christians do lessen Christ's sufferings interpretatively, as if they were not so great; they trifle and dally, and compliment in religion, and so do not make it so weighty a matter to save their souls: Luke xxiv. 26, 'Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?' and ver. 46, 'Thus it behoved Christ to suffer.' As matters were laid in God's decree, nothing else would serve the turn; Christ ought to suffer, it was fore-ordained.

But you will say, How do you force this zealousness and earnestness for good works out of what Christ hath done; for if he hath done so much, what need we do any more!

I answer—He is gone to heaven as the captain of our salvation, and we must follow him in the same way; he is gone to seize upon heaven in our right, but we must force our way thither. Canaan was given to Israel, but they were to take possession by the sword; or as Caleb was to drive out the giants out of Hebron, though it was given him. So though heaven be given, and Christ hath seized upon it in our right, yet we have our conflicts. Indeed the power of Satan is broken, his head bruised, yet there are some relics of the battle left for our exercise; and therefore be earnest, be zealous.

5. Consider, to quicken you to this zeal, the enemies of religion are violent and earnest. The devil is busy, always compassing the earth to and fro, therefore we had need stand upon our guard: 1 Peter v. 8, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.' In your duties, in your shops, in your closets, in the congregation, the devil is still at hand. Oh! how should we bestir ourselves! The enemy watcheth, and dost thou sleep? The devil makes an advantage of our carelessness and security: 'While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares,' Mat. xiii. 25. While we are cold and careless the devil doth prevail over us, he doth but watch to make an advantage of our carelessness and security. Birds are seldom taken in their flight, but when they rest and pitch; so Satan hath no advantage against us when we are upon our course and wing, when we make speed to heaven, and

are zealous and earnest in our flight. Satan hath busy agents in the world, that are watchful and zealous factors for hell; they ever shame the church: Luke xvi. 8, 'The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.' They do more against God than we do for God. Satan's cause is most befriended in the world, and it is sure to be followed diligently and earnestly, as a stone runs down-hill of its own accord. The children of this world in their employments, in their sports, are wise, active, and diligent, and follow it earnestly. While the disciples were asleep, Judas and his company were watchful and plotting. Usually Satan's instruments get the start of us; we are cold and frigid in the cause of Christ; therefore shall we not be earnest and zealous for God?

6. Consider, a small measure of grace will not become you that profess Christ and christianity, because you are to exceed others; there must be something more than ordinary in your conversation: Mat. v. 20, 'Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven;' and ver. 47, 'What do you more than others?' A peculiar people must live in a peculiar manner. There must be something over and above in you of what is found in others. The pharisees were very strict; the apostle calleth them *ἀκριβεσάτην αἵρεσιν*, 'the most straitest sect,' Acts xxvi. 5; they did excel all others: Luke xviii. 11, 'The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee I am not as other men.' There were washings, tithings, fastings, alms-giving, and corporal mortifications. Oh! how did the pharisees profess *περισσένειν*, to increase the law, and supererogate; they exceeded all others. Now, saith Christ, you must exceed their exceedings. It were wondrous to tell you what a painful and costly profession of holiness they made, insomuch that the Jews thought that if but two men were to be saved, one should be a scribe and the other a pharisee; such were their long devotions, their sad looks, their hard penances, their bountiful alms; they did excel in all these things. Therefore do not tell me merely of hearing much and praying much; except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, Christ will shut you out of the kingdom of heaven. Christians, it would make a man's heart to tremble to consider how far a natural man may go by the strength of an unrenewed will; how just, and patient, and temperate, and meek some of the heathens were, how much they could overcome their passions, and deny their worldly concernments; to tell you how far a hypocrite, a temporary believer, or a convinced man may go, and yet there must *τὶ περισσὸν*, be something over and above in you, something more than a heathen can do, or a hypocrite can do, or a temporary believer, or a convinced hypocrite can do; you need to carry piety to greater heights, and endeavour after a greater degree of sanctification, for there must be something excellent and exceeding both in your hearts and lives.

7. Consider that all things in the christian religion are transcending and high, and call for somewhat more than ordinary. There are great obligations, holy precepts, rich advantages, glorious hopes. Great obligations: God was devising what he should give us, and in the covenant he hath given us himself, and could give us no greater thing; he gave

us his Son to die for us, and his Spirit, and with Christ he hath given us all things. It should constrain and urge us more than it doth: 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.' What a poor requital is the best that we can do! We have too many mercies, as too much wood puts out the fire. God's love is gone to the uttermost, therefore we should not be cold and careless, but double our diligence in the work of God. Then we have rich advantages, the supplies of the Spirit. A poor heathen may torture and rack his brain how to find out a remedy for sin; some of them, because they could not mortify a lust, hanged themselves, and some put out their eyes, and offered violence to nature. Oh! but we have a mighty Spirit. Mark! there is not only a person of the godhead to merit our salvation, but a person of the godhead to work it out. Next to the gift of Christ, we have the gift of the Spirit. Oh! it should be a shame, that when we have such a keen sword to cut the throat of our lusts, that we act so faintly, use it so feebly, and are no more valiant. And then what pure and excellent precepts have we in the christian religion, reaching not only to the act, but the very aim, to the intents and thoughts and secret workings of the heart: Ps. xix. 7, 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.' And not only to the sin, but to the lust: 'Thy commandment is exceeding broad,' Ps. cxix. 96. Then we have glorious hopes. The scriptures, that are a perfect rule in all other cases, yet herein they profess their imperfection: 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 'We prophesy but in part,' words not fit and great enough to tell us of our hopes: 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,' *καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολήν.* It is the highest strain and reach of fancy. In all other things the garment of fancy is too great for the body wherewith it is to be clothed. Fancy never takes a right measure of things; but the highest suppositions are too short to express the greatness of those hopes that are provided for you. And then for the dreadful punishments; we are told of a worm that never dies, of a fire that shall never be quenched, of a pit without a bottom, of torments that are without end, and without ease. Our hearts are filled with horror when we do but think of these things: and shall we not burn now with zeal for God, when we are in danger of burning in hell-fire for ever hereafter? If now we are cold and slow in good works, it were the most incongruous thing in the world, where there is such a high elevation of duty and comfort. The whole scriptures are formed to elevate these things to the highest pitch, that we may not be backward and slow in the christian religion. All things are sublime, and therefore call for something more than ordinary.

8. Consider the great danger of coldness both to ourselves and others. To ourselves; where there is no zeal, there will be decay: Prov. xviii. 9, 'He also that is slothful in work is brother to him that is a great waster.' Not to go forward is to go backward. Standing pools corrupt; as a man that rows against the tide and stream, if he doth not ply the oar, he will lose ground, and be carried away apace; so if we

be not zealous we cannot stand and keep our ground, there will be a decay. Bernard observes to this purpose, that all the angels in Jacob's ladder were either ascending or descending; there is no stay, but either going up or going down. When they lose their first love, their zeal is gone: Rev. ii. 4, 5, 'Thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.' What is the reason men grow weary of truth, weary of holiness, weary of prayer, ordinances? They do not keep up a constant diligence. First they lost their zeal, they became indifferent, cold, and careless, then off goes the service of God; first their love, and then their works. So consider the danger of it to others. Men grow formal by imitation. When christians high in profession grow formal, cold and careless, this makes their neighbours so. There is nothing hardens more than a cold professor; it makes men sit upon their lees. Mortified and strict christians upbraid others by their example. A man cannot come into the company of a mortified strict christian but his heart will upbraid and shame him. And therefore if in this general decay we have learned deadness and formality one of another, let us strive now who shall be most forward in the ways of grace: Heb. x. 24, 'Let us consider one another, to provoke to love and good works.' You shall see, in the times when idolatry was like to go down, Isa. xli. 6, 7, 'They helped every one his neighbour, and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage; so the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil,' &c. They were strengthening one another to plead for their shrines, and to get up their pictures and idols again, that their trade might not go down. Thus idolaters hold in a string. Oh! what a religious correspondency should there be in the children of God. When the power of godliness is like to decay and go down, how should we strengthen and encourage one another and provoke one another by holy example to be more zealous, that we may not contract the guilt of their deadness and formality!

9. Consider, there is no danger in zeal; we cannot do too much in solid piety. The least is more than enough in sin, because everything is too much there; but in grace there is never enough. In external worship indeed there may be too much, as in pomp and ceremonies; when men will be decking God's ordinances with gawdery, it is not proportionable to the end of worship, therefore there may be too much. And in particular exercises there may be too much; it is good to keep a decorum in praying and hearing. But now, in the love of God, and zeal for God, and the service of God, and solid piety, there can be no excess; you cannot be too heavenly or too holy. There is a great deal of danger of doing too little. Many 'come short of the glory of God,' Rom. iii. 23. O christians! you cannot be too busy for saving your souls, nor too earnest. 2 Peter i. 11, we are pressed to labour after 'an abundant entrance.' There are some that are afar off, that do not enter at all, that neither strive nor seek to enter, that are as swine, filthy, abominable, unprofitable, good for nothing but to ruin themselves, as profane persons and heathens; and some are very nigh to the kingdom of God, as the moral man upon the brink and border, and as he that was 'almost persuaded to be a christian,' Acts xxvi. 28. Others again make a hard shift to get to heaven; they are scarcely saved, or

saved as by fire. But others are carried on with full sails, their hearts are enlarged to God. This is our duty, to labour to get this abundant entrance. Some seek to enter, and are not able; they go far, and yet perish: Luke xiii. 24, 'Many shall seek to enter, but shall not be able.'

10. Consider, if your hearts be dead and cold, you lose the comfort of all your christian privileges. A dead christian is as bad as none at all. You cannot take comfort in your conversion. A change without life and zeal is but a moral reformation, not a regeneration, for regeneration is a quickening, and a begetting to life: Eph. ii. 5, 'Even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ.' That is true conversion, where they are not only changed, but quickened. Heathens have been changed from profaneness to a moral course. If you pretend to close with Christ, and find no life, you can take no comfort in your faith; it is but a cloud, a fancy: John x. 10, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' So for repentance and trouble for sin; if no zeal follows it, it is naught: Rev. iii. 19, 'Be zealous therefore, and repent.' So for being members of the church; you cannot take comfort of being Christ's members without zeal, for all the true members of Christ's mystical body are living stones: 1 Peter ii. 5, 'Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house.' It is true in the outward building there are some carved stones, so in the visible church there are many polished with gifts which may serve in their place to hold up the building; but they are not living stones, for they want life. And then for hope, it is but a fancy and dream if we be dead and sluggish. It is called 'a lively hope,' 1 Peter i. 3; and if thou art drowsy still, and neglectful of God, surely thou art but in a dream. Canst thou take comfort in this, that thou art a constant hearer of the word, if thou art as backward to holiness and good works as ever? Phil. ii. 16, 'Holding forth the word of life.' The word is the word of life; it doth not leave us dull, slow, and backward. If there be not life and zeal, all is nothing.

11. Consider how odious want of zeal is to God. He will not own a cold, careless, neutral spirit: Rev. iii. 16, 'So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my mouth.' Cold lazy professors, that have nothing but a dead form, are as lukewarm water to the stomach; and there is nothing the stomach nauseates so much as that which is lukewarm. So will God cast them out with much loathing; he will uncase and pluck off their masks, and reveal them to the congregation, and make them odious; this is worse than stark cold. It is not enough that we are not violent against the ways of God, but are you zealous for God? otherwise you are odious to God: Mat. xxv. 30, 'Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness;' and not only the grossly wicked, but the unprofitable servant. Though he did not abuse his talent, nor embezzle it away, yet he hid it in a napkin. If you hide your talent, be it parts, estate, or authority, are you then zealous for God? Useless, sapless, lifeless christians incur the penalty of damnation as well as the openly wicked; they are cast into hell; therefore rest not in a dead form.

12. Consider how dishonourable it is to the living God to serve him

with a dead heart and cold affections, when he hath indented with you upon such glorious and noble terms. Heathens, that worship the sun, offer to him a flying horse, because of the swiftness of his motion: 2 Kings xxiii. 11, 'He took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun.' So our worshipping of the living God must not be dead and cold: 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?' God, that is a living God, must have lively service; but men worship him as a dead idol. In an earthly matter we would not be so cold and careless in our treaties and transactions: Mal. i. 8, 'Offer it to thy governor; will he be pleased with you, or accept your person, saith the Lord?' What you do, it must be done with all the heart and all the might. Consider, religion is not a fancy. You do not worship the vanities of the gentiles, therefore be not dead, cold, and careless. You worship the living God, and he will be served with life, zeal, and strength of affection.

SERMONS UPON HEBREWS VI. 18.

SERMON I.

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.—HEB. vi. 18.

To give you the occasion of these words, we must look back into the context. The apostle proveth the firmness of the promises, and yet the great need of faith and patience ere they be accomplished. He proveth both by the instance of Abraham, who was long exercised in waiting, and had God's promise ratified with the most solemn assurance that can be conceived under heaven, with an oath, which is held sacred and inviolable among all nations. But here some might object, that if Abraham had such a special assurance from God, what is that to us? To this the apostle replies, that though God's oath were given to Abraham, yet it concerns all the heirs of promise, every believer hath the same ground of certainty that Abraham had; so it is asserted, ver. 17, 'Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.' There is an emphasis in the phrase, 'more abundantly.' God's oath was not given out of necessity, but out of condescension. Not out of necessity, as if his word was not valid and authentic without an oath, but he would give his oath that, over and above and by all solemn ways of assurance, the Lord would provide for our certainty and assurance, that we might have strong consolation upon solid grounds, 'That by two immutable things,' &c.

In the words we have the purport and the aim of God's oath, which is to give believers more solemn assurance. Take notice of three things—

1. The ground of this assurance, 'That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie.'

2. The fruit of this assurance, 'That we might have strong consolation.'

3. The persons to whom God hath given this assurance, we 'who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope that is set before us.'

Suitable to the three parts there are three main points—

[1.] God's word and oath are the immutable grounds of a believer's certainty and confidence.

[2.] That the fruit of this confidence and certainty is strong consolation.

[3.] That the persons to whom God hath deposited his oath, and by it administereth so strong a comfort and consolation, are those who fly for refuge to take hold of the hope that is set before them.

Doct. 1. That God's word and God's oath are the immutable grounds of a believer's confidence and certainty; for these are the two immutable things spoken of. I shall speak of each distinctly.

First, God's single word is an immutable ground; having this, you have enough. And so it will appear if you consider the power and the certainty of it.

1. The power of God's word. His word is nothing else but the declaration of his powerful will; the force of it was discovered in creating the world. God created all things by his word: Ps. xxxiii. 9, 'He spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.' This whole fabric of heaven and earth, which we now behold with wonder, was made with a word. And mark, God's creating word and word of promise do not differ, they are both the word of God; and there is as much force and power in this word 'I will take away the heart of stone,' as there was in this word, 'Let there be light.' There is as much power in this sentence, 'I will make your vile bodies to be like to Christ's glorious body,' as there was in that word, 'Let there be a firmament.' God's word was powerful enough to make a world when it was nothing before. All the works of God subsist by the force of his word: Heb. i. 3, 'Upholding all things by the word of his power.' It is but for God to say, Let it continue, let it be, and either are accordingly. One word is enough to undo the world, and one word is enough to uphold and preserve it. God's word is the declaration of his almighty and powerful will; whatever he did in the world, he did it by his word. Therefore if you have this immutable ground, if God hath deposited and plighted his word, you have enough to establish strong consolation, for it is powerful to all purposes and intents whatsoever.

2. Consider the certainty of it. When the word is gone out of God's mouth, it shall not be recalled. The Lord prizeth his faithfulness above all things. The scripture must be fulfilled whatever inconveniences come of it. Mark the whole course of providence, and you will find that God is very tender of his word; he valueth it above all his works: Luke xxi. 33, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.' God is not so tender of heaven and earth but that he will break it all to pieces rather than not make good his word; though it be a curious frame and fabric, in which he hath displayed much of his glory, yet that shall be dissolved. Heaven and earth do only continue till all that is prophesied of in the word be fulfilled. We shall enjoy the comfort of his word in heaven, when all these things are melted away with a fervent heat. Nay, which is more, God valueth his word above the human life of Christ his own Son. If God passed his word for it, his Son, who was the delight of his soul, equal to him in glory, must come from heaven, take a body, and suffer a cruel death: 'Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to

do thy will, O God,' Ps. xl. 7. God had passed his word to the church that it should be so; therefore, rather than he would go back from his word, he sent Christ to die for a sinful world. There was no promise of more difficulty for God to grant nor for us to believe, than this of the incarnation and death of Christ; yet rather than go back from his word Christ must come and die an accursed and shameful death.

Secondly, The main thing is, what ground of consolation we have in God's oath. And there I shall—(1.) Show the reasons why God gives us his oath over and above his word; (2.) The several advantages which we have by his oath in believing.

1. For the reasons why God should give this oath. An oath you know is given in matters doubtful. Philo saith, An oath is given for the manifestation of a matter which is secret and doubtful, and which cannot otherwise be determined. To swear in things apparent and matters clear is to take the name of God in vain. All matters which are clear are otherwise decided; matters of opinion, by argument; matters of fact, by testimony; matters of promise, by the single word of the party that promises, if he be a person of honour and credit; but always an oath supposes some doubt and controversy that cannot otherwise be determined. And so much the apostle intimates when he says, Heb. vi. 16, 'It is the end of all strife' or controversy. Well, then, God's promises being of such absolute certainty, why doth the Lord deposit his oath with the creature, since his single and bare word is enough.

I answer—The matter itself needs it not, but only in regard of us. We look upon the promises with doubtful thoughts; there is a controversy between God and us; we have hard thoughts of God, as if he would not be so good as his word; therefore his oath is given, not to show the doubtfulness of the thing that is sworn, but the greatness of our unbelief. Austin saith, *Est exprobatio quædam infidelitatis nostræ*—God hereby upbraids us with our unbelief, when he gives us an oath for the confirmation of any matter. Briefly, God's oath is given us for two reasons—to show us the certainty, and to show us the excellency of our privileges in Christ.

Reason 1. To show us the certainty of our privileges in Christ. The world makes it a controversy and doubtful matter whether Christ came to die for sinners, yea or nay? whether God will save those that take sanctuary at Christ? God saith, Ay, and we say, No; and how shall the matter be decided? Observe it, and you will find that there are two things which we are apt to suspect in God—his good affection in making the promise, and his truth in keeping the promise. We suspect his good affection, especially when we are in pangs and gripes of conscience; and we suspect his truth in straits and difficulties, whenever in the course of God's providence we are cast into such a condition that we think he hath forgotten his promise. Now the Lord might be highly offended with us for those wicked thoughts we entertain of his majesty, but in a gracious condescension he is pleased to put an end to the controversy by an oath. As if the Lord had said, Do you doubt of this? Will you put me to my oath? Here I am ready to take it; and that the matter may no longer remain in suspense, I swear by my life, by my holiness, by whatever you count sacred and

excellent in me, that whoever among you, whatever he be, that is touched with a sense of his sin and misery by nature, if he will run to Christ for refuge, take sanctuary in Christ, if he doth belong to my unchangeable purposes of grace, I will surely without miscarrying bring him to a sure and eternal possession of glory; and for the present I will be a father to him, and guide him and keep him as the apple of mine eye; I will be his present help, his guardian, his counsellor, during the whole time of his abode in the world, where he is only liable to dangers. This was the matter in controversy, and this is the substance of God's oath. And I shall show you how apt we are to distrust God in all this. We suspect, as I said, either his good affection in making the promise, or his truth in keeping the promise, so that we need this solemn way of assurance. Therefore—

First, I shall speak to this, that we distrust his good affection, and will not believe God upon his single word. What should be the reason that nature is so abhorrent from this certainty and assurance, which so much concerneth our own peace and comfort? Take six reasons—

1. Partly because guilt is full of suspicion. We hate those whom we have wronged. *Proprium est humani ingenii odisse quos læserit.* First we hurt a person, then we hate him; so out of fear of revenge we suspect all that he doth, all acts of kindness, all tenders and offers of reconciliation which come from him. Let me exemplify it in men. Thus David speaks of his enemies: Ps. cxx. 7, 'I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war.' David was the wronged party, and Doeg and Saul's courtiers had slandered him, and done him wrong. David was willing to forget all this injury, and he comes with an offer of peace, but all treaties of peace are in vain. This you will find to be the fashion of the world, when they have wronged a person, never to trust him any more, lest they should give him opportunity of revenge. Thus do we deal with God; conscience knows we have wronged him, slighted his love, and put affronts upon his grace, and therefore, though he makes the first offer, we believe it not. Revengeful man cannot think God will be so gracious and merciful, therefore we cannot believe those ample purposes of reconciliation. It breaks the back of patience to think of forgiving seven times: 'Must I forgive seven times?' saith Peter. And therefore how can we believe the Lord will pardon so many thousand affronts we put upon him day by day? Thus we wrong God and sin away our faith, and therefore are not capable of so rich a comfort.

2. Partly because the way of salvation is so rare and wonderful, that a man can find no faith for it. The gospel is a mystery, so called by the apostle, 1 Tim. iii. 16, 'Great is the mystery of godliness.' Nature affords no help here. Theology is natural, but not christology. Nature believes there is a God, but not that there is a Christ. The sun and moon preach up a God, their sound is gone out into all lands, and proclaim everywhere that there is one infinite and eternal power; and conscience preacheth up a judge. But all these natural preachers are dumb and silent concerning Christ, not a word concerning a saviour and mediator. It could not enter into the thought of an angel to pitch upon such a remedy if God had not revealed it to them by 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.' The angels did conceive of this great mystery by observing God's dispensations to the church. Well, then, the way of salvation being so rare and wonderful, we should never acquiesce and rest satisfied with bare declarations, but we need God's oath that the controversy may be determined. When an angel came to bring tidings of it to the Virgin Mary, though she were a holy woman, and had such an extraordinary way of assurance, yet you find her unbelief outstarts her obedience and submission to the will of God: 'How shall this be?' Luke i. 34. The incarnation of God, the conception of a virgin, the death of life itself, all these things are riddles and golden dreams to reason; and without a higher assurance than a bare word, we should not be easily satisfied.

3. Partly because the blessings and privileges we have in Christ are so great, and the persons which enjoy them so unworthy, as being nothing and deserving nothing, that they exceed all thought and belief: 1 Cor. ii. 9, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him.' Mark, all the ways by which we can gain any knowledge of a thing, they come short; sense, fancy, reason, eye, ear, heart, of man cannot conceive and cannot tell what to make of these excellent privileges we have in Christ; they cannot furnish him with fit notions and apprehensions of such excellent glory as is revealed to us in him. To illustrate it by the creatures: If a man had been by when God made the world, as the angels were, if he had seen God laying the foundations of all things, he would have wondered what God was about to do, for what rare creature the Lord was about to frame this stupendous and wonderful fabric, arched with heaven, floored with earth, interlaced with waters, decked with fruits and plants, stored with creatures, and glazed, if I may so speak, with stars; who would ever have thought that all this furniture and provision was for man, a handful of dust, a poor worm not six feet long, that he might be lord of all things, vice-king and deputy under God? Now, if a man would wonder at the honour and glory God put upon man at his creation, much more at the privileges of our redemption by Christ; they are matters to be wondered at indeed: 2 Thes. i. 10, 'Christ shall be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.' This place chiefly concerns the angels, when God puts such clarity and splendour upon the body that they shall wonder what Christ is about to do with such a contemptible creature as man, that newly came out of the grave of rottenness and dust. This text I am upon speaks of 'a hope set before us.' If this were but a little opened, as our ear hath received a little thereof, if we should tell you what preparation Christ hath made to bring the saints to glory, with what a glorious train of angels he will come from heaven, what mansions he hath prepared for us in his Father's house, and all this for those that have nothing and deserve nothing, unless it be extremity of misery; if a man should tell you Christ would come in such a state, and entertain the saints with such dearness of affection, and receive sinners into his bosom, that he would make them his fellow-judges, liken their bodies to his own glorious body for brightness and splendour, that such pieces of worms, and clods of earth shall be many times brighter than the sun, I tell you this would require a strong faith to believe it, and

we had need of all the averment and assurance that can be given us under heaven. If an angel admires at the saints, certainly inferior creatures will suspect it. Alas! what a valuable price can we bring and pay to God for all this glory! We that judge all things by the laws of reason and commutative justice, for we give nothing but upon valuable consideration, what valuable price can we bring to God? What consideration can we give him for so great a glory, and how shall we think ever to be partakers of an estate so disproportionable to our merit and condition? Therefore, because our privileges in Christ are so great and wonderful, we need not only God's word, but also his oath.

4. Partly because we ourselves are so false and fickle in all our contracts with one another, especially in our dealings with God, that we need to be bound with promise upon promise, and oath upon oath, and all little enough to restrain and hold us within the bounds of duty. Man is changeable, and breaks vows and covenants and promises, and snaps them asunder as a thread and tow is burnt asunder with fire, and will not be held with any obligation. It is a Greek proverb, Children play with nuts, and men with oaths. It is too often so. Perjury, though it be monstrous and barbarous, and dissolves the bonds of human societies and confederacies, yet it is no rare thing in the world, especially in the latter times. They are said among other sins to be infamous for covenant-breaking: 2 Tim. iii. 3, 'Truce-breakers,' &c. Thus we deal with one another. But if we should be more faithful to men for the safety of our interest, yet how often do we break with God, and compass him about with lies: 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, 'He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.' We are false and fickle when God is sure. To-day we promise, to-morrow we fail. What vow did we ever make to God and kept it? Now we are apt to judge of God's promises by our own. It is usual with man to transform God into his own likeness, and to muse of him as we use ourselves. The heathens did it grossly, and by a sensible picture; the apostle chargeth it upon them: Rom. i. 23, 'They changed the glory of God into an image made like to corruptible man.' They shaped God into the picture of man, and still according to the particular genius and fancy of each nation. The Spartans, being a warlike people, painted their gods in armour, suiting most with their disposition; the Ethiopians painted their gods black and their devils white, because they were a black people. But now we do it all spiritually: Ps. l. 23, 'Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself.' We judge of God by ourselves, and draw a monstrous misshapen picture of him in our minds, as if he were revengeful, fierce, fallacious, fickle, and changeable as we are. Therefore, to meet with this sin doth the Lord so often disclaim the dispositions of a man, that we should not fancy him according to the lineaments of a man: Hosea xi. 9, 'I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man.' As if he had said, Do not measure me according to your model; I am not revengeful as you are, and changeable as you are; this is not my fashion. So Isa. lv. 8, 9, 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.'

You see the distance between earth and heaven is so wondrous great that the earth cannot reach it with its mountains, cedars, turrets, smoke, and vapours; it is so great that a star of the heavens, as big as the earth, seems to be but a spangle: so infinitely more are the workings of my thoughts, and my heart different from your thoughts and your heart. More particularly and suitable to the present case: Num. xxiii. 19, 'God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken it, and shall he not make it good?' Man is as unstable as water; his point varieth according to the different posture of the times and situation of his own interest and advantage; but it is not so with me, saith the Lord. Men say and do not, but God's Yea is always yea, and his No is always no. This was the speech of Balaam, who was called a false prophet, not from the matter of his prophecy, but only from his aims. But if you will have it from a more authentic hand, you have it out of the mouth of Samuel: 1 Sam. xv. 29, 'The strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent; for he is not a man that he should repent.' Mark the reason, for he is not a man. To be a man and to be changeable is all one. Certainly the frequent inculcation of such passages in scripture showeth that we are apt to measure infiniteness by our own scantling and size. And therefore, this being man's natural thought, God in a condescension, and by way of check, is pleased to give the creature this assurance, we have his word and his oath; so that if we would but afford him the favour we use to show to an honest man, we have no ground of diffidence and distrust.

5. Another cause of this unbelief is enmity to the gospel. There is a natural contrariety in our hearts both to the privileges and duties of the gospel, and because we hate it, we do not easily believe it. The pride of man's heart sets him against the privileges of the gospel, and carnal liberty against the obedience of it. Man is a proud creature, and would be self-sufficient; he is loath to be beholden to God, as a proud man loves a russet coat of his own better than a silken garment that is borrowed of another. Thus the apostle complains of the Jews: Rom. x. 3, 'They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish a righteousness of their own, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' There needs some submission and bearing down of the pride of man, all is borrowed; here Christ is all, and doth all, he hath merited for all, and suffered for all. Now this suits not with the pride of man's heart, who would be sufficient to himself, and establish a personal merit in himself. And then especially is this pride bewrayed when a man hath anything to trust to and rest in, as civil righteousness or a formal profession; it is a hard matter then to bring men to submit to the righteousness of God, to come hungry and thirsty for Christ's righteousness. There is no pride so deadly and mischievous, and opposite to the gospel, as the pride of self-conceit and self-sufficiency; yet this is natural to us; therefore God doth not only say, but swear, that we shall never enter into his rest unless we take this course, and run to this hope that is before us. And as pride opposeth the privileges of the gospel, so carnal liberty opposeth the obedience of the gospel. Men are loath to stoop and submit to God's terms. Christ is to be Lord as well as Saviour. Now the world will not hear of laws and restraints. You know the nations

were all for casting away the bonds and cords: Ps. ii. 3, 'Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' In the latter ages of the world, it is foretold in the prophecies of scripture, that the church is in danger of turning to libertinism: we cast away yoke after yoke, till we have left Christ nothing but an empty title. How busy are men now to find out a north-east-passage, a nearer cut to heaven; and therefore the Lord swears, and ratifies the whole tenor of the gospel by an oath, to meet with our enmity and natural contrariety, which makes us so apt to misbelieve.

6. Another cause why those that are touched with a sense of sin suspect God's good affection is a jealousy of assurance, or a secret fear of presuming. All the doubts and scruples of a troubled conscience come to this issue, and may all be referred to this head, a fear of presuming. Many will plead the number of their sins, and how many affronts they have put upon the grace of God. Some will plead the greatness and the aggravations of their sins, relapses into sin, sins against light, against the advantages of grace; but they all end in this one thing, a fear of being too bold with the comforts of the gospel, and that comfort doth not belong to persons in their case. This is the cable-rope which keeps them from floating out amain upon the ocean of God's mercy, as if the Lord delighted in their grief rather than in their assurance and satisfaction. Usually thus it is with disturbed consciences. Trouble that is once swallowed is hardly got up again; and men think sadness is more pleasing to God than comfort, and that doubts suit with a christian frame rather than confidence, and so they hug a distemper instead of a duty. Therefore the Lord is fain to swear that certain it is. Nay, it is not for nothing that this makes the heart of Christ so joyful, that we live upon the provision he hath made for us: John xv. 11, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.' This is the very aim of God's oath; he would show, as I shall further clear by and by, that our assurance is more pleasing to him than our doubting; that he is better pleased with our comfort, nay, though it rise up to strong comfort, than with our sorrow. Thus you see that diffidence and incredulity is deeply rooted in our nature; yea, believers themselves are liable to many doubts, out of the relics of atheism and unbelief that yet remain in them.

Secondly, I am to show that we are apt to suspect his truth in keeping his promise. When straits and difficulties come, and things go cross to our expectation, we had need of more than God's single word. There is not one of an hundred that lives by faith, and can bottom his comfort on a single promise, and can rejoice in the Lord his God when outward supports fail. We are led altogether by sense, and therefore in cross providences we look upon promises as words of course, and are apt to say, Where are his promises, and the soundings of his bowels? and where is the ready help which God hath promised in the time of trouble? And therefore, as a prop to the soul, he hath backed his promise with an oath. Mark it, christians, it is very usual, even with God's dearest children, to unravel their hopes, and to question all upon a cross providence; as David: Ps. cxvi. 11, 'I said in my haste, All men are liars.' Why doth David retract that charge, and impute it to his haste? The apostle saith, Rom. iii. 4, 'Let God be true, and every

man a liar.' We are changeable creatures, our beings are a lie; to-day we are, and to-morrow we are not; and so our promises are a lie; we say, and do not; and therefore why doth David impute it to his haste, as if he had spoken something that were untrue? Certainly, there was some blame in the expression, for he acknowledgeth it was spoken in haste. The speech hath respect to those messages and assurances which were brought to him from the mouth of God by Samuel, Nathan, and other prophets. They comforted him with God's promises, and now he was thunderstruck, blasted with some sore affliction, far enough from the case of a man that had many assurances from heaven; now 'all men are liars,' prophets and all. Once more, Ps. xxxi. 22, 'I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications, when I cried unto thee.' God hath cast off all care of David; he doth not look after a poor banished man, which wandereth up and down in the wilderness, a poor flea that is chased and hunted to and fro. Such pets and passions of distrust, such irregular and unbelieving thoughts usually have we upon any cross providence, when sense contradicts the promise. Always we find sense and distrust making lies of God; therefore a single promise will not serve the turn, but we need an oath. Surely if God hath sworn, we may wait upon him. Doubts, now God hath passed his oath, do but accuse him of perjury. And therefore you shall see the oath of God hath always been the refuge of the saints even in the worst of times, when they seemed most of all to lour upon their hopes and expectations, Hab. iii. 9. The affairs of the church were at that time desperate; but saith the prophet, 'Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah.' God for his covenant and oath's sake revived the affairs of the church when they were at a desperate pass. It is there expressed in the plural number, *oaths*, because they were often renewed with the church; and they are called 'the oaths of the tribes,' because this was the church's treasure, because of the oath God made with the tribes, for it is not meant of the oaths the church made with God. Look, as the covenant of Abraham is God's covenant made with Abraham, and the mercies of David were God's mercies bestowed upon David, so the oaths of the tribes are not taken actively for the oaths which the tribes deposited with God, but passively for the oath God deposited with the tribes, that is, the church. God took this bow out of the case, and bestows the arrows of his vengeance upon the adversaries of the church. That this exposition is true, it appeareth in what follows, 'Even thy word. Selah.' There is his word, and that confirmed by an oath, the two immutable things; these relieve the sinking state of the church. It goes ill with the church a long time, that we might have experience what God can do. Look what Florus said of the state of Rome, *Romani prœlio sœpe victi, bello nunquam*—The Romans were often overcome in battle, but never in war. So of the church; they go by the worst in some particular cases, and in some particular times, that we might try God, and God may try us: but we are safe; God will remember the oaths of the tribes; the oath of God will relieve the most desperate case. It is rude blasphemy to say God will not make good his oath. Thus you see why God would deposit his oath.

Reason 2. God sweareth, as for the confirmation of his grace in Christ, and to show the certainty of our privileges in Christ, so for the commendation and excellency of them. An oath is not lawful but in weighty matters; it must be taken in judgment, as well as in righteousness and truth, Jer. iv. 2. In judgment, that is, considerately, upon weighty occasions. It is a profaning the name of God, and of such a solemn ordinance and part of worship, to make an oath to lacquey upon trifles, and upon every small matter; it must be in matters of weighty concernment. There is a severe penalty and sanction annexed to the taking of God's name in vain, either rashly or falsely: 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.' So whatever is established by God's oath must needs be great and excellent. Certainly God would not swear but in weighty matters; therefore one of his aims was that we might the more regard our privileges in Christ. The apostle proveth the excellency of Christ's priesthood by the oath wherewith it was ratified: Heb. vii. 20, 21, 'And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest; for those priests were made without an oath, but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent,' &c. He alludes to Ps. cx. 4, where God is brought in, saying to Christ, 'The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck.' Such administrations as are confirmed with an oath have upon them a seal and mark of special excellency. The Lord foresaw that as we were apt to disbelieve the gospel, so also to despise it; and therefore, to shame us for our neglect as well as our unbelief, to awaken our attention and quicken our speed and earnest pursuit, the Lord swears; his word should be regarded, much more his oath. When we are busy about the world; and neglect the great salvation, we put a scorn upon God, as if the things he hath confirmed by oath were not worth the looking after. When we prefer worldly comforts as more certain, oh! what an injury is this to the oath of God! We read of the sure mercies of David, but you are all for lying vanities. We are naturally for the comforts that are before us, and look upon it as a riddle to grow rich in promises and to live by faith. Are uncertain riches more to be trusted, and a better refuge and sanctuary for your souls than God's oath? It is a sign you slight his confirmation and commendation, and so count him false and foolish in all the things he proposeth to you. God forbid, say you, that we should be guilty of such a blasphemy. You do it not in word, but this is the necessary interpretation of your actions. If a man should offer you a good bargain upon very easy terms, that would bring you a thousand pounds profit, and should confirm it by oath, though you did not tell him that he did deceive you with words, yet if you go away never heeding it, but should run after smaller matters which you purchase with great hazard, would not this argue you counted him but false and foolish; or the thing not worth the taking and looking after? So when God hath pawned his oath, that his grace and immutable counsel for salvation belonged to you if you would but take sanctuary in Christ, do you not count him false and foolish in the proposal when you run after carnal satisfactions, which are purchased with the loss of your souls?

SERMON II.

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, &c.—Heb. vi. 18.

II. The advantages we have by God's oath. What greater assurance can we have?

1. Consider the sacredness of an oath in general. You know among all nations an oath is accounted a sacred and most solemn way of engagement among the sons of men. The apostle saith it is πέρας ἀντιλογίας the end of strife: Heb. vi. 16, 'An oath for confirmation is to men an end of all strife.' When men solemnly call God to witness, though the matter were never so doubtful and controverted before, when they take an oath we have no more to say, but believe every honest man upon his oath. The heathens have spoken much of an oath. One saith, this is the final assurance; we are bound up, and contented when men swear. Another that it is the highest faith that men can expect. We owe so much to humanity. All nations by the light of nature have found out this remedy and way to end differences. So among the Jews; if there were a strife between Israelite and Israelite, Exod. xxii. 11, 'Then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both, and he shall accept thereof.' There was no more stir to be about the matter. Perjured persons are the scorn of men, and they have forfeited the privilege of humanity. Well, then, if the oath of man be so sacred and valuable, how much more is the oath of God! It is impossible for God to lie. He can do all things which argue power, but nothing which argueth impotency and weakness, for this were to deny himself.

2. This oath is so sacred, because the name of God is invoked in it. It is the name of God that giveth credit to all other oaths. When men swear, saith the apostle, 'They swear by a greater,' Heb. vi. 16, by a higher power. Men by sin have lost their credit, and therefore they pawn the credit of God. Every oath is an appeal to God as witness and judge. For want of other sufficient proof we appeal to God as a witness; so we acknowledge his omnisciency, that he is the searcher of the heart and reins. And indeed herein an oath differeth from a vow; in a vow we deal with God as a party, but in an oath we appeal to God as a witness. Nay, and in case of forswearing, we appeal to him as a judge, and challenge and imprecate his vengeance, wherein we acknowledge his justice and power to avenge the wrong that is done to his name. For mark, if a man violate his oath, and forswear himself, the wrong is directly done to God; his truth is falsified, his witness is abused, his name is blasphemed; therefore there is an implicit appeal to him for vengeance, if not expressed. Sometimes the execration and imprecation is expressed in an oath; as 1 Kings ii. 23, 'Then King Solomon sware by the Lord, saying, God do so to me, and more also, &c. So Ruth i. 17, 'The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.' Sometimes it is suppressed, as Ps. xcv. 11, 'Unto whom I sware in my wrath, If they enter into my rest.' If! What then? Then count me not a God. The imprecation is sup-

pressed; because the expression is dreadful, it is not mentioned. Furious gallants belch out curses against themselves, whereas usually the imprecatory part in scripture is not expressed, but left to be conceived in silence. However, every oath ends in an imprecation and curse, and it is understood, if it be not mentioned and expressed in all oaths. And this is that which makes the oath to be the more binding, for in charity it is not to be supposed that a man will draw God's curse upon himself wittingly and willingly. Now it is the name of God which makes all other oaths to be valid and binding; we swear by a higher, because our own credit is lost. Now when the Lord swears by himself, shall not he be believed, when he could swear by no higher?

3. This advantage faith hath by God's oath, it is a pledge of his love and good-will, that he would condescend so far to give us his oath for our assurance and satisfaction. Man's oath is necessary in weighty matters, because we are vain and foolish, and deceive and are deceived, and our vanity makes our speech to be less believed; but God's oath is not necessary, but only to show his love and condescension; he would satisfy us in the highest manner that possibly he could. Man takes it ill if he be forced to his oath. Oh! how far then doth the great God stoop to give us this satisfaction! Over and above his word he hath deposited his oath. What could God say more? He is willing to do what he can, not only for our safety, but for our assurance. Take this observation, the Lord not only hath given us an assuring oath, but an inviting oath in Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.' And all showeth his readiness to do good to his creatures.

4. God's oath is an argument that he delighteth in our comfort and assurance. Some look upon doubting as a kind of humility, but it is quite contrary to the aim of God's oath. With what care doth he provide not only for our salvation but security! He would deliver us not only from hurt, but from fear. Certainly a fluctuating spirit always, like the waves of the sea, tossed to and fro, displeaseth the Lord exceedingly. His promise is confirmed by an oath, that the comfort might be more strong, and remain with us both in life and death, and that he might take away all doubt and scruple. Certainly it is not a thing acceptable with God always to be uncertain and in terms of suspense. Nothing can be more directly contrary to his purpose than a course of doubting; therefore it is not presumption to rise to assurance, as carnal men think, and godly men fear.

5. Consider the special nature of God's oath. In every oath God is invoked as a witness and as a judge. As God is called upon as a witness, so there is an appeal; and as he is called upon as a judge, so there is an execration. With reverence and wonder think of it. In God's oath there is, as it were, an appeal to our thoughts of him. God appeals to the reverence and confidence we put in his holiness, excellency, and power; nay, and there is somewhat that answers the imprecation and execration, and all his excellency is laid at pawn, and exposed, as it were, to forfeiture, if he doth not make good his word.

To clear it by instances. Sometimes the Lord swears 'by himself,' Jer. li. 14; sometimes 'by his holiness,' Amos iv. 2; and in other

places 'by his excellency,' Amos vi. 8; and by his life, 'As I live, saith the Lord.' Now in all these there is something answers the appeal; as if the Lord should say to the creature, What do you think of me? Can you think that I will deceive you? As you esteem of me a living, holy, excellent, glorious God, so surely will I perform all my promises. Then there is something answers to the execration or appeal to God as a judge, there is his honour laid at stake upon such an issue; never count me a living, glorious, excellent God more. God draws an imprecation (let me speak it with reverence) upon himself, if I do not accomplish this for you. All the glory of his godhead is laid at pawn and pledge with the creature.

Application.

Use 1. Information.

1. We see the greatness of the condescension of God. Herein God considereth rather what is fit for our infirmity than his own glorious excellences. Such is the sovereign majesty of God, that it is enough for him to declare his mind to his creatures, to command what he would have done, and to forbid what he dislikes; but he addeth a promise, and would indent with us in the solemn way of a covenant, as if we were altogether free before the contract. Now, as if his word were not enough (though it be enough; he can as well deny his nature as his truth; he can do all things, but he cannot lie) he addeth his oath. We take it ill to be forced to our oath. That God should engage himself at all is much, for he is debtor to no man. We account it a wrong to a friend to require a bond of him for the assuring of a free gift. God is willing to do anything, not only for our safety, but assurance, that the comfort might be more strong, and remain with us in life and death. It is not acceptable to God that we should always fluctuate, and be upon terms of uncertainty, therefore he was pleased to yield thus far.

2. What reason we have to bind ourselves to God. There was no need on God's part why God should bind himself to us, but great need on our part why we should bind ourselves to God. We start aside like a deceitful bow, and therefore we should solemnly bind ourselves to God: Ps. cxix. 106, 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.' We need the strongest cords; we have sometimes motions to good, but they die presently, and come to nothing Well, then, out of necessity, as well as out of gratitude, let our engagement in the covenant answer to the Lord's. Only take heed of resting in it, and take heed of breaking it. Take heed of resting in it; remember Peter's confident promise would not bear him out; a rash and presumptuous confidence is soon disappointed What feathers are we, for all our vows and oaths, when the blast of a temptation is let loose upon us! Take heed of breaking it; remember Ananias, Acts v. God hath a double right; an oath bindeth us more than a bare promise. Better never have sworn than not perform our vows.

3. You see the great wrong you do to God in giving so little credit to his promises. You make God a liar: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth not God hath made him a liar.' But John iii. 33, 'He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.' It is a great dishonour to God not to receive God's testimony; you put the lie upon him, and so make him to be no God. You would not do

so to your equals. A lie is the greatest reproach; it rendereth a man unfit for society and commerce. It is a fearful thing to make the God of truth a father of lies. When God hath given his word, and oath, and seals, all this while shall he not be believed? God never gave us cause to distrust him, he never failed in one promise; all that have had to do with him have found him a faithful God. Nebuchadnezzar doth him this honour and right after he had tasted of the whip, and was again restored to the use of reason: Dan. iv. 37, 'Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth;' not only justice, but truth, not only as I deserved, but as he foretold. It is a shame that you have made no observations upon providence, that you may give it under hand and seal that God is true and faithful. God expecteth such a testimony from his people; all that have long had to do with him have found him a true God both in a way of justice and mercy, that he ever stood to his word. God cannot lie: Titus i. 2, 'In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.' God can do all things that argue power and perfection of nature, but he cannot lie, for that argueth weakness and impotency: 2 Tim. ii. 13, 'If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself;' he should then cease to be God. He is truth itself, the primitive and supreme truth, the original author of all truth. If he should not be true, who should be so?

But is any so impudent as to put the lie upon God? I answer—Yes: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.' We accuse him not only of a lie, but of perjury—

[1.] By our carelessness, and the little regard we have to those great and precious promises that he has given us. Great things are offered, and you look upon them as notions and fancies. It was otherwise with the patriarchs of old: Heb. xi. 13, 'All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.' We cast off the tenders of grace, as matters of which we never made any great account. We grasp after the world, and let heaven go; when we mind it not, we believe it not. A man toileth hard all day for a small piece of silver; do we seek heaven with a like earnestness? How many adventures do merchants run, when the gain is uncertain! But we are not uncertain of our reward: 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.' Did we more steadfastly believe this, we should not be so cold in duties, and so bold in sinning.

[2.] By our despondencies in all cross providences. We have a sure word, and why are we up and down, and so full of distractions and unquietness of soul? James i. 8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways,' unsettled in all his thoughts, uneven in all his ways, raised up and cast down with contrary hopes and fears, off and on, as worldly things ebb and flow. We shall never want discouragements if we live upon sense, but if we could live upon the promises, we should not be at such a loss. The fruit of faith in the promises is strong consolation, too strong to be overcome by sin, death, or hell. A believer is content with the promises, though all the world say, No: 2 Cor. i. 20,

'For all the promises of God in him are, Yea, and in him, Amen.' Yea to our hopes, Amen to our desires. Whatever changes happen, the promises are the same; upon desire of such a thing, Amen, saith the promise; upon hope of such a thing, Yea, saith the promise. In difficult cases you ask of the creatures, they say, No, but the promise saith, Yea.

[3.] When we will venture nothing on the promises. Christ told the young man of treasure in heaven, and he went away sad; he doth not like such a bargain: Luke xviii. 22, 23, 'Sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come follow me. And when he had heard this, he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich.' Thus God dealeth with us: Prov. xix. 17, 'He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again;' Eccles. xi. 1, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.' But the words and engagements of men, that deceive and are deceived, are esteemed above them. We would trust a man of sufficiency upon his bond with hundreds and thousands, if we have his hand and seal to show for it, but we refuse God's assurance. Who is careful to provide bags that wax not old, and to draw over his estate into the other world? Luke xii. 33, 'Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.' What adventures do you make upon God's bond or bill? Do you account no estate so sure as that which is adventured in Christ's hands? Can we believe the promises, and part with nothing for them, with neither our lusts nor our interests?

[4.] When temporal things work far more than eternal things, visible things than invisible. If we had such promises from men, we would be more cheerful. If a beggar did hear of a great inheritance fallen to him, he would often think of it, rejoice in it, long to go see it. We have a promise of eternal life, who thinks of it, or puts in for a share of it? We are contented with any slight assurance in matters of such weight. Men love great earnest and great assurance in temporal affairs, but any slight hope serves the turn in spiritual affairs. Why do we so little rejoice in it? If the reversion of an earthly estate be passed over to us, how are we contented with such a conveyance! but God hath made over pardon and grace, and we are not satisfied.

[5.] Our confidence bewrayeth it. The pretended strength of our faith about Christ and hopes of glory showeth the weakness of it, and that it is but a slight overly apprehension. Most men will pretend to be able to trust God for pardon of sin and heaven, and yet cannot trust God for daily bread; they find it difficult to believe in temporals, and yet very easy in spirituals and eternals. What should be the reason? Heaven and things to come are greater mercies, the way of bringing them about more difficult; if conscience were opened, and the heart serious, they are more hardly obtained; there are more natural prejudices against our coming to Christ, and coming to heaven. The whole earth is full of his goodness. God feedeth all his creatures, even the young ravens that cry; there is not a worm but he provides for it; but he pardoneth but a few, blesseth but a few with spiritual blessings,

saveth but a few. But here is the reason: bodily wants are more pressing, and faith is presently put in exercise. Men are careless of their souls, and content themselves with some loose hopes of ease and eternal welfare. Certainly he that dareth not venture his estate in Christ's hands, he dareth not venture his soul there. They say they find no difficulty in believing in Christ for pardon of sin and eternal life, and yet cannot trust God for such maintenance and support as he giveth the young ravens: John xi. 24, 'Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' As if it were an easier matter to raise him up after so many years than after four days. But the reason is, faith is not put to a present trial, and men are careless of things to come, and do not mind the danger and hazard of eternity. Certainly he that dareth not in the use of means trust God for this life, doth not trust him for everlasting life. Eternal things are counted a fancy, but worldly things are desired in good earnest.

Use 2. To press us to improve these two immutable grounds, that we may grow up into a greater certainty. His saying is as immutable as his swearing; God's word is valuable enough of itself, but only because we count an oath more sacred. God hath added it over and above. Men are slight in speech, but serious in an oath. Well, then, since you have a double holdfast on God, make use of it in prayer and in meditation; in prayer, when you speak to God; in meditation, when you discourse with yourselves.

1. In prayer, you may urge God with his promise and oath. We put ourselves in remembrance by pleading with God, therefore God alloweth the humble challenges of faith. 'Put me in remembrance,' saith God, Isa. xliii. 26; or rather, put yourselves in remembrance. By pleading with God we wrestle with him, that we may catch a heat'ourselves. Tell the Lord what an holdfast you have upon him; show him his handwriting. As Austin said of his mother, she showed him his handwriting; or as Tamar brought out to Judah the bracelets and staff and ring, and said, Whose are these? So you may plead, Ah! Lord, are not these thine own promises, and is not this thy oath? The children of God have done both; they put him in mind of his word: Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.' As if he had said, Lord, thou hast invited my hope; I should never have had the boldness to have expected so great a mercy and privilege in Christ if thy promise was not passed. God forgetteth not, and yet he loveth that the saints should put him in remembrance; he would have you to revive these grounds of trust and confidence. Then they put him in mind of his oath: Ps. lxxxix. 49, 'Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses, which thou swearest unto David in thy truth? It is a great advantage in believing thus to put in a modest challenge to God.

2. Improve God's word and oath in meditation when you discourse with yourselves. And here I shall show—(1.) How we may improve God's oath in meditation; (2.) When, and in what seasons.

[1.] How? Thus: God, that cannot lie, hath passed his sword, he who is truth itself, the supreme truth, the original of all truth. Then say, Hath he given me his word and oath? and why am I still upon

terms of suspense? The word of an honest man is wont to be enough, and an oath is the end of strife if there be a controversy. God hath passed his oath, and why doth the controversy still remain between me and God? How is it with me? Is the controversy ended and taken up? Am I satisfied with God's oath? Do I live as one to whom God hath given such a highway of assurance? The world lives by guess and devout aims, and hath good meanings and conjectures. Ay! but christians should not rest in a may-be, or content themselves with a possible salvation, with lazy conjectures or loose hopes. Art thou still upon uncertainty, upon terms of hesitancy and suspense? See how St James describes them, chap. i. 8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways;' and it is our character, we are double-minded, divided between hopes and fears, full of anxious thoughts; and as chaff is driven in the air, or waves tossed in the sea to and fro with various and uncertain motion, so are we carried up and down. Dost thou live up to the assurance that God hath given thee, and to the preparation and provision he hath made for thy certainty and confidence?

Briefly, that you may know what a sin it is to be upon uncertainty, consider the dishonour you do to God, and the damage you do to yourselves.

(1.) The dishonour you do to God. Unbelief accuseth God not only of a lie, but of perjury; you accuse him of a lie with respect to his word, and of perjury with respect to his oath and solemn engagement: 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth not God hath made him a liar.' But God forbid, will you say. Why then are you so doubtful, notwithstanding so many offers of grace and mercy? why so full of trouble and jealousy when difficulties do arise? Oh! base barbarous ingratitude! you take a stranger's oath, but you deny God the honour that you vouchsafe to any that bears the face of a man. If a man pass his oath, his brother shall accept of it, Exod. xxii. 11, and will you not do thus to the great God that cannot lie?

(2.) The damage you do to yourselves; you frustrate the oath of God, and weaken your own comfort. Wherefore did God give us his oath? What! that we might rest in a possible salvation, and walk with him, as dancers do upon ropes, every moment to be in fear of falling? Did God lay so great a foundation for so weak a building? Who would build a hovel on such a foundation as would serve to bear a palace? God's oath is a foundation for the highest confidence, and do you think God gave it only that you might rest in conjectural hopes and uncertainties? Nay, you run the hazard of a dreadful curse. God hath sworn in judgment as well as in mercy: Ps. xcv. 11, 'Unto whom I sware in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.' Do you think this rest only concerned Canaan? No, but it reacheth the unbelievers of all ages. Oh! it is terrible when God swears against us. The greater his condescension in the gospel, the greater is his wrath when it is refused and neglected. It is very sad when God is provoked to swear to the damnation of any creature. Who are the persons that may stand in dread of this oath? Why, they that believe not: Heb. iii. 18, 'To whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believe not.' It is the sin of unbelief after many tenders and offers of mercy, which provokes God to this indignation. Here is oath against

oath, the one to drive us, the other to draw us, and pull in the heart to God. If you continue in this course, you shall have neither part nor portion in Christ, nor in the land of promise. It is better to be satisfied with God's oath in mercy, than to run the hazard of his oath in judgment. Therefore speak to conscience, Do I come up to this certainty and confidence? Is the controversy ended between God and me? Are all suspicions laid aside?

Object. But you will say, I do not doubt of the truth of the gospel, but of my own interest. I doubt that I am not the person to whom God hath sworn. The truth of God is sure, but my interest is not clear.

Sol. In answer to this, consider—

(1*st.*) It doth but seem so that all doubts are about our own interest, but it is not so indeed. If once you were heartily persuaded of God's good affection in Christ, doubts and scruples about our own estate would soon vanish. Look, as the fire, when it is well kindled, bursts out of its own accord into a flame, so if faith were once well laid in the soul, if men could rest upon these two immutable things, consolation would not be so far from them; if there were a firm assent to the doctrine of the gospel, there would not be so many *buts;* if you did firmly believe his mercy in Christ, it would soon end in a steadfast confidence. This appeareth from the nature of the thing. All uncertainty ariseth either from a neglect of the great salvation, or else from trouble of conscience. Now carnal men neglect it, because they are not persuaded of the worth and excellency of it; and men under horrors of conscience distrust it; they are such sinners they dare not apply it, and are so full of doubts and scruples because they are not persuaded of the truth of the gospel. See how the apostle proposeth the gospel: 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.' If negligent and carnal men would but look upon it as 'worthy of all acceptation,' and troubled conscience look upon it as 'a faithful saying,' there would be more regular actings and effects found in their hearts and lives; the negligent would give more diligence, and the contrite would rise up into a greater hope and confidence. If men did believe the worth of salvation, they would not run after lying vanities. If they did believe the truth of salvation for sinners there would not be so many scruples and fears. It is notable that the scriptures very seldom do press assurance of the subject, but assurance of the object in very many places, to believe the doctrine itself, for there is the greatest difficulty; and in the word of God we have no precedent of any that were troubled about their own interest. If an earthly king should proclaim a general pardon, and an act of grace to all persons in rebellion, only on terms of submission and laying down their hostility and returning to their duty and allegiance, the doubt would not be of their own interest, but of the truth of his intention to show them such grace and mercy. So it is with God; he hath proclaimed terms of grace in the gospel, provided we will lay down the weapons of our defiance, and return to the duty of our allegiance. Now that which we suspect is the heart of God and the gospel in the general, whether there be mercy for such kind of sinners as we are.

(2*d.*) Because we cannot persuade men to a certainty against their

consciences, what should hinder but that now you should establish your interest, and that you now make your plea and claim according to God's word and oath, for joy must arise from a sense of it. Your complaining is not the way to ease your conscience, but obedience. It is an advantage to find ourselves in an ill condition, not a discouragement. As the woman in the gospel made an argument of that, that she was a dog: Mat. xv. 27, 'Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.' As when the man-slayer saw the avenger of blood at his heels, this made him mend his pace, and fly for refuge, so when we see we are under the wrath of God, this should make us more earnest to look after Christ, and salvation in and by him. The cities of refuge under the law stood open for every comer, and there was free admission till their cause was heard; so Christ is the sanctuary of a pursued soul, and whosoever comes shall be received: John vi. 37, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' God excludeth none but those that exclude themselves. No sin is excepted but the sin against the Holy Ghost. Therefore make your claim till your cause be heard. The great affront we put upon God's oath is not so much doubting of our condition, but not running to Christ for refuge. If we still stand complaining of our lost estate, and do not attempt the work of faith, we put an affront upon God's oath. If the Lord had bid thee do some great thing (I allude to the speech of Naaman's servants), wouldst thou not have done it to be freed from death and hell? How much rather when he saith unto thee, Only come; fly as for thy life, and see if I will cast thee out? Take up a resolution to try God, and see if he will not be as good as his word and oath. Say, Lord, thou hast given two immutable grounds of hope; here I come, I will wait to see what thou wilt do for me in Christ.

(3.) I answer—Do but see whether thy interest in Christ be not established or no? Here is the lowest qualification of an heir of promise, and yet the highest and most solemn way of assurance. Here are two immutable grounds, and yet what is the description? We who have fled for refuge, 'to lay hold upon the hope set before us.' Here is a driving work that belongs to the law, implied in these words, 'We fly for refuge;' then a drawing work, which belongs to the gospel, in these words, 'To lay hold on the hope set before us.' The law begins and works preparatively, as Moses brought the children of Israel to the borders, then Joshua led them into the land of Canaan. The law shows us our bondage, and makes us fly for refuge, but then the gospel pulls in the heart to God. There is a necessity of the preparing work of the law, that we might be driven out of ourselves; sin else would not be bitter, nor Christ sweet, our motions and addresses to mercy would not be serious; every one hath this, some in one degree, some in another; though all be not anxious, yet all are solicitous: Oh! what shall I do? Now, canst thou speak of this driving work of the law? Thou canst not say but thou art a poor lost sinner, one willing to fly and take sanctuary in Christ, and to wait upon him in obedience till thy great hopes be accomplished. This is the lowest trial; what canst thou deny in it? Art thou not a poor chased pursued soul, else what mean these fears and scruples? and what hath

the Lord required of thee, but to run to Christ for refuge? Many christians have not assurance, but though they dare not say, Christ is theirs, yet here they will wait, and not let go their holdfast for all the world. God hath promised to be gracious to every one that takes hold of his covenant, Isa. lvi. 6, when the soul will not let go the grace of God in Christ, though it hath many discouragements; but, in the face of all doubts and scruples, will anchor and hold fast, whatever comes of it. I am a lost and undone creature; it is Christ that must save me, and here I will stick and hold. This is the qualification, why should we be afraid to be comforted upon God's terms? If you are resolved to wait upon God in and through Christ, you are the heirs of promise, God hath plighted his oath to you, if there be such a disposition in you, being startled and awakened with the sense of your sinful condition, to take hold, and not let it go, then what mean those fears and scruples? Do not you desire to take sanctuary in Christ, and wait upon him with strong resolution not to be discouraged? When therefore God hath put it upon such low conditions, why should we stand off?

Object. All the fear is, these terms are too easy and cheap to give a solid comfort, and many miscarry by sudden and delusive hopes, and this makes christians stand at a distance from their own comfort.

Ans. When a man hath God's warrant to show for his confidence, why should he doubt? If men were once serious in the business of salvation, there is no fear of delusion. You will find comfort cannot be counterfeited, as the life of a creature cannot be painted. Carnal men, that feed themselves with delusive hopes, who make an account they shall go to heaven, are not serious, and mind not what they do, as appears by their contradictions, for they blow hot and cold. They think that he is in a dangerous condition that doubts of his salvation, and yet they say it is presumption for a man to say he is assured of his salvation. The one saying suiteth with their carelessness, and the other with their own private feeling. They have no deliberate and advised confidence, only a rash presumption. And because of their miscarrying, we have no reason to weaken our own hopes; because a man that is in a dream thinketh that he is awaked when he is not, shall not a man that is really awake know himself to be so? Shall we suspect all our interest in Christ and the terms of the gospel as too free and easy? Let me tell you, by experience you will find, when you are serious and deliberate, it is not so easy a matter to have rest for your souls. Certainty and solid assurance is not so soon had. Guilty nature is subject to bondage, and presagious more of evil than of good, more prone to fear than hope, and to mourn than to rejoice; therefore go on with your business, wait upon God, and take his way without jealousy and doubting. Thus I have showed how you should meditate on these two immutable things.

[2.] When must you meditate on God's word and oath? *Ans.* Very often. The less you apply God's promise and oath, the weaker will your consolation be in Christ; and the oftener, the stronger; for by these two immutable things we have strong consolation. Christians lose much of their peace and comfort, because they do not exercise themselves in thinking of the condescension and satisfaction which

God hath given them in this kind, that he should lay all his holiness, his life, his excellency at pledge with poor creatures. I am confident if you did but think of these unchangeable grounds and advantages of faith mentioned before, your comfort would not be upon such loose terms. But there are some solemn times when it must be done.

(1.) Whenever you are conversant about the seals of the covenant, and go to the Lord's table. Why should I doubt, when I have God's promise and oath? The sacraments are *visibilia juramenta*, visible oaths; here God reneweth his oath to us, and we to God. It is an oath of allegiance to Christ, to walk in all his ways; and it is God's oath of assurance to us, that he will perform the promises of the covenant. As under the law, the blood of the covenant was to be sprinkled half upon the altar and half upon the people, Exod. xxiv. 6–8, God takes an engagement upon himself, and reneweth his oath to be good and gracious to us in Christ; and we take an obligation upon ourselves to walk before him in all obedience. There is a mutual stipulation, therefore there is a special time to meditate of the sureness on God's part; God that cannot lie, hath said and sworn it.

(2.) In times of outward trouble, when you are in danger of fainting and making revolt from God, meditate of the unchangeableness of his word and oath: 'Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction,' Ps. cxix. 92. God's word and oath were given on purpose to revive a fainting soul. This is the design of the text; the apostle is dissuading from apostasy, and pressing to keep our hopes to the end: ver. 11, 'We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.' Why? We are not upon conjectures and probabilities; and though outward encouragements fail, yet God's promise and oath is a sure ground of comfort in the midst of all difficulties and hardships. This reviveth the soul; we have a glorious inheritance in reversion, and we have God's word and oath to show for it, as much as the patriarchs had to show for Christ. It is notable that when the patriarchs were exercised with any new trouble, then God renewed his oath, implying this is a sure holdfast we have upon God. When outward encouragements in the service of God are like to fail, then think of the two immutable grounds of comfort.

(3.) In pangs of conscience, when guilt lies heavy and burdensome upon the soul, God's word and oath is a proper meditation. The Lord hath sworn that if I will, out of a sense of this misery that is upon me, take sanctuary in Christ, I shall have strong consolation. And we have not only an assuring, but an inviting oath, to help us in such a case: Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.' Count me not a living God if I delight in your scruples and in your death.

(4.) In fears of death. We must die by faith, as well as live by faith; and then comfort ourselves with the promise and oath of God, called here two unchangeable things. We need all the props of faith that can be used. When all things are about to change, then think, God changeth not, though I am changing apace. As one comforted himself with that passage: Isa. liv. 10, 'For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee.

neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.' Sight is almost gone, and speech doth even fail, but God's loving-kindness will never be gone. You are changing, but you may look upon death itself as an act of faithfulness, and sent in mercy to break the shell, that you may have the kernel; to dissolve the union between body and soul, that the soul may flit away to God.

SERMON III.

We may have strong consolation, &c.—HEB. vi. 18.

DOCT. 2. That the fruit of this certainty and assurance which we have by God's word and oath is strong consolation.

To make way for the discussion of this point, and to open the words which the apostle here useth, I shall—

1. Inquire what is meant by strong consolation.

2. How this strong consolation ariseth from the certainty and assurance we have by God's word and oath.

3. How it is dispensed on God's part, and how far it is required on ours.

I. What is meant by strong consolation, *ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν*. There are two terms, *consolation*, and *strong consolation*.

First, Consolation. There are three words by which the fruits and effects of certainty and assurance is expressed, which imply so many degrees of it. There is peace, comfort, and joy. Peace, in the scripture dialect, notes rest from accusations of conscience. Comfort notes a temperate and habitual confidence. Then joy notes an actual feeling, or an high tide of comfort, or a lively elevation of the saints.

1. Peace. That we have as a fruit of justification: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' There are no actual doubts, though we cannot say we have absolute assurance. This is the lowest degree of assurance, and it is a fruit of the Holy Ghost; as many of the children of God have encouragement to wait upon God, though they cannot for all the world say they have an absolute interest in Christ.

2. Then there is consolation and comfort, which notes an habitual persuasion of God's love; there is an habitual confidence, a serenity and cheerfulness of mind. Though there be not high tides of comfort, there is support, though not ravishment. It is called 'everlasting consolation,' 2 Thes. ii. 16, 17, 'Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.' There is a settled comfort, and he prayeth for the continuance and increase of it. When the heart is lightened or eased in duties or troubles, it is bewrayed by a constant cheerfulness and alacrity in God's service, and support in troubles.

3. Then there is joy, or an high and sensible comfort: Rom. xv. 13,

'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.' This abides not always; it is a festival dispensation, wherewith God entertains the soul in the day of his royalty and magnificence, he useth it but now and then. We have this high joy, either after the pangs of the new birth, when deep sorrows were occasioned by the spirit of bondage. When David's bones were broken, then 'make me to hear joy and gladness,' Ps. li. 8. Then we have the highest comfort: John xvi. 21, 'A woman when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of a child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.' Then our apprehensions of Christ are most fresh. Comfort, being a strange thing, is most welcome. Trouble makes way for more comfort; for as our trouble is most vehement, so is our comfort enlarged. Or upon the solemn exercise of grace, when we are carried on in high assistance, in meditation, prayer, receiving the supper, and the word is revived upon the conscience; or else in times of suffering and self-denial, for God will always be even with a believer: 2 Cor. i. 5, 'For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' A man is no loser by Christ, but according to the ebb of outward comforts so is the tide and overflow of inward comforts; and when we have experience of Christ's sufferings, we also have experience of Christ's comforts, that at the same time God may have an experience of our faithfulness, and we of his. So that comfort is a middle degree of assurance between peace and joy; a temperate confidence and support, though we do not feel ravishment and actual sweetness; as a child doubteth not of his father's affection, though he doth not actually smile upon him.

Secondly, The next term is 'strong consolation.' Why is it so called?

1. It is called so either in opposition to worldly comforts, which are weak, vanishing, and washy. The consolations of the world seem to be strong till they come to be tried. Carnal joy makes a great noise, but is soon gone: 'As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool,' Eccles. vii. 6. None seem to lead such merry lives as carnal men; but when it comes to the trial, when their joy is put to it by sickness, trouble, pangs of conscience, or death, it is soon spent. Take away the creature and it is gone; it dependeth upon somewhat without them. Or if the creature continueth, it availeth not; before it cometh to trial, wicked men tremble at the very thoughts of eternity. Outward things cannot ease the conscience; if they could satisfy the heart, they cannot buy a pardon: Jer. xvii. 11, 'As the 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;' Prov. xi. 4, 'Riches profit not in the day of wrath.' Carnal mirth is a merry madness, as a bird in the fowler's snare: Prov. ix. 17, 18, 'Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant; but he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell;' a stolen fit of mirth when conscience is asleep. Carnal mirth entangleth us; the more dreggy delights oppress reason, wound conscience, and so make way for sorrow.

2. Or else it is called 'strong consolation' in comparison with itself, with respect to less or more imperfect degrees of comfort. There is a latitude in comfort, some have more, and some less; some have only weak glimmerings and drops, others have strong consolation, 'joy unspeakable, and full of glory,' 1 Peter i. 8. Now a christian should aim at the highest degree; the stronger your consolation, the better is Christ pleased with it: John xv. 11, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy might be full.' This makes the heart of Christ glad, when our comforts are more able to swallow up our sorrow, and revive the soul in the midst of trouble. In some this confidence is accompanied with more sensible doubts, staggerings, and weaknesses, though comfort gets the upper hand; in others it is more strong, clear, and lively, and they act in the ways of God with greater encouragement.

3. It may likewise be called strong in regard of its effects.

[1.] It marreth carnal joy, it puts the soul quite out of taste with other things. Men used acorns till they found out the use of bread. We content ourselves with husks till we taste of the fatted calf in our father's house. The soul must have some oblectation, love cannot lie idle; we are taken with garlic and onions till we taste manna. When once we have tasted of the love of God, other things will not be so sweet: Cant. i. 4, 'We will be glad, and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine.'

[2.] It is stronger than the evil which it opposeth; it swalloweth up all our sorrows, whatever they be. Look, as we say of wine, or of any spirits, it is very strong, when a few drops can change a great deal of water into its own nature, so, because it overcometh the greatest evils, terrors of conscience, worldly miseries, and the greatest anguish and distress which may befall us, therefore it is called strong comfort. A mighty joy, a sense of God's love in Christ, swalloweth up all our sorrow whatever. The wrath of God is a dreadful thing; we can hardly think of it without amazement. The fear of hell, death, and judgment to come, these are wont to raise a great storm in the conscience, but spiritual joy can only allay it. As a wounded conscience can say, There is no sorrow like unto my sorrow; so a peaceable conscience can say, There is no joy like unto my joy: Phil. iv. 7, 'The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Jesus Christ.' The strength of this joy is seen by experience rather than expression. In outward troubles, they can 'take pleasure in infirmities,' 2 Cor. xii. 10; 'Glory in tribulation,' Rom. v. 3. The more the devil seeks to trouble the saints, they have the more joy, and are 'more than conquerors,' Rom. viii. 37, and all by the power of this joy; as the more we seek to wrest a staff out of a man's hands, he holds it the faster. Tribulations, anguish, distress, fears, torments, difficulties, they are all overpowered by this joy.

II. How this strong consolation ariseth from assurance and certainty.

To establish joy and comfort, two things are necessary—excellency and propriety. The thing in which I rejoice, it must be good, and it must be mine. Suitably here in the text, there is an assurance of excellent privileges; and then there is a qualification annexed, that we may understand our own interest. God by his oath assures us of excellent privileges in Christ, and that is a ground of strong consolation.

Then he requireth a duty of us, that we fly for refuge to take hold of the hope set before us.

1. For the excellency of our privileges. You know, that which will minister solid comfort to the soul, it had need be excellent. A small matter, though never so sure, will not occasion a strong consolation; the joy is according to the object. Now, whether a christian look backward or forward, there is matter of rejoicing to the heirs of promise. Backward, there is the immutability of his counsel; forward, there is a hope set before us. From one eternity to another may a believer walk, and still find cause of rejoicing in God. If he looks backward, there God reveals to him the unchangeable purposes of grace before the world was; if he looks forward, there is an eternal possession of glory, when the world shall be no more. It is sweet to know what is past and what is to come; there is naturally a curiosity in us which would be satisfied. We know what God was doing before the world was, and what he will do when the world shall be no more. We may know, for our comfort, God was treating and dealing with Christ about our salvation, putting it into an unchangeable course; and he hath for ever provided for the comfort and welfare of our souls, that we may enjoy him, love him, and delight in him for evermore. Man, out of a natural curiosity, hath a great delight both in history and prophecy, to read what is past, and to foreknow what is to come, especially what concerns his own destiny. Now God in condescension tells us, under the assurance of an oath, what he has done for us, what thoughts of love he had towards us from eternity, what he will do, and how happy our estate shall be for ever. God doth not only satisfy the curiosity of our nature, that desireth knowledge, but the bent of it, that poiseth us to our own happiness. It is sweet to read our names written in the book of God's everlasting decree: Luke x. 20, 'Rejoice because your names are written in heaven;' that God hath set us down as heirs of all that grace and mercy he hath dispensed in his covenant. It is sweet and pleasant to reflect upon his ancient purposes of grace; and by the eye of faith to read our names written and recorded in the rolls of heaven; when you hear any offer in the gospel, to say, This was God's purpose and eternal counsel to bestow this upon me before all worlds; he thought of me then. And then there is an hope set before us; thy lot is fallen to thee in a fair ground. Oh! what joy is this to believers, that their souls are fully provided for for ever and ever, and they shall have what infinite mercy can bestow, and what infinite merit hath purchased!

2. Another cause of strong comfort is interest and propriety. Besides the excellency of the privilege, there must be the clearness of our interest. The object of joy is not only good in common, but our good, *τὰ αὐτῶν πᾶσιν ἥδεα.* That which is a man's own is sweet to him. It doth not enrich a man to hear there are pearls and diamonds in the world, and mines of gold in the Indies, unless he had them in his own possession; so it doth not fill us with comfort and joy to hear there are unchangeable purposes of grace, and that there was an eternal treaty between God and Christ about the salvation of sinners, and that there is a possible salvation, but when we understand this is made over to us. When God led Abraham through the land of promise to view the

breadth and the length of it, and see the goodness of it, he saith, 'All this will I give thee,' Gen. xiii. 15. So here we speak of rich comforts, but happy is the man that can apply them. We speak of abundance of comfort, but it is to those that have an interest in it, not to those that live in their sins. Here is a description of the parties, which must be regarded if we would establish this comfort. When once we take sanctuary in Christ, and run to him as our city of refuge, then God saith, All this will I give thee; this hope is thy own, and you are those to whom belong these unchangeable purposes of grace; otherwise it is but a joy in fancy and conceit. It is said of David, 1 Sam. xxx. 6, 'But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.' He comforted himself not only in God, but in the Lord his God. That God is ours, this is a ground of comfort. As the father said, *Tolle meum, tolle Deum*—Take away mine, and take away God; so the church, Hab. iii. 17, 18, 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.'

III. How it is dispensed on God's part, and how far it is required on ours; because every heir of promise cannot speak of these lively comforts, those sweet and strong consolations of the Spirit.

First, On God's part. There is a great deal of difference between christians in respect of God's dispensations.

1. Consider, Christ, though he loved all his disciples, yet he did not use them all alike familiarly; some were more intimate with him, and were more in his bosom. In his transfiguration he takes with him Peter, James, and John, Mat. xvii. 1; and when his agonies came upon him in the garden, he took the same disciples with him, Mat. xxvi. 37. Though they were all dear to Christ, yet these were chosen out above others to be witnesses of his agonies and transfiguration. So though all the elect are dear to Christ, yet there are ἐκλέκτων ἐκλεκτότεροι, the elect of the elect, some chosen out above others, with whom God will be more intimate and familiar. All the saints, with respect to the substance of the covenant, are alike beloved. Those poor christians who were scattered throughout Pontus, Asia, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia had ἰσότιμον πιστιν, 'like precious faith' with Peter the apostle, 2 Peter i. 1. A jewel in the hand of a man and of a child is of the same value, though a man holds it more firm and faster; so faith being conversant about the same object, the righteousness of Christ, as to acceptance with God, is alike precious; though because some have a greater faith, and hold the jewel faster, God may more manifest himself to them, and be more intimate and familiar with them. We are all saved by the same mercy, redeemed by the same merit, and called to the same grace and glory for the substance of it; yet in degrees of grace and dispensations of comfort there is a vast difference. Some are feasted with loves, while others are exercised with sorrows, trained up in a way of duty without comfort, their apprehensions being more sad and doubtful, and their comforts more dark and litigious; for comfort is not absolutely necessary to salvation, though we should all aim at it. The highest degree of comfort pleaseth Christ best; when our joy is full,

then Christ's heart is most delighted: John xv. 11, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full;' though we may go to heaven without it. Look, as many carnal men go to hell, and die away without any actual sense of wrath to come, so I am persuaded it is possible that some christians may neither in life nor death have any feeling of comfort and joy. Certainly we find some have it not all their lives till sickness and the hour of death, and they are even in the borders and suburbs of heaven; their pulses of desire and love beat vehemently after Christ; when they are in the end and close of their lives, then their hearts are filled most with peace and joy, as natural motion is swiftest the nearer the thing moved draws to its centre. Again, others have comfort, and may lose it again; these spiritual suavities are liable to change, and such dispensations may be removed. The 5th of Canticles begins with a feast, and ends with a story of desertion. There are many ups and downs in a christian's comfort; and after great enlargements, when a soul hath been feasted with the loves of Christ, there may be a sad suspension, and our gourd, which seemed to cast a comfortable shadow upon the soul, may be devoured and eaten up by the worm of conscience. If our joy were always full, we should look for no other heaven. Thus there is a great deal of difference in regard of God's dispensation, without any breach of faithfulness; he doth not break his oath in not ministering to us this strong consolation, for God hath not absolutely promised degrees of comfort.

2. Though God deals here with great difference, yet it is usual with the Lord to give most comfort to three sorts of persons—

[1.] To the poor in spirit. Look, as parents use their weak children with most indulgence and fondness, so poor weak christians, that are sensible of their weakness, wants, and sins, have that comfort which is denied to persons it may be of greater spiritual ability. Comfort is promised to mourners, and blessedness to the poor in spirit: Mat. v. 3, 4, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' Their interest many times is most sensibly cleared up, and they feel the greatest elevation of joy and comfort. It is God's wonted method to revive the spirit of contrite ones, and to bind up broken bones: Isa. lvii. 15, 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' God loves to comfort poor, humble, afflicted believers, whereas others, that are full of themselves and of their own abilities, are carried on in a more dark and low way. A broken vessel is fitter to hold the oil of gladness than a full one, I mean such who are empty and broken, and possessed with a sense of their own wants. Thus our Lord saith, Mat. xi. 5, 'The poor have the gospel preached to them.' We translate it too feebly; in the original it is εὐαγγελίζονται, the poor are evangelised; it is such a form of speech as notes a deep reception, they are all to be gospelled. The poor, not in purse or estate, but poor broken-hearted sinners, they are drenched in gospel-comfort, and most filled with the good news and glad tidings of salvation, and a sense of God's love in Christ.

[2.] Though God is at liberty, yet usually he fills those which are exercised with hard and long conflicts with their corruptions. Comfort is Christ's entertainment for those that return from victory over their lusts: Rev. ii. 17, 'To him that overcometh,' that is, the enemies of his salvation; he that hath been long wrestling with the powers of darkness, and the inconveniences of the world, and corruptions of his own heart, and can persevere notwithstanding assaults and temptations, 'to him I will give to eat of the hidden manna;' that is, feast him with inward and spiritual refreshments, figured by manna; 'and I will give him a white stone,' which some say was a token of election; a white stone they gave in their suffrages for choice of a magistrate, to manifest they had chosen him; or else white stones were given to wrestlers as a token of victory; or, as among the Romans, a black stone with a hole in it was a sign of condemnation, a white stone of absolution; or in lots, a white stone was a token of good luck and happiness, a black stone of misfortune. Take it either way, Christ will give it to him that overcometh; they shall have the comfort of pardon, and free justification with God, and till then a man is not fit for comfort.

[3.] Those that are called forth to great employments and trials are seldom without comfort, and this strong consolation, that they may behave themselves worthy of their trial. Look, as men victual a castle when it is in danger to be besieged, so God layeth in comfort aforehand when we are like to be assaulted. This we have in the example of our Lord himself. Just before Christ was tempted, he had a solemn testimony from heaven: Mat. iv. 1, 'Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.' Every circumstance of scripture is notable, and when the Spirit of God notes the time, it is to be regarded: *Then*; it looks back to the words before, chap. iii. 17, 'Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And after this solemn assurance, 'Then was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil.' Certainly somewhat there is in that, that the same apostles must see the beaming out of the divine glory of Christ, and afterwards see his agony, as Peter, James, and John, first his glory in the transfiguration, and then his agony in the garden; to show that when once we have had experience of the glory of Christ, when he hath given us any signification of his love, any foresight of heaven, and of our interest in the comforts of the covenant, then most commonly we are called out to suffer agonies and bitter conflicts. God's conduct is gentle and faithful, he drives on as the little ones are able to bear; he doth not lead into great temptation until he hath given the advantage of great comforts; first he stores the hearts, and lays in sweet consolation, then calls out to trial.

Secondly, On our part. It is not absolutely required that we should enjoy it, but only to seek after it; and if we want it, to submit to God's pleasure. Comfort is seldom withheld when it is long sought and highly prized. I cannot say he is no child of God that hath not a feeling of this strong consolation, but he is none that doth not seek after it, and that hath low and cheap thoughts of the consolations of God: Job xv. 11, 'Are the consolations of God small with thee?' We are absolutely bound to communion with God in point of holiness, and to seek

after communion with God in point of happiness; but rewards differ from duties, and they must be left to God's pleasure. There is a difference between comfort and grace; comfort is a mere dispensation, and is to be referred to the pleasure of God; but we cannot be without grace, without sin; the one belongeth to communion with God in point of holiness, and the other to communion with God in point of happiness; and God hath the dispensing of our happiness: the one concerneth our being, the other our well-being; grace makes us living, comfort makes us lively christians. On God's part, if he doth not give us sensible consolation, he is only bound to give us sustentation and support; and there is no breach of duty on our part to want comfort, provided it be not despised, and we do not neglect to seek after it. To want grace or any degree of it, though it be God's gift, is a sin, because the creature is under a moral obligation; but to want comfort is no sin, because that is a thing given, not required. Grace is given and required. Comfort is required that we should seek after it, but for its attainment we must leave that to God's pleasure, and tarry till the master of the feast bids us sit up higher, and till then we must be content with our measure and degree. And this is God's course, he gives less comfort, that we may look after more grace; and in the decay of comfort a christian many times doth receive a greater increase of grace; as you know a summer's sun that is clouded yields a great deal more refreshment and comfort than a winter's sun that shineth. It is an advantage to be kept humble, and therefore we must submit to God's will, and be contented with 'unutterable groans,' though we have not the 'unspeakable joys' of the Spirit, 1 Peter i. 8, Rom. viii. 26, we must be satisfied with a lower dispensation.

Use 1. Information in these branches.

1. That comfort is allowed to the saints. I observe it, because we are nothing and deserve nothing unless it be misery, torment, bondage, and so out of guilt we entertain comfort with jealousies and fears. Dolorous impressions are most natural to a guilty conscience; we suspect comfort, and in deep distresses we refuse it: Jer. xxxi. 15, 'A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not;' and Ps. lxxvii. 2, 'My soul refused to be comforted.' This was his infirmity. God hath made you a good allowance, take heed of refusing comfort upon God's terms. God alloweth it; it is made a part of our work: Phil. iv. 4, 'Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.' We serve a good master. Christ hath purchased it, and the Spirit worketh it, for he is the comforter: Rom. xiv. 17, 'The kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' Nay, it is not only God's allowance, but his great aim; the solemn assurance that is given by his covenant is that you may grow up in believing to a strong consolation, and be able to laugh at fears and sorrows.

[1.] You may pray for it when you want it: Ps. xc. 14, 'O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.'

[2.] Nay, when you have lost it by your default, it is not boldness to ask grace and comfort again when you have wasted conscience and weakened your hopes; as David, Ps. li. 12, 'Restore unto me the joy

of thy salvation.' When your candle is put out, you may get it lighted again.

[3.] You may wait for comfort, and still continue your attendance upon God: Ps. lxxxv. 8, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people and to his saints.'

[4.] You may entertain it when it comes. Comfort is a fruit of the Spirit as well as grace; he which is the God of grace is also the God of consolation; and the same Spirit which works grace witnesseth for our comfort; and it is as great a crime to smother his witness as to resist his work. Whatever we think, God would have us not only to be holy, but to be cheerful. Would you make the heart of Christ glad? See John xv. 11, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.' Christ rejoiceth most in his heritage, when they live up to the provision and preparation he hath made for them in the gospel. The devil envieth our comfort, he knows how useful it is in the christian life, to make us thankful for mercies, cheerful in his service, to wean us from carnal delights, and make us willing to do and suffer for God; he seeks to weaken our confidence, as knowing the joy of the Lord is our strength; he would either keep us from grace, or from a sense of it; and make us either wicked or sad, and keep us from a comfortable feeling and apprehension of grace.

2. If strong consolation be a fruit of certainty upon God's oath, then it informs us that it is a false comfort and peace, which is not the fruit of certainty and confidence in Christ, which ariseth either from a neglect of duty or carnal pleasure; and all that wicked men have comes from one of these grounds. It is good to look to the fountain and spring of our joy and comfort, that we may be able to say with the psalmist, 'Thy comforts delight my soul,' Ps. xciv. 19. We should look to the ground and reason of our peace and security. Why am I thus quiet? Is it because God is reconciled to me in Christ; because of assurance from him, under his oath, upon my taking sanctuary in Christ? The devil lulls men asleep by other means. Carnal men's comfort ariseth from carelessness and negligence in the spiritual life; they do not trouble the devil, nor he them: 'When a strong man armed keeps his palace, his goods are in peace,' Luke xi. 21. The devil lets us alone when we let him alone, when we do not exasperate lusts, nor trouble his kingdom in our heart. Look, as the sea is very calm when wind and tide go together, so when our corruptions and Satan's temptations run the same way, all is calm and quiet. As a man feels not the sickness that grows upon him till the humours are stirred by exercise, so when there is a spirit of slumber and security, and men are neglectful and careless in the spiritual life, and let Satan alone to possess the heart, they sleep, but their damnation slumbers not. Then for carnal pleasure, this will not give them leave to think of their condition; their whole life is nothing but a knitting of pleasure to pleasure, and a diversion from one contentment to another; so they put far off from themselves the thoughts of their own eternal condition. The outward man is gratified, and the inward man hath no time; they fill the soul with work, that it may not fall upon itself, as a mill grinds not itself as long as it hath something to work upon; as the prophet observes of those that drink wine in bowls, 'and put far away the evil day,' Amos vi. 3. They

melt away their days in pleasure, and charm and lull their souls into a deep sleep with the potion of outward delights, lest conscience should awake and talk with them. Therefore look to the ground of your comfort and security, whence it cometh: Ps. xciv. 19, 'Thy comforts delight my soul.' Every now and then we should be making experiments, and try the strength of it. Can you venture your everlasting estate upon the present confidence? Would I be thus found of God? 1 John ii. 28, 'Little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' In afflictions and sickness men are wont to be serious. Is your faith found to praise and honour?

3. It informs us that the state of a believer is far better than the state of those that flow in worldly delights. A man of a great estate, and that abounds in all the comforts of this life, may seem to live a merry life. Oh! but a believer hath strong consolation, such as, when it is put to the trial, will bear him out in life and death. Wicked men may rejoice, as a bird sings in the fowler's snare; they may take comfort in their portion for a while, but in their latter end they will be fools. Alas! your comforts cannot ease you of the colic or headache, nor give you a good night's sleep. Small comfort, that can neither satisfy the heart in any distress, nor ease the conscience. Solomon saith, Prov. xi. 4, 'Riches profit not in a day of wrath.' Take it for man's or God's wrath. In man's wrath, riches many times prove our burden; and none lie so obnoxious to public displeasure as rich men; the comfort is soon lost, it lieth without us. An estate cannot be carried about you; though it be in jewels, it is liable to hazard. The rich Jews were carried captive when the poor were left to till the land. So in the day of man's wrath, it falls most upon worldly great men, they have poor comforts which will not bear them out; but we read of those which 'took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they have in heaven a better and an enduring substance,' Heb. x. 34. Though with Joseph they lose their coat, yet they keep a good conscience, and this makes amends for all their outward losses. But I take the place rather for God's wrath; there is the trial in trouble of conscience, and in the pangs of death. Christians, as sure as the Lord liveth, there will a time come when the strength of your comforts will be tried. Here you sit a brooding upon wealth, as a partridge upon rotten eggs; and what then? 'At his latter end he shall be a fool,' Jer. xvii. 11. Why at his latter end? Then he shall be so in the conviction of his own conscience, his own heart will call him fool. O fool! O madman that I was, in lavishing out my time, strength and care upon that which will yield me no comfort! Mr Fox tells us of a rich cardinal, who, when about to die, cried out, And must I die that am so rich? will not death be bribed? will money do nothing now? This will be your case and condition when you come to die, if you get not an interest in this strong consolation. As that pagan emperor warbled out to his soul, *O animula blandula vagula, quo nunc abibis?* &c.—Oh! where is this soul of mine going? You that now shine in bravery, that eat of the fattest, and drink of the sweetest, when your day is gone what will become of you? You must die and go from all this. Nothing then but peace of conscience and spiritual

comfort will serve the turn. Oh! for one drachm of this comfort then when death is nigh and God is angry. Men keep a great deal of bustle now to get honour, and break through all restraints of honesty and conscience to work themselves into worldly greatness. Oh! but when they come to die, how will this be upon their heart? What would they give then for peace of conscience, and this strong consolation which God vouchsafeth to the heirs of promise? But then no price will be given to God. That look as a husband when he surpriseth his wife in her adulterous embraces, 'He will not spare in the day of vengeance; he will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts,' Prov. vi. 34, 35. So when God hath surprised you in the midst of your whoredoms, when you have diverted your respects from, and been disloyal to him, it is the day of his vengeance, and he will take no ransom. What will a man give in exchange for his soul? There will be such a dying hour, which thou must expect, it is hard by. Christians, have you comforts strong enough to encounter the terrors and horrors of death? Within a little while you will be put to trial.

4. It informs us that christians put a disparagement upon their comforts when they are dejected with every fear and trouble. This is much beneath God's oath, the merit of Christ, and the joy of the Holy Ghost, and all the provision the three persons have made. As for instance—

[1.] When your comforts are so weak that you faint in every affliction: Prov. xxiv. 10, 'If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.' Thou hast small comfort if it will not bear thee out in outward trouble. God and Christ and the Spirit, they are as it were trying their skill (I would speak it with reverence) to raise up a confidence in believers that shall be affliction-proof; now if you are presently gone when put to trial, you disparage this strong consolation, and frustrate all the provision they make for you. Many a heathen would do better upon moral principles, and behave themselves with a greater generosity and bravery of spirit. You know that question, Job xv. 11, 'Are the consolations of God small with thee?' The meaning is, is all the provision of comfort and grace and joy in the Spirit too slender to bear you up in this affliction? What do you expect, christians? Would you have better provision than God hath made? Dost thou expect greater promises, surer mercies, and a more able Christ to bear up thy heart? Are not all the consolations of God able to raise you up? Thus when you are overcome in every trial.

[2.] When you are full of doubts, bondage, and servile fears, you disparage God's consolation. As for instance, when you cannot think of the judgment without horror: Acts xxiv. 25, 'As he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled;' or of death without bondage: Heb. ii. 15, 'Through fear of death they were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Christians, now and then we should be making experiments, and trying the strength of our comforts, and say thus, Can I venture my everlasting estate upon this confidence? Would I be thus found if Christ were coming to judgment? 1 John iv. 17, 'Herein is love made perfect, that we may have

boldness in the day of judgment.' Take it for God's apprehensions of his love to us, or our apprehensions of our love to God; we should still be providing for that day, and citing ourselves before Christ's tribunal, that we might see of what strength our consolation is.

SERMON IV.

We might have a strong consolation, &c.—HEB. vi. 18.

USE 2. To press you to look after this strong consolation. Oh! be not contented until you have the fruit of God's oath, that you may be able to live up to the provision and preparation he hath made for your comfort in the covenant. It is a condescension that God will give us his oath, and this is the fruit of it, that we might have strong consolation, to see our names in God's book, and our heaven in Christ's possession.

I shall press you with arguments both of duty and profit.

First, For arguments of duty.

1. It is for God's honour that his people should walk comfortably. Two things there are which God glories most in—the holiness and the comfort of his people: in their holiness, as he is a God of grace; in their comfort, as he is a God of consolation. It is said in scripture, 'There is none holy as the Lord.' God would have the world know that there is none can sanctify but he alone. Moral principles may change the life, but he only can change the heart. And then it is said there is none like him in pardon: Micah vii. 18, 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?' God would have the world know that there is no comfort so strong and sweet as that which he conveyeth. In your lives God will be glorified in holiness; in your deaths God will be glorified in your comfort: Jer. vi. 16, 'Where is the good way, and walk therein, and you shall find rest for your souls.' Is there any such comfort to be had as my people have, as they have found in the way they have beaten, the beaten path of faith, repentance, and godliness?

2. As it is for God's glory, so for our profit. We look upon comfort with jealousy, knowing we have deserved none: we are guilty creatures, therefore are loath to entertain it even upon God's terms. Joy is the strength of the soul: Neh. viii. 10, 'The joy of the Lord is your strength,' and that in all duties. Satan knoweth that while the conscience is kept raw, the soul is unfit for action. A christian never acts so strongly, so regularly, as when he is filled with God's love. Again, there are some special duties which cannot be performed without comfort, as rejoicing in God: Phil. iv. 4, 'Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice. You cannot have comfortable thoughts of God, your meditation of God will not be sweet, until you have apprehensions of his grace. And you cannot long for the presence of Christ. It is 'the Spirit in the bride, that saith, Come,' Rev. xxii. 17. God will not be sweet, nor the day of judgment looked upon with hope and

longing. And so for thankfulness for mercies; thanksgiving is the vent of comfort and joy.

3. Though it costs you pains, it will make amends at length. All excellent things are encompassed with difficulty. Comforts would not be rightly prized, nor rightly managed, if they did not cost us pains and diligence. The heir that comes to his estate without labour spends it riotously many times, whereas those that know the getting of an estate are careful in spending it; so when we come lightly by comfort, we are apt to abuse it. It must cost pains, for it is the nature of man to slight things that are easily obtained.

4. Consider, comforts were to be suspected if they cost you nothing. Foolish presumption is like a night dream, soon gone, like a mushroom that grows up in a night, or like Jonah's gourd: 'Behold, thou hast not laboured, neither madest it to grow,' saith God, Jonah iv. 10. So an idle conceit without labour, that you receive you know not how, comes to nothing. False comfort casts a false shadow upon the soul for a while, to shelter it from the wrath of God, but the worm of conscience will soon devour it. But a settled solid comfort, though it costs much pains, yet it will stick by you, and satisfy you for all the expense of labour and travail of soul to which it puts you.

Secondly, Take notice of the benefit that this comfort will bring you, how it will sweeten all things, sweeten God, Christ, providence, ordinances, mercies, afflictions, nay, death itself.

1. It will make God sweet to you. Ps. civ. 34, David saith, 'My meditations of him shall be sweet.' Oh! how sweet is this, when we can think of God without horror and trembling, his mercy will be sweeter to you, because it is yours; this is your portion. His justice will not be your terror, but support; your comforts are bottomed upon God's justice as well as his mercy, 1 John i. 9. The apostle doth not say, he is faithful and gracious, but 'faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' You have a holdfast upon God by the merit of Christ, and so you may expect a crown from a righteous judge. Nay, his very wrath will increase your comfort. Why? Because this you have escaped. Look, as a sense of danger heighteneth the deliverance, so for reflections upon God's wrath, if it be opened to you in a sermon, or to your own thoughts, how may you rejoice that you are delivered from it. No man can look upon the sea with more comfort than he that hath escaped a danger of shipwreck; so will you with comfort look upon all the bitterness, and dregs, and sourness of God's wrath, this you have escaped; as the Israelites, when they saw the Egyptians dead on the shore, sang a song of praise. Nay, this will make the magnificence of his creating power sweet; when you walk in the fields, and view the structure of the heavens, you will say, Heaven is my Father's palace, and mine in Christ: 'All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's,' 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

2. This will make Christ sweet, whenever he is represented in the word, and crucified before your eyes, and you can say as Thomas, 'My Lord, and my God,' John xx. 28. A possible salvation is nothing so sweet as that which assurance gives. Conjecture gives but a taste, as those hypocrites had but a 'taste of the good word of God, and the

powers of the world to come,' Heb. vi. 5; but this is nothing to an actual interest. When you can say, 'My God,' how doth it fill the soul with ravishment and sweetness!

3. This will make all his providences sweet, the dreadful acts of his justice, and terrible things of righteousness which God discovereth to the sons of men. Look, as a son is much delighted in a history wherein are recorded his own father's valiant acts, so will you take pleasure in meditating upon the providences of God; they are the mighty acts of your God and Father.

4. This will make ordinances sweet; as prayer, it brings the soul sweetly into God's presence. It is a far greater advantage to cry, 'Our Father,' than to cry, 'Lord, Lord.' Observe it when you will, duties are a burden, either when we have a false peace or none. When we have a false peace, for then we are loath to disturb our carnal quiet; it breeds a quarrel between vile affections and natural conscience. Oh! when we have no peace, fears are revived and come upon us anew; as guilt ariseth at the presence of the judge or an offended party. Oh! but when we can say, God is our reconciled God, what a comfort is this! It is sweet to draw nigh in the assurance of faith: Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw nigh in full assurance of faith.' This will make the word sweet; the word relishes not unless we have some interest in the comforts of it. Things which do not concern us affect us not. Though a man come with never so much comfortable promises, they taste not sweet until we have a propriety in them. A taste presupposeth hope. Oh! but how sweet will it be when we shall come to the word as to the reading of our own charter, as the indenture which is drawn between God and us, by which all privileges are made over to us, and can apply the promises, and say, This was God's unchangeable purpose given me in Christ. And this makes the supper of the Lord sweet, for then you can come as one of God's friends and invited guests: 'Eat, O friends, drink; yea, drink abundantly, O beloved,' Cant. v. 1. Others hope well, but you are sure of welcome and entertainment.

5. This makes all particular providences of God to yourselves sweet, when they are dipped in love, for 'all things shall work together for good to you,' Rom. viii. 28. Though a single dispensation may seem to go cross to your desires and hopes, yet there is no curse in it; as a crooked stick in a faggot makes the whole more compacted: Cant. iv. 16, 'Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south.' Mark, north and south wind, two contrary blasts from different corners; however it be, it doeth good to the church. Whencesoever the blast comes, be it a gentle breath that comes this way, or a cold nipping wind that comes another way, it makes the spices to flow out. Oh! how sweet are mercies, when they are wrapped up in the bowels of Christ, and sent to us as a token from heaven, and we can see love in all our enjoyments! If God gives you deliverance, you may say, as Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 17, 'Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption.' You are loved into mercy. Whatsoever you enjoy, it is not as a creature, but as an heir. What a comfort then will a christian take in a morsel of bread, when he can see God's special love in it, more than worldly men can take in their greatest possessions! Look, as a mean remembrance from a friend is better than a royal gift from

an enemy, so this makes thy meat and bread sweet, when sent from thy Father in heaven, when thou hast it as an heir of promise.

6. This will make afflictions sweet; their very property is altered; they are not now vindictive dispensations, but such as belong to the covenant of grace, and so they will not do us harm: 'In faithfulness thou hast afflicted me,' Ps. cxix. 75. When you can make this reflection, The Lord seeth I want this, else I should not be exercised with such providences. At least there is a supply of inward comfort, and then a heavy burden is nothing to a sound back. If God strikes, sin is pardoned, and the sting of affliction is taken away.

7. It will sweeten death itself; thou knowest whither thou art going. Death is a sad stroke to wicked men, which sends the body to the grave, and the soul to hell; it must needs be a king of terrors to them. But death to those that have this strong consolation is as Haman was to Mordecai; from a mischief, it is made a means to do us honour. Christ hath delivered us both from the hurt and fear of death: Heb. ii. 14, 15, 'That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' So that we may entertain it with delight, as Jacob looked upon the chariots that were sent for him with rejoicing. This is a messenger to carry me to Christ; and who would refuse to be happy? Phil. i. 23, 'I desire to depart, and to be with Christ.' They know death is but a loosing from the body, that they may be joined to Christ, and they had rather lose a thousand bodies than fellowship with Christ; their souls are sent away in peace to the place of bliss.

8. This makes the day of judgment sweet. Look, as the betrothed virgin longs for the day of espousals and when the bridegroom will come, or as a woman longs for the return of her husband that is gone a long voyage, so the soul that is betrothed to Christ longs for the return of the bridegroom, that he may carry it into his Father's house.

9. It will make the thoughts of heaven sweet. When a christian walks abroad, and points up to heaven, he may say, There is the place of my bliss and everlasting abode. One would think this were enough to ravish the heart of any man, and make him do anything, even run to the ends of the earth, to gain this strong consolation.

But we are backward and slow; therefore here is the great question, What shall we do to get and keep this great comfort?

I shall give you a few directions. Many rest in notions; when they see the way, they are discouraged, and go no farther. But will you engage, before the Lord, to observe these things, if you find them according to scripture?

First then, how to get these strong consolations.

1. Lay a good foundation by meditating upon the mercy and truth of God in the gospel. Our first comfort ariseth from meditation, or the serious act of faith on the mercy and truth of God; as settled assurance ariseth from a sight of evidence. God usually gives us at first conversion a taste of his goodness and sweetness, which differeth from assurance: 1 Peter ii. 2, 3, 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' Usually at first, when the soul is taken up

with deep thoughts of God's love and mercy in Christ, God lets in some comfort and sweetness into the soul, which, though it be not assurance, and a solemn testimony of our interest in Christ, yet it is a refreshment which the soul receiveth, while it admires the riches and the bounty and the certainty of God's grace. However this is a taste, a beginning, that maketh us look after a more assured sense of God's grace. Briefly, there must be believing thoughts of God's mercy and truth. I call this meditation, because all the direct acts of faith are performed and carried on by the help of the thoughts. Faith engageth us in solemn musing, and deep thoughts fasten things upon the spirit. As eggs are hatched by a constant incubation, so when the soul museth, comfort ariseth. The two things you should often propound are mercy and truth, because they are the Jachin and Boaz, the two pillars which support the covenant of grace; for it was made in mercy, and kept in truth. Therefore it is said, Micah vii. 20, 'Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and mercy to Abraham.' The covenant was made first with Abraham, therefore it was mercy to him; but it was made good to Jacob, therefore it was truth to him. In the 89th Psalm, they are seven times coupled; the one is the fountain, the other the pipe and conveyance; it springs from mercy, and is conveyed and dispensed in truth. Therefore the psalmist saith, Ps. xxv. 10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to them that keep his covenant and his testimonies.' It is free that it may be sure, and sure that it may be free. These are the two attributes God doth glorify in the covenant of grace, and in all his dispensations of grace.

[1.] Meditate of the mercy and love of God. In the covenant of works, God would glorify his justice, but his great aim in the covenant of grace is to glorify his mercy: Eph. i. 6, 'To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath accepted us in the Beloved.' God would make grace glorious. Justice seeks a fit object, mercy only a fit occasion. The question of justice is to whom is it due? but the question of mercy is who wants it, who needs it? Well, then, though Satan and our own hearts may make many objections, there is enough indeed to overwhelm us, to damn us when we look to ourselves. But what will God glorify? Grace, grace. This is the banner he hath spread over the church, in defiance of all the powers of darkness: 'He hath brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love,' Cant. ii. 4. You must refresh your souls with a sense of God's mercy; every day get a sprinkling of Christ's blood upon your heart. Now in the establishing assurance, this is necessary; for the Spirit sealeth as a Spirit of promise, upon terms of mercy and grace: Eph. i. 13, 'Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.' The Spirit stirreth up faith in the promise, and then giveth in the sense and comfort of it. And therefore if you first look for evidence, and see what grace is wrought in you, you pervert the order of the gospel; the right method is to begin with direct acts, and then to go on to reflex acts; first refresh the soul with God's free grace and mercy.

[2.] Then for God's truth, look upon what sure terms grace is conveyed to you. In the text you have God's word and oath. God would over and above satisfy you. If you will not trust him upon his word, yet give him the credit you would give to an ordinary man's oath.

You have promises of grace written in the scriptures; put him in remembrance, spread your matter before the Lord, and show him his tokens: Lord, whose are these? Then you have covenant and seals, which are as indentures between God and you. A covenant is a solemn transaction between man and man; now God hath made a covenant, and sealed it in the sacrament. Then you have not only outward seals, but inward assurances, earnest, and first-fruits; as if the Lord could never be bound fast enough to the creature, that is so loose and uncertain. God hath given us his word, oath, covenant, seals, and earnest, which you should meditate upon if you would increase delight.

2. Get assurance and holiness, which is an evidence of your title and interest. As Ahab was angry with the prophet Micaiah: 1 Kings xxii. 8, 'I hate him, because he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil;' so sinners hate us because we speak not peace, and do not assure them of comfort. But alas! in vain do we press men to comfort, for till there be holiness there can be no peace or positive certainty: 1 John ii. 3, 'Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.' This is the evidence we must avouch in the court of conscience. Though comfort be founded upon Christ's merit, yet it will be found only in Christ's way. Mark the distinctness of phrase, Mat. xi. 28, 29, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' Certainly it is Christ must give us rest; but when will he give it? ver. 29, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls;' when we abide in the discipline of his Spirit. God first poureth in the oil of grace, and then the oil of gladness. There is an inseparable connection between comfort and grace, as between fire and heat; if no fire, no heat; and if no grace, it is in vain to expect comfort. The dispensation of the Spirit of Christ cannot be severed from the application of his merit. Christ is first king of righteousness, then king of peace, Heb. vii. 2. First he disposeth and puts the soul into a holy righteous frame, and then settleth peace and quiet in the conscience. Alas! for others, God will not trust them with it, and they cannot receive it. God will not trust them with peace and comfort. God trieth carnal men with the comforts of the world, which they abuse to the neglect of God, and therefore he will not bestow upon them the comforts of his Spirit: 'If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?' Luke xvi. 11. When a leaky vessel is tried with water, and will not hold it, you will not put any precious liquor into it; so if you are carnal, and abuse worldly comforts, corn, wine, and oil, to riot and excess, do you think God will trust you with the strong consolations and ravishments of his Spirit? Then you cannot receive it. A man may as well think to apply a needle to his finger and not be pricked, as to commit sin and not find trouble in his conscience. Comfort cannot be felt there where sin reigns; and besides, a carnal heart can have no spiritual discerning. Therefore the foundation must be laid in grace and holiness, that is the evidence.

3. Labour after a sense of grace. Grace and a sense of grace differ, for the spiritual acts of the soul are not so liable to feeling as the acts of the body. When I awake, I know I am so; but internal sense differeth

from outward. A man may be in a state of grace, yet not always know it; as John xiv. 4, 5, 'Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?' A direct contradiction. *Sciebant isti, sed se scire nesciebant,* saith Austin—The apostles knew the way, but did not know they knew it. We need an interpreter to show us our righteousness. Grace is so weak, and there is such a mixture of sin, and men so seldom come to an audit, that conscience is extremely puzzled to know whether there be grace or no. Our uncertainty in this kind may be reduced to these two heads—want of observance, and want of judgment, inadvertency and injudiciousness. We do not take notice of the acts of grace through non-observance, and because of the mixture of weakness, conscience cannot judge of the regulation of our actions. We neglect observation, and therefore are to seek of consolation. You know there are two questions go upon this debate—whether I have done such a thing or no? then whether I have done it as I ought to do it? It concerns first the being of the action, and then the regularity of it, congruousness of it with the rule. Therefore, if we would get a sense of grace, we must be watchful to observe what is done, and judicious to see whether it carry proportion with the rule. Now, 'by use our senses will be exercised to discern both good and evil,' Heb. v. 14. To get a sense of grace, the soul must be heedful and cautious. By long and much acquaintance with God and the work of holiness we may be able to make a judgment upon our own actions.

How shall we keep the soul in a constant observation, that we may be more at home, and constantly take notice of the state of the heart? Here these rules will be of use.

1. As doubts arise get them satisfied. These are hints from God, that you should study your hearts more. Smothering of doubts is dangerous; it breeds atheism and hypocrisy; therefore, when they arise, never dismiss them without an answer and clear satisfaction; do not suspend it out of self-love and carnal fear. As when we see the smoke a-coming, we keep blowing to get it into a flame, so when the Spirit begins to set the heart on fire, keep blowing. Doubts arise, but bring them to a head. God offereth many a fair occasion to men to study their own heart, how it is with them; if they neglect it, all runs to confusion and uncertainty. Well, having your hearts at an advantage, get the case cleared one way or other.

2. As sins are committed get them pardoned: 1 John ii. 1, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' Run to your advocate; never leave until you have gotten a copy of your discharge, and God gives you assurance of your pardon by his Spirit in the court of your consciences. This will put you upon often recourse to Christ, which is the sure way to get comfort; but negligence in the spiritual life, and swallowing sins without remorse, breeds security. Look, as a fountain, when it is muddied, never leaves till it work itself clear again, so when you have fallen foul, and conscience smites, never leave until God hath given you the pardon of that sin: Jer. viii. 4, 'Shall they fall, and not arise?' Take heed of lying still or of negligence. If you be a constant observer of corruptions, and cease not until by Christ's death you get a pardon, all things will not be so dark, doubtful, and litigious.

3. Revise acts of faith as soon as they are exerted and put forth. When faith is renewed by the word, in prayer, or in meditation, examine it. Lusts and graces are best discovered whilst they are stirring. A man surprised in an act of sin is most sensible of it: 'A thief is ashamed when he is found,' Jer. ii. 26. So to surprise the soul in an act of grace, as when sweet thoughts and hopes of God's grace and mercy are stirred up, say, Is not this faith? Carnal principles, that otherwise lie hid, are best discovered in their operation; as when a man is praying or preaching out of vainglory, if his heart return upon him, and take him tardy, his shame is more increased.

4. Get experiences confirmed as soon as they are exhibited. A christian that walks in darkness and is uncertain of his state had need be watchful, and wait upon God in the word and in prayer, and observe providences for some glimpses of his love. Look, as Benhadad's servants, 1 Kings xx. 33, watched for the word *brother*, so should you watch what tokens of love and favour will pass out, and what experiences and quickenings you have. In the word: Ps. cxix. 93, 'I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me.' When you find fresh excitations of grace come in upon the soul, oh! I shall never forget such a duty; there God met me and quickened me. Oh! improve it. So in the supper: Cant. i. 3, 'Because of the savour of thy good ointment, thy name is an ointment poured forth, therefore the virgins love thee.' When at any time you have been conversing with God, and the Lord hath stirred up holy joy, oh! remember it. So for comfort in affliction: Rom. v. 3, 4, 'We glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.' When you have had any experience of God in trouble, improve it to a settled hope. Should I not believe in him, and wait upon him for comfort, that hath been so gracious to me? When experiences and feelings pass away without any observation, we lose a great deal of comfort.

5. Give not over strong desires of grace until they be answered and satisfied. Many times there is something which awakens the heart to grow earnest in prayer. Observe what answers God gives: Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.' When holy and strong desires are stirred up in the heart, we must not suffer them to go away, but they must be pursued resolutely, and recommended to God until he give an answer.

6. When at any time you are convinced of the power of sin, leave not until you get it mortified. There are some sins which have most power over us, as suiting with our complexions and course of life, and they most of all urge the soul with frequent temptations. Now a christian is to observe the weakness and decay of this sin; as David, Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.' Whatever the sin be, be it pride, sensuality, or worldliness, any carnal practice, or fleshly gratification, which you are convinced of by many smitings of conscience. A man cannot be such a stranger to his heart but he must needs find what this sin is. Now, you will never have peace till this be mortified. Spiritual peace is disturbed, God provoked by it, and a guilty conscience is clamorous, and full of objections; you must narrowly observe the decay of this sin.

7. Observe how daily temptations are checked. There is no day but

the devil will be casting in some bait or other, either to please appetite, provoke anger, stir up pride, or worldly desires of greatness and reputation, and rising in the world, or fears of men. Now unless a man be a constant observer of his temptations and conflicts, all will be out of order, and in confusion with him; a man will be a great stranger at home, and not observe what his heart is. This much for the first question, how to get it.

Secondly, How to keep it. As it is gotten with much diligence, so it must be kept with much care.

1. There must be constant watchfulness against sin, and avoiding it; suppose it be passion, wrath, evil-speaking, envious and vain thoughts, all these grieve and disturb the Spirit in his sealing work: Eph. iv. 30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' Men usually sin away their comfort and peace, and the grieved Spirit will refuse to give witness. Evidences are not kept clear, but are blotted and blurred, that you cannot read them. Especially watch against such sins as most waste the conscience and disturb all in the soul.

2. There must likewise be a constant increase, and an exercise of grace. I press both.

[1.] A constant increase of grace. Small things are hardly discerned. Many stars in the firmament are so small that they cannot be seen; so a great many graces in the soul, when small, conscience can take no notice of them. They need have good eyes that read a very small print. Every grace by degrees is set forth in a fairer letter and a new edition; as the waters of the sanctuary grew deeper and deeper, Ezek. xlvii. 3-5; 2 Peter i. 5–10. Give diligence to add to and increase every grace. He musters up several graces, and then infers the exhortation, ver. 10, 'Wherefore the rather give diligence to make your calling and election sure.' So that by increasing of grace still we increase our assurance. Christians rest in complaints, but do not increase and grow in grace. It is impossible for a man to have fire in his bosom and not feel it; so it is impossible, if men did grow and thrive every day, but they would be sensible of it.

[2.] Exercise grace more. By a constant exercise of grace it is drawn forth into the view of conscience. Grace is never so apparent as when it is in action. As the sap is hidden though the fruits are seen, so habits of grace lie out of sight, but operations discover what is in the soul, the fruits appear. Therefore if christians be lazy and without fruit, they will be without comfort. St James saith, chap. ii. 23, 'Faith is made perfect by works.' Understand not in a popish sense, as if works did contribute a worth and value to faith. No; but as the strength of God's power is discovered with more advantage by the weakness of man: 2 Cor. xii. 10, 'When I am weak then am I strong.' So faith by works is sensibly discovered with more advantage to the soul. So that if a man would come to the knowledge of grace, he must be constant in the operations of grace.

SERMON V.

Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.—HEB. vi. 18.

THE third thing I would take notice of in this text is the description of those who may take comfort in God's word and oath, 'Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.' The point is this—

Doct. 3. The true heirs of promise, with whom God hath pawned his word and oath to do them good eternally, are such as have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them.

In the description there are two parts, 'flying for refuge,' and 'taking hold of the hope set before them.' The one relates to their justification, or their first acceptation with God in Christ, 'Flying for refuge;' the other relates to their carriage after justification, 'To take hold of the hope set before them.' To open both these—

I. For the first branch, 'Flying for refuge.' It is an allusion to the cities of refuge spoken of under the law. God provided six cities of refuge for them to fly to that were guilty of casual homicide, that, killing a man by chance, they might avoid the fury of the avenger of blood. These cities of refuge were a type of Christ. In the opening of which, I shall show two things—(1.) That Christ is a believer's city of refuge; (2.) That believers must run into him.

1. That Christ is a believer's city of refuge, or the alone sanctuary for distressed souls. These cities are spoken of Num. xxxv. 11–14, Josh. xx., and Deut. xix. Now the comparison or resemblance between Christ and these cities is very obvious. Look, as God appointed cities of refuge to fly to, so Christ is of God's appointing to be a sanctuary for distressed souls. These cities were built upon hills and mountains, that they which fled to them might ever keep them in sight; so Jesus Christ is set forth: Rom. iii. 25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for our sins.' And the apostles which did hold forth Christ are compared to 'a city upon a hill,' Mat. v. 14. Christ is lifted up in the preaching of the gospel, to be seen of all. There was a causeway, with stones set up to guide them, a direct path, that the manslayer might fly thither: Deut. xix. 3, 'Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land into three parts, that the slayer may flee thither.' The cities were so established that they might have a short and direct way to them, and that their escape might be more easy; so the way to Christ is clear and open, that we may not miss of him who is alone the support of our souls; and God hath appointed some that were as stones to signify to us that this is the way: Zech. ix. 12, 'Turn ye to the strongholds, ye prisoners of hope;' by the ministry of man he hallooeth, as it were, after us: Isa. xxx. 21, 'Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.' Again, they were ordered so that in half a day one might recover one or other of them from any part of the land or corner of the land; so God is made near to us in Jesus Christ: Rom. x. 6–8, 'Say not in

thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above), or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead); but what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach.' Our refuge doth not stand at a distance; the gospel hath brought him near to us. In the gospel God doth so plainly and fully show the way of salvation, that we need not seek further; Christ is at hand to do us good. Once more, these cities of refuge were all cities belonging to the Levites, partly that the tribe of Levi might be the more esteemed and loved of all Israel, but chiefly that they might not be lurking holes of wicked and flagitious persons, but a school as well as a sanctuary, where persons that lived there in exile might be instructed in the law of God; so whoever comes to Christ for refuge must come also for instruction, to be taught and instructed in all the ways of God: Micah iv. 2, 'Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways.'

Other things are spoken of these cities of refuge, but I now come to the persons that had slain a man by chance, and were not guilty of malice prepense; they fled thither as for life, for fear of the avenger of blood; so do we even 'fly from wrath to come,' Mat. iii. 7, as if the wrath of God were at our heels. And whoever ran to the city of refuge was to be received; the gates were always open, for Jew or foreigner; the sojourner was capable of the privilege as well as the natives: Num. xxxv. 15, 'These six cities shall be a refuge both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them, that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither.' So John vi. 37, 'He that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' The arms of the Lord's mercy stand open to receive us. And when they were once received, they were safe, and might enjoy their privilege without molestation, unless they went out of the limits and bounds of the city, then it was death: Num. xxxv. 26, 27, 'But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; and the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer, he shall not be guilty of blood.' So when wrath makes inquisition for sinners, they are never safe but so long as they are 'found in Christ,' Phil. iii. 9. Christ must not be made use of only at first, but for ever. And here they were to remain until the death of the high priest, Josh. xx. 6, who was herein a type of our great high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by his precious death wrought out a perfect reconciliation between God and us, and procured the full pardon of all our sins, and a perfect liberty from the pursuit of God's wrath: John viii. 36, 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' I mention these things because it is very comfortable to compare the law and the gospel. Look, as though you know a man well, yet you delight to view his picture, so though Christ be more clearly represented in the New Testament as a sanctuary for souls, yet it is good to look upon his picture, and the shadows of Christ under the law.

2. It is the property of believers to fly to Christ for refuge. This flying may be explained with analogy to the two terms of every motion, which

are *terminus a quo* and *ad quem*, from what we fly, and to what; and so we have the perfect method and course which the Spirit observeth in bringing home souls to God. In this flying to Christ as a city of refuge there is a driving and a drawing work; the first belongs to the law, the second to the gospel. The law driveth us out of ourselves, and the gospel draweth us, and bringeth us home to God; first there is a preparative work of the law, which causeth flight and fear, and is as the avenger of blood at our heels to make us run as for life: but the gospel hath the greatest stroke in the conversion of a sinner; it is the gospel that pulls in the heart of a man to God. In coming to Christ we are moved not only with fear but hope; a flight argueth fear, and there is an hope set before us; there is a fear of deserved wrath, and a hope of undeserved mercy. First the law worketh fear in us, as a good preparation to make way for the gospel, but then the hope set before us in the offers of the gospel perfecteth the work; as Moses brought them to the borders, but Joshua led them into the land of Canaan. Let us speak a little distinctly of these points.

[1.] Let us speak of the *terminus a quo*, the term from which we come, or the driving work; it is comprised in these two things—a sense of sin, and a sense of the wrath of God pursuing for sin.

(1.) There must be a sense of sin. A man is satisfied with his condition until he seeth his own vileness in the glass of the law: Rom. vii. 9, 'I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' He had as great hopes as most men have. Persons have a strong conceit of themselves, and a large opinion of their own righteousness, until the law of God comes upon their hearts in full evidence and power, and shakes their confidence; then what wretched creatures do we appear to ourselves upon such conviction! I thought that I was thus and thus towards God, but I see that I am wholly carnal, and the law is spiritual; I had thought that I had a better heart towards God, but alas! I was wholly overgrown with lusts. This is like the awaking out of a dream; a poor hungry man dreams that he is satisfied, but awaking, his soul hath nothing; so a sinner says, I thought my estate was good; but now I am convinced of the unsoundness of my heart, oh! how poor and miserable and wretched am I in all spiritual respects? First or last we are thus humble: Rev. iii. 17, '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.' Sottish wretches think they had ever a good heart towards God: Mat. xix. 20, 'All these things have I kept from my youth up;' and they go on with a pleasing dream, and so are not so much as prepared for Christ. The children of God are kept constantly humble, they think none can have a worse heart than they: 1 Tim. i. 15, 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'

(2.) There must be a sense of the wrath of God pursuing us for sin; both are necessary. Some are sensible of sin, but not of wrath; as the carnal and dissolute, who cannot but know themselves wicked wretched creatures, but do not consider of wrath to come: Amos vi. 3, 'Ye put far away the evil day.' Hell is at a distance, and judgment is to come: they put off trouble when they cannot put it away; they sleep, but their

damnation sleepeth not; they adjourn their work, and leave their souls at a desperate pass. Things afar off, though they be marvellous great, seem little; a star that is bigger than all the earth is as a spark or spangle. Their consciences are not sensible of wrath, though their hearts be full of sin. Wrath is not upon them, nor the avenger of blood at their heels; they delay and dream of a devout old age. But now God maketh them sensible of wrath to whom he meaneth grace, though I confess in a different degree. They are solicitous, if not anxious; one time or other they are brought to this. What shall I do? Some more violently, others more gently; some are wounded at the very heart, others are pricked and a little stung at the heart: Acts ii. 37, 'Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart,' as with an empoisoned dagger. No certain rules can be given; sometimes they that have good education have least terrors, as being restrained from grosser sins. Trees long unpruned have the more cuts when they come to be lopped. Some have more terrors, because they have withstood more means. Some that are called to greater services have most terrors; he that hath received much wrong by a bad neighbour can speak worse of him than he that hath received less injuries. Those that are not called to such eminent services, God spareth them. Work serveth instead of sorrows. Some have drunk most deeply of the dregs of sin, they serve only for monuments of the power of God's anger. Sometimes men or women of the most excellent and acute understanding are most troubled, as having the clearest apprehension of the heinousness of sin and terribleness of wrath. At other times it cometh from ignorance, as fears are in the dark, and weak spirits are apt to be terrified. There can be no certain rules, only this in general, all feel some smart. Sin would not be bitter, and Christ would not be sweet, did not we taste it sometimes. The hart would not pant for the waterbrooks if it were not chased, Ps. xlii. 1. Every one cometh to Christ with their load. A man that was never lost in himself will never be found in Christ.

[2.] Let us come to the *terminus ad quem*, from what we come to what; they run to Christ as their city of refuge.

(1.) It implies earnestness, as in a case of life and death. A dilatory trifling spirit shows we are not touched at heart. A man scorched with the wrath of God will not linger but fly; delays are a sign of unwillingness. To say, *Non vacat*, I am not at leisure, rightly interpreted, is *non placet*, it doth not please me. When men are not at leisure for the things of their peace, it is a sign they have no mind to go to Christ, and are not earnest in this matter. Excuses are but a real denial, as they that have no mind to pay their debts, they put off their creditors and troublesome suitors until another time, only to be rid of them. When men have a true sense of their case, they can trifle no longer. In a matter of life and death delays are dangerous. God is for present obedience: Heb. iii. 7, 'To-day if ye will hear his voice.' And so a soul that is affected with its condition cannot dally with God any longer: Gal. i. 16, 'Immediately I consulted not with flesh and blood.' When Christ called Andrew and Peter, they 'straightway left their nets, and followed him,' Mat. iv. 20; and Zaccheus 'made haste and came down, and received him joyfully,' Luke xix. 6. When men have but a slight conviction, they think of a more convenient season,

when such a business or such a temptation is over; but alas! *modo et modo non habet modum*, a sinner's morrow will never come.

(2.) Running to the city of refuge implieth avoiding all byways. A soul that is rightly affected cannot be satisfied with any other thing; another place would not secure the man, nothing but the city of refuge. Worldly things to a wounded conscience are as unsavoury as the white of an egg. Surely the wound is not deep enough when it can be healed with other plasters, and that thirst is not urgent which we can quench at the next ditch; I mean, when the comforts of the creature can satisfy the soul, our thirst was not very deep. Many have a trouble upon them, but they quench it in mirth and carnal company, and by little and little wear out all feelings of conscience. A man that ran to a city of refuge would not turn aside, but went a straight way thither; another town could not secure him; so all things else are but dung and dross in comparison of being found in Christ, Phil. iii. 8, 9. There are two things which are apt to keep us from Christ when we begin to be touched with any sight of sin or God's wrath pursuing us—either the delights of the world, or some formal duties. When a man begins to be in want with the prodigal, he first feeds upon husks with the swine, takes up with worldly delights, which serve to benumb and stupify the conscience. Or, if that will not do, then some outward formal duty. That trouble never went very deep that can be cured with anything on this side Christ.

(3.) This running implies an unwearied diligence. The man was running still till he was gotten into the city of refuge, for it was for his life; so we are unwearied until we meet with Christ, Cant. iii. 2. The spouse sought her beloved throughout the whole city, from one ordinance to another, Where is Christ? They run here and there to the word and to prayer, to see if God will let in any glimpse of love. They do not presently give out, though they find not what they look for, but are borne up by encouragements of the word. Many that have trouble upon them are anxious, and make a kind of essay whether God will give them Christ or no, and, if not presently answered, throw up all; but they which run to Christ in good earnest wrestle with many a discouragement and delay; it is for the lost sheep of the house of Israel; it is children's bread, and not to be given to dogs, but they are resolved to hold fast and take no denial.

(4.) When they are got into their city of refuge, they stay there; having once taken hold of Christ, they will not quit their holdfast for all the world. Many times the children of God have that which divines call a negative adherence, that is, they do not stick to other things; though they dare not apply Christ to their souls, though they have but a twilight, and make but a blind adventure, they dare not say Christ is theirs, yet they will not let go that kind of loose hope for all the world. Much more when it comes to some positive adherence, though not a full assurance, that is, when they are resolved to cast their souls on Christ, to see what God will do with them; as Joab when he took hold of the horns of the altar, he said, If I die, I'll die here, 1 Kings ii. 30. So, whatever discouragements they meet with, their hearts hold Christ fast, and will not let him go.

II. For the second branch, 'To lay hold upon the hope that is set

before us,' and you must repeat the word *flying* or *running* again. Here is another metaphor implied. The apostle having spoken of flying, alludeth not only to the city of refuge, but to that speed and haste men make in a race to take hold of the prize; for he speaks of laying hold of a hope set before them (the word κρατῆσαι signifies to seize upon it), and ver. 20, of a 'forerunner' that is entered before us.

1. What is this hope? Hope is put for the thing hoped for, heaven with all the glory thereof; for it is a hope 'that lies within the veil,' ver. 19, or a hope 'laid up for us in heaven,' Col. i. 5. Mark the double end of him that cometh unto Christ, refuge and salvation; for in Christ there is not only deliverance from pursuing wrath, but eternal life to be found; first we fly from deserved wrath, then we take hold of undeserved glory. This is more easy of the two: Rom. v. 10, 11, '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. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.' The greatest brunt is at first, because of the great fear upon us to fly from wrath; then we encourage ourselves to take hold of eternal life. In the temporal refuges they had security, but not possessions, there was no heritage there; but here we are not only secured against the avenger of blood, but we are called to great and glorious hopes. Our privileges in Christ are not only privative, but positive: Cant. ii. 3, 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' Christ is not only a shady tree, to afford a cool and wholesome shade to shelter us from the scorchings of the sun, but a fruitful tree; we are not only sheltered from wrath, but called to eat of the apples of paradise. In the covenant of grace God doth not only enter into a league with us, that he will not hurt us, but he openeth all his treasure to us. So Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'The Lord God is a sun and a shield.' We are not only pardoned, but restored to favours and friendship. It is much to us to be delivered from the terrors of hell, but more to be made heirs of eternal life. The prodigal only looked for a pardon, Luke xv. 19, 'Make me as one of thy hired servants,' and the father bringeth forth the robe, the ring, and the fatted calf. Oh! that we, that have deserved to be in the bottom of hell, should find a place in the heart and bosom of God! Let us enlarge our expectations according to the extent of Christ's mercy. Here is pardon and glory; heaven is more credible than pardon: Rom. v. 10, 'Much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' It is harder to get a guilty sinner pardoned than a pardoned sinner glorified. And let us answer the divine mercy, to be not only negative, but positive in our obedience. Many please themselves in an abstinence from gross sins, but do not care to maintain communion with God: Ps. i. 1, 2, 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.' They are not scorners, wicked enemies and drunkards, but there is no savour of religion upon their hearts. Do they delight in the law of the Lord? Do they meditate on it, and make it their study? To leave sin is but the first degree, there must be something more.

2. Why is this hope said to be set before us?

I answer—

[1.] To note the divine institution of this reward; it is not devised by ourselves, but appointed by God. The hypocrite's hope is compared to the spider's web, Job viii. 14, which is a poor slender thing, woven out of her own bowels, and it is gone by the first turn of a besom; so is the hypocrite's hope a fancy, a slender imagination, or a rash and unadvised confidence, which comes to nothing.

[2.] It is proposed and set before us for our encouragement. As it is said of Christ, Heb. xii. 2, 'For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, and despised the shame;' that is, for the joy that was propounded to him. Well, then, it is a real hope, and a hope offered to us, and laid before us.

[3.] What is it to run to take hold of the hope set before us? Sometimes it implieth a challenging it as ours; as 1 Tim. vi. 19, 'That they may lay hold on eternal life.' Here it signifies holding fast, never to let this hope go. It implieth diligence of pursuit, perseverance to the end, and all this upon christian encouragement.

(1.) Diligence in pursuit of eternal life in the heirs of promise. It is expressed by working out our salvation, making it our business: Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' Most men make a jest of it, or a thing of course; but it must be made the main work, the great pursuit and thing in chase, as the obtaining the prize in a race, and not only a business, but that which is first and chief: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof.' And a business that must be earnestly prosecuted and well followed, and that notwithstanding discouragements: Mat. xi. 12, 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;' when men press through, and will not be kept out. There must be earnestness in the matter, and this not only for a fit, and for a little while until they have made some progress, but there must be a getting ground daily: 'I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,' Phil. iii. 14, getting nearer, and nearer, making for heaven apace, to be established in the hopes of eternal life. When we will not be put off with anything else, but have heaven or nothing, this is to seek heaven in good earnest.

(2.) This flying to take hold of the hope set before us importeth perseverance in well-doing, notwithstanding the difficulties in the way to heaven. The Israelites' way to Canaan lay through a howling wilderness; so we have many inconveniences and discouragements in our way to heaven, but we are borne up with this hope, that the promise will make amends for all, and so we go on in our course till we come to our journey's end. And the apostle, speaking how Christ, as judge of the world, will distribute eternal rewards, describeth those that shall inherit eternal life: Rom. ii. 7, 'Those that by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality.' It is not a description of our first address to Christ and taking comfort in his merit; no, that consists in a broken-hearted acknowledgment of our sins, and a desire to be found in Christ, depending upon his merits and righteousness to free us from the wrath of God. But the apostle is not describing our coming to Christ, but our coming to

heaven, and the manner how justified persons look for their eternal reward; by patient continuance in well-doing they seek for glory, honour, and immortality. Though we are justified, and have the right of sons, yet we shall not have the possession of the inheritance until we are exercised in well-doing; therefore we must wait God's leisure, and persevere in obedience. And—

(3.) All this upon christian encouragements, for the hope that is before them. A man may know much of his spirit by what bears him up, and what is the comfort and solace of his soul: Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope;' when a man is borne up by invisible comforts, and upon the hopes of an invisible inheritance kept for him in heaven. A wicked man's hope lies within the compass of the world, therefore it may perish and die before he dies: Prov. xi. 7, 'When the wicked man dies, his expectation shall perish, and the hope of unjust men perisheth;' or at least it ends at death: Prov. xiv. 32, 'The wicked is driven away in his wickedness.' He would fain stay longer in the world, but he is arrested by death, in the name of the great God of heaven, and driven into the other world, there to be responsible to God; 'but the righteous hath hope in his death;' then his hope beginneth.

Application.

Use 1. Comfort to those that can apply it, even to those who are thus qualified, that are driven and drawn to Christ, and then go on cheerfully with the work of obedience, waiting for their inheritance in heaven. Now, that you may take in this comfort, examine yourselves.

1. Have you ever felt any law work? Were you ever driven to Christ? Were you ever startled and roused out of your sins, and made sensible of the displeasure of God, and forced to sit alone and complain over a naughty heart? Have you Paul's experience: Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Have you been awakened? Eph. v. 14, 'Wherefore he says, Awake, thou that sleepest.'

2. Have you been drawn to Christ by the cords of the gospel? Have you been brought to him as a sanctuary for your distressed souls, as the man shut up himself in the city of refuge? 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 against that day.' Here is my anchor and safety.

3. Are you begotten to a lively hope? Do you often look within the veil, and groan and long for your everlasting hopes? Do you send spies beforehand into the land of promise, a few thoughts thither? What hearty groans are there, and sighs for that happy state! Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but 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.' Doth it quicken you and make you mend your pace, whatever difficulties you meet with? Rom. v. 2, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.'

Use 2. Conviction. It showeth the hardness of their hearts who have neither felt the law work nor the gospel work, but remain like the smith's anvil, softened neither with hammer nor with oil; neither driven by the threatenings of the law, nor drawn with the glad tidings

of salvation; neither John nor Jesus worketh on them. Of such Christ speaketh, Mat. xi. 17, 'We have piped unto you, and you have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and you have not lamented.' A rude and stupid people, not affected with any kind of music. In times of rejoicing the Jews had their lighter notes fitted for mirth; in times of lamentation, they had their minstrels and mourning women, that had *venales lachrymas*, beating their breasts, and crying, Alas, my brother! and, Ah, Lord! and, Ah, his glory! Jer. ix. 17, 'Consider ye, and call for the mourning women.' Notable movers of passions they were. It was a thing so common among them, that the boys would imitate them in the streets. To these Christ likeneth a stupid people, that are moved with no kind of doctrine, neither with judgment nor sweet offers of grace. Alas! they are far from the strong comfort here spoken of.

Use 3. To persuade you to this temper. Three sorts of people usually we speak to—(1.) The carnal secure; (2.) Those that are affected with their condition; (3.) Those that esteem Christ, and embrace him, that own him as ready and willing to save sinners.

1. For the carnally secure, that never made their peace with God, never fled for refuge, nor took sanctuary at the grace of Christ. Our work is to make them sensible of the avenger of blood that is at their heels. O poor wretches! will you sleep when your damnation sleeps not? Within a little while what will become of you? In the ordinary course of nature, you have but a few years to pass over in this world, but for aught you know, the wrath of God, which makes inquisition for sinners, may seize upon you a great deal sooner; you may not live out half your days, that is, so long as in an ordinary providence you might expect: Ps. lxviii. 21, 'God shall wound the head of his enemies and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses.' God may take you by the hairy scalp while you are in your youthful freshness, before baldness and old age cometh on, and infirmities seize upon you. That which is measured by time will soon come about. Every day you are a step nearer to eternity. Oh! what will become of you? When you are at odds with God, death waylayeth you in every place; it may take you sleeping, eating, drinking. Ah, poor man! what refuge hast thou? what buckler to catch the blow of God's angry indignation, and ward off the strokes of his vengeance? Oh! fly, sinners, for refuge; the Lord knows how soon destruction may seize upon you, while you are yet in health and strength; there is no other means but Christ. Surely this driving work would prosper more if men were not wanting to themselves to improve the conviction of the word. When God shows you your natural face, and begins to startle and awaken you, oh! let not conviction die! No iron so hard as that which hath been often quenched and often heated; so no heart so hard as when it hath worn out many convictions. Make use of remorses of conscience and your own trembling fears, lest you are given up to a spirit of slumber.

2. To those that are affected with their condition, to seek for salvation in Christ alone. You which are troubled about your eternal state, own Christ as a city of refuge, his arms are always open to receive poor trembling sinners, that fly thither from the wrath of God. You do but go about while you seek elsewhere: Jer. xxxi. 22, 'How long

wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth. A woman shall compass a man;' that is, when God hath sent forth Christ born of a woman, why will you weary yourselves to go about? This city of refuge stands open for all comers; own Christ as the only remedy. One who was long exercised with troubles of conscience, and at length came to some establishment, gave this advice: I will never look for that in the law which is only to be found in the gospel; and I will never look for that in myself which is only to be found in Christ; and I will never look for that on earth which is only to be found in heaven. These three things are the causes why men are kept in trouble. You will get nothing but weariness and discomfort by running about, and looking to duties and legal qualifications; and therefore, while you are affected with your condition, own Christ.

3. To those which are fled to Christ, and own him as the only sanctuary for poor souls. Press onward to take hold of eternal life. Now you have fled from deserved wrath, run to take hold of undeserved glory. You are past the worst, the rest is more easy. The apostle, Rom. v. 11, 12, puts a 'much more' upon this; 'Much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life;' as if that were a more easy thing. Now the worst brunt is over; 'And not only so, but we also joy in God through the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.' When you are reconciled to God, you may look to be entertained as friends; being adopted in Christ, you may look for a child's portion. If God would pardon your sins, and take you with all your faults, quicken yourselves to be more diligent in the pursuit of eternal life, and put to your best strength. You will have many ups and downs in the world, but bear it with patience; heaven will pay for all.

But here is a doubt—May we look to the rewards? I answer—Yes, else there were no room for hope, for hope is nothing else but a longing expectation of blessedness to come. Sure those think themselves wiser than God that deny us the use of the Spirit's motives; why else doth God set these things before us? It requireth some faith to aim at things not seen. The world is drowned in sense and present satisfaction; it is a great help to us to look upward. Christ made use of it: Heb. xii. 2, 'For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross and despised the shame.' As man, he was supported with human encouragements. Our flesh is weak, and our task is difficult, and therefore we need all helps. But yet we are not so to covet the reward as to sever it from duty and neglect our work.

SERMONS UPON JOHN XIV. 1.

SERMON I.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.—JOHN xiv. 1.

THE disciples had heard our Lord Jesus discoursing of his death and departure, and the great trials which they were to undergo; and that one disciple should betray him, another eminent among them deny him, and all take offence and leave him; therefore fear and trouble seized upon them. Our Lord, perceiving this distemper growing upon them, seeketh to relieve and ease them. He had sorrow and agonies of his own to think upon, but he is so taken up with comforting his disciples, that he seemeth to forget himself and his own approaching death, and wholly applieth himself to them, 'Let not your heart be troubled,' &c.

In these words we have—(1.) An evil dissuaded, 'Let not your heart be troubled.' (2.) A cure prescribed, and that is the exercise of faith, set forth by its double object, God and Christ, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' In God, as the supreme fountain of all blessing; in Christ, as mediator, or the only way to come to God. In God, as the creator and preserver of all things; in Christ, as the redeemer, to whom the care and conservation of the church belongeth. They did believe in God, they were trained up in that as Jews, but they had not hitherto so clear, so distinct, so strong a faith in Christ as they should have; their faith was but dark and weak as to the dignity of his person. Therefore he presseth them to believe, not only in God, as Jews, but in himself, as christians; that was the point, the faith of which would be now assaulted by his ignominious death and sufferings.

There are two points—

1. That christians should carefully guard themselves against heart-trouble.

2. The proper cure of heart-trouble is faith.

Doct. 1. That christians should carefully guard themselves against heart-trouble.

I. What is this trouble of heart that is here spoken of? There is a twofold evil—natural evil, which is misery; and moral evil, and that

is sin. The one we act of our own accord, the other we suffer against our wills; the one ariseth from something within, the other from something without. This text speaketh not of troubles for sin, but of troubles in the flesh, which being many, and grievous to be borne, it cannot be supposed but that the heart will be touched with them: 2 Cor. iv. 8, 'We are troubled on every side.' Yet, 'let not your heart be troubled.'

A sense of them is not only lawful, but necessary. The two extremes must be both avoided, slighting and fainting: Heb. xii. 5, 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.' Without a sense of them they cannot be improved, neither do we show that reverence that is due to our Father's anger, as not to be afflicted and humbled under his mighty hand: Num. xii. 14, 'If her father had spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days?' Some kind of spirits are stupid and senseless, neither affected with sin nor misery. Not with sin; though they provoke God to his very face with their continual brutish practices, yet they never lay their condition to heart; conscience is seared, or at least benumbed; they are 'past feeling,' Eph. iv. 19. Shall we say to these, 'Let not your hearts be troubled?' No; these usurp a peace and exemption from trouble, as if joy and comfort were their portion. The only way for such is to be troubled, that their trouble may prepare them for comfort. Christ came to save sinners, but they are penitent and broken-hearted sinners, that are weary and heavy-laden under the burden of sin: Mat. xi. 28, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' Not the heart that is whole, but the heart that is wounded. These he calleth, and calleth to repentance: Mat. ix. 13, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Not with misery, neither with their Father's anger, nor their brethren's misery: Jer. v. 3, 'O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return;' Amos vi. 3, 'Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near.' Fall out what will, they set their hearts for ease and pleasure, and carnal delights, and are given altogether to mirth and jollity, riot and revelling, and all manner of vanity. Should we say to these, 'Let not your hearts be troubled,' and lull them more asleep in carnal security, by tincturing their sensuality with religion, and adding a drachm of spiritual comfort to make their carnal portion more effectual? No; Christ speaketh not to such kind of persons as mind neither his presence nor absence, and regard not whether he do good or evil. No; to such we must rather say, 'Be afflicted, and weep, and mourn; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness,' James iv. 9. We call not upon them to rejoice, but to howl for the misery that is coming upon them. A sense there must be.

Quest. What is then dissuaded?

Ans. A perplexing oppressing trouble about sensible and worldly things.

Here I shall show you—(1.) The causes of this trouble; (2.) The nature of it.

First, The causes of this trouble, which are—

1. Carnal self-love, which is all for bodily ease and welfare, or the pleasures, and honours, or profits of the world. They that are under the power of it seek great things here, and the disappointment of their carnal expectations breedeth trouble. Solomon telleth us what was the result of his accurate and deep search into all worldly and human affairs: Eccles. i. 14, 'I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit.' He found all worldly things not only vain and ineffectual to confer happiness, but, which is worse, apt to bring much trouble and affliction upon the hearts of those who are too earnestly conversant about them. Therefore the best way to be free from trouble is to look for no great matters here in the world.

2. The life of sense, which only looketh to the present state of things, and if we have not all things which we affect under the view of sense, trouble filleth our hearts: Heb. xii. 11, 'No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.' There are two emphatical words, πρὸς τὸ παρὸν, 'for the present,' and δοκεῖ, 'seemeth;' they both intimate the causes of our trouble, present sense and false appearance. Of the latter I shall speak in the next head, the former is to our purpose now. All affliction is ungrateful to flesh and blood, and so cannot but be troublesome to us if we look only to the present; but then in the end it giveth us a full recompense for all our patience, namely, such an increase of grace as bringeth peace along with it.

3. Fancy, vain conceit, and false appearance; and so we are often troubled at what may afford joy. The sad point which the disciples could not digest was Christ's departure; yet our Lord telleth them how necessary it was for his own honour and their comfort. His honour: John xiv. 28, 'Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again to you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father, for my Father is greater than I.' If ye were kind to me, ye would have looked upon it with joy, because his going to the Father was the advancing him to a higher condition than that in which he was now; the ignominious cross was the way to dignity and honour. Again, it was for their comfort: 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; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.' They were full of sadness at the thought of his departure, as if it were their utter ruin and undoing; but the coming of the Holy Ghost would be of more advantage to them than his staying with them; it was for his glory and their benefit. Thus we often misinterpret God's dispensations; those hard trials which are ordered for our comfort and peace increase our troubles and perplexities. We judge according to appearance, and therefore do not judge righteous judgment; so we wound ourselves by our own fancies, and make our evils much worse than they are by our vain conceit.

All these concurred in the present case. They had dreams of sharing honours in Christ's kingdom, all which would be disappointed by his ignominious death; and they looked to the present face of things, and so could not see glory in this shame. And besides, they did quite mistake the dispensation.

Secondly, The nature of this trouble, wherein it consisteth in three things—(1.) A fear of danger, or evils to come; (2.) Sorrow for evils present; (3.) A fretting indignation or dislike of God's dispensations. It is distrust to be troubled about what is to come; despondency or uncomely dejection to be troubled about what is present; impatiency and murmuring to dislike God's way of dealing. All these constitute that trouble of heart from which Christ dissuadeth his disciples.

1. There was fear in it of approaching dangers. Christ was to depart, and they were to be left to an unquiet world: John xiv. 27, 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' They were afraid what should befall themselves when their master and guide was gone, from whose direction and protection they promised themselves so much comfort and safety. Future things are to be left to God's providence. Every day that bringeth its cares and difficulties bringeth also its incident comforts: Mat. vi. 34, 'Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' We must not be over-solicitous about future contingencies, nor be anxious for that to-day which may be soon enough cared for to-morrow. But we usually anticipate our troubles, and make our present condition more grievous by bearing the charge and burden of the future also; and so by our cares and fears about futurity, oppress, and so both overwhelm ourselves, and take God's work out of his hands.

2. This trouble did arise from sorrow and immoderate dejection, because of the loss of Christ's bodily presence: John xvi. 6, 'Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your hearts.' Usually upon the loss or absence of some prized comfort we let loose the reins of our affections, and keep no moderation in our sorrow and grief, as if God could not supply the loss of the creature by the presence of his Spirit.

3. Indignation, or a fretting dislike of God's dispensations. That this was a part of the disciples' trouble appeareth from Christ's whole discourse with them. The bodily presence of Christ was comfortable to them upon a spiritual account, as they enjoyed many a sweet instruction by it; but they also looked for great things in the world, and were confounded with the disappointment of their expectations. The temporal kingdom ran in their minds, and therefore the news of his ignominious death was so afflictive to them. Our Lord taxeth them for this, but in a gentle condescending manner, that for want of faith and love they were so unsatisfied with God's design, which was so expedient and useful for them and the world. Now this is the usual ground of our troubles: we set up an anti-providence in our hearts, and obtrude some model and scheme of our own upon God, which if he doth not comply with, we are troubled. But God's way is more for our real good, though our own way suiteth better with our fancy and vain opinion.

II. Why christians should not let their hearts be troubled.

1. It is very incident to us. We have somewhat within us and without us which will always be an occasion of trouble. There is corruption within, and an evil world without. A believer is not to become as a stock or stone, or cease to be a man; our flesh is not as the strength

of brass, nor are our sinews iron. Our Saviour himself was troubled: John xii. 27, 'Now is my soul troubled.' But his trouble was like the shaking of pure water in a crystal glass, there was no mud at bottom. Certainly it is lawful and requisite to be sensible, and to be affected with our condition; but we are apt to exceed in our fear and grief, and so it becometh a fault. There is a dejection and discouragement which cloggeth us in our duty, and causeth sinful negligence and deadness of heart; this is a distemper which we should oppose by all spiritual means.

2. This is contrary to our duty and obedience, which consisteth partly in a subjection to God's governing will, revealed in his laws; partly in a submission to his disposing will, discovered in his providence.

[1.] For the first. The case is clear there; if God hath forbidden cares and fears and immoderate sorrows; if he hath said, 'Be careful for nothing,' Phil. iv. 6; and 'Fear them not therefore,' Mat. x. 26; and ver. 28, 'Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul;' and again, 'Weep as if you wept not,' 1 Cor. vii. 30; and 'Mourn not as men without hope,' 1 Thes. iv. 13. But such is the goodness of our God, that he hath said all this and much more, and so made our comfort and cheerfulness a great part of our work, and hath made it unlawful for us to be miserable, and to pierce ourselves through with divers sorrows. The Lord foresaw what sinful anxiety was incident to us because of our difficulties and discouragements, and how we would be distracted in our duty if he should leave the burden of care and sorrow upon us; therefore he would only have us mindful of our duty, leaving all success and events to him. A small matter occasioneth much vexation of spirit to us when we take the care of it upon ourselves; therefore it is not only our privilege that we may, but our duty that we must, disburden ourselves of these distrustful fears and cares and sorrows. It is his peremptory command, which his people must not disobey, unless they will incur his displeasure.

[2.] A submission to his providence. He is absolute Lord, to dispose of our persons and conditions as it shall seem good in his sight; for he is our potter, and we are his clay: Isa. xlv. 9, 'Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker: let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth: shall the clay say to him that formeth it, What makest thou?' Therefore we must not be troubled when he exerciseth this his sovereignty: Job xxxiii. 13, 'Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not an account of any of his matters.' Who shall be judges and arbitrators to take the account of his proceedings? and before whom will you call him to render a reason of his actions? No; he ruleth with absolute dominion and sovereignty, but yet showeth himself a loving and tender Father to his people: Mat. vi. 32, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth you have need of all these things.' The Lord will keep off dangers, provide everything needful, and is more solicitous for your well-being than you can be yourselves. There is a constant fatherly providence watching over his people for good; if we do believe it, why are our hearts troubled? Let our Father take his own way to bring his children to glory: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' That clause concerneth not only our final blessedness, but all the ways and means which conduce thereunto.

3. It is contrary to that peace, comfort, and happiness we might otherwise take in the rich provisions and preparations of grace which God hath made for us. It is said, Ps. xciv. 19, 'In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.' It is a great point of sincerity to comfort ourselves with God's comforts, such as he alloweth to us, provideth for us, and worketh in us. Many careful troubles and perplexing thoughts are apt to arise in our minds in a time of danger. Now where is our ease and relief but in God's comforts? These will yield not only support, but delight; they have a power to revive and cheer the soul. All the business is to inquire what are God's comforts? The comforts of the gospel, such as result from the sense of our reconciliation with God: Rom. v. 11, 'Ye joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement.' The pardon of our sins: Mat. ix. 2, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.' Our adoption, or being taken into God's family: Heb. xii. 5, 'Ye have forgotten the exhortation that speaketh unto you as unto sons.' It cannot be otherwise with those that have a Father in heaven, but they may have some comfort; if not in the creature, yet in God; if not on earth, yet in heaven. Besides this, there is the hope of glory: Rom. v. 1, 2, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Sin hath woven calamity into our lives, and filled us with troubles, griefs, and fears; but God hath sent his Spirit, not only a sanctifier, but comforter, into our hearts, 'to fill us with all joy and peace in believing,' Rom. xv. 13. Now, shall God make all this provision for our comfort and we never the better? Luke xxiv. 38, 'Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?' Surely the comforting work of the Spirit should not be interrupted by us. It is our sin if these comforts be despised, our infelicity if they be not enjoyed, they being necessary for us, for our encouragement in the way of holiness, and to quicken our praise and thanksgiving, and raise our hearts in love to God.

Use. Let us all take heed then of the evil of a troubled and uncomfortable spirit. What shall we do to prevent it?

1. Something is pre-required, that a man be upon good terms with God: 1 Sam. xxx. 6, 'David 'encouraged himself in the Lord his God.' He was in a great distress at that time; the city wherein he left his family, and the families of his followers, was taken and burnt, their wives and children carried away, and all gone; so that David and those that were with him lifted up their voices and wept till they had no more power to weep; and to make up the calamity, his soldiers were ready to stone him. In this desperate condition, David 'encouraged himself in the Lord his God.' So Ps. xlii. 11, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.' David speaketh this when he was deprived of ordinances and his constant recourse to God's solemn worship, which was a sad reflection to him; yet he rebuketh himself for being utterly cast down or immoderately disturbed; and why? Because he had some supports in the midst of all this sadness. 'God is the health of my countenance;'

and he did not despair but God would return in mercy to him, and he should find some way of escape, because God was his God. This is a stay to our drooping souls, that we be not too much dejected and disturbed, that God is our loving Father when we are under his sharpest chastisements. If God be ours in covenant with us, why should we be troubled? If you have consented that God shall be your God, your portion, and saviour, and sanctifier, there needeth no more for your comfort. Are you resolved of this?

2. See that your hearts be mortified to the world, and fixed on heavenly things. Whilst you have too great a value for worldly things, your hearts will be overwhelmed with griefs, and cares, and troubles. Our affections increase our afflictions: Job i. 22, 'In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly;' 1 Cor. vii. 30, 'And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;' 2 Cor. vi. 7, 'By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report;' Phil. iv. 12, 'I know 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.' A man must learn both lessons, or he learneth neither. The prevalency of any earthly love will always expose us to disquiets, and we should have more in God if we looked for less in the creature; but whilst we dote upon these things, we are more solicitous about getting or keeping, and troubled at the want or loss of them.

3. The great cure is in the text about the exercise of faith on God and Christ: 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' Sense is the cause of trouble, faith of comfort. Christ, who is the true physician of souls, knoweth what cure is proper to the disease. Mountebanks would prescribe another cure, spare the flesh or feed men with carnal hopes. No; 'ye believe in God, believe also in me.' Though God should not prevent the evil feared, or remove the affliction, yet if we can believe, we are well enough. Faith represents more grounds of comfort than sense can of trouble, whilst it carrieth off the heart from things seen to things unseen, from things present to things future, from the creature to God, who can give better things than the world can give or take from us. Here are two objects of faith—God and Christ: 1 Cor. viii. 6, 'To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' One supreme God, from whom we derive all our graces, and to whom we direct all our services; and one mediator, by whom, as a golden pipe, all our mercies are conveyed to us, and by whom also we have access to God for all that we stand in need of.

4. Let us labour to keep our consciences pure, if we would not have our hearts troubled. Sin will bring on trouble, both inward and outward; for it is the cause of sufferings, and it maketh them more grievous; as we shall always walk in pain till the thorn be pulled out of our foot. Righteousness bringeth peace, and the oil of grace maketh way for the oil of gladness. The apostle bringeth this out of Melchisedeck's name and title, Heb. vii. 2, 'First being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is

king of peace.' Elsewhere the scripture doth attest it: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God;' and 2 Cor. i. 12, '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.' David interposeth a caution, Ps. lxxxv. 8, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace unto his people and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly.'

5. There are certain ordinances appointed to fortify us against soul-trouble. The word: Ps. cxix. 50, 'This is my comfort in mine affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.' There are the fixed grounds of that hope and comfort which will support and enliven us in the greatest pressures. God's covenant and promised mercies are portion enough, what distresses soever he sendeth. So prayer, if it be ingenuous thankful prayer: Phil. iv. 6, 'Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' The Lord's supper, it is our *viaticum, non morientium,* not when we come to die. Papists think so, and therefore thrust the sacrament into the mouths of those that die; if this be neglected, they almost despair of their salvation; but it is *viaticum viventium* of those that live. Death is not a journey, but the end of a journey, a passage in a moment, a cessation from our journey in this world, which needeth no *viaticum;* a going out of the world, like the putting out of a lamp in a moment, as the lamp needeth no more oil when it is to be extinguished. We need this for our journey in the world, not our departure out of the world: Acts viii. 39, 'He went on his way rejoicing.' As it is our antidote against the corruption that is in the world through lust, so it is our cordial against the troubles of the world, to give us more joy of faith, more sense of God's love. It is the feast provided for the refreshing of the weary, and cherishing of the mournful soul.

SERMON II.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.—JOHN xiv. 1.

DOCT. 2. One great means of easing our hearts from trouble is believing in God and Christ.

To evidence this, I shall consider—

1. The act.

2. The object, which is double—(1.) One part taken for granted, 'Ye believe in God;' (2.) The other part of the object they were now invited and recommended unto, 'Believe also in me.'

1. For the act. Faith in the general hath a comforting property, and a power to allay trouble. As here the disciples, being in trouble,

are exhorted by Christ to believe, that is, to renew their faith. David felt a blustering in his spirit, and how doth he allay the storm? Ps. xlii. 5, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God.' There is no such ready way to still unquiet thoughts as to set faith on work, and to cast anchor within the veil, hoping for and expecting relief from God. So the primitive christians, when they were under great heaviness in divers trials, how did they get any comfort to keep themselves alive? 1 Peter i. 8, 'In whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' A lively exercise of faith will bring in much joy to the soul in hard times and under sore trials, and not only keep it alive, as Hab. ii. 4, 'The just shall live by faith,' or make a believer not barely to subsist, but he fareth high, and liveth at a wonderful rate of comfort, such as is for nature and kind, though not degree, somewhat like the joy of the blessed. Look into the book of God, and you shall find that all our fears and troubles are for want of faith. As for instance, Peter, when he walked to Christ upon the waters, his feet never sunk till his faith failed: Mat. xiv. 31, 'O thou of little faith! wherefore didst thou doubt?' The wind was boisterous, but there was Christ at hand. He looketh at the wind too much, and at Christ too little, and therefore was full of fears, and began to sink. So the disciples were afraid to perish, though Christ himself were in the ship: Mat. viii. 26, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' It is, Mark iv. 40, 'How is it that ye have no faith?' A little faith is as no faith in great trials. Well, then, there is no way to ease our hearts of trouble but by exercising faith. To make this more expressly to appear to you, I shall consider again what is trouble, the nature of it, and what are the causes of it, and then you will discern that faith is the proper remedy.

First, For the nature of this trouble. It consisteth—(1.) In a fear of danger; (2.) Sorrow for some disappointment in the creature; (3.) A fretting dislike of God's dispensations.

1. Fear is vanquished by faith. That appeareth by that opposition: Prov. xxix. 25, 'The fear of men bringeth a snare, but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord, shall be safe;' or, as it is in the Hebrew, 'shall be set on high.' There is no conquering either the allectives or terrors of sense, till faith represent something greater to be feared and loved: 1 John v. 4, 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' It much outweighs all temptations. What is a prison to hell, a fiery furnace to everlasting burnings, the creature to God, or the threatenings of men to the Lord's promises? Do but shut the eye of sense and open that of faith, and you will see that God is only worthy to be feared and trusted, and then the creature will be nothing to you; we shall comfortably do our duty, and not fear what man can do unto us. We have more encouragement to be faithful to Christ than the world can present allurements or affrightments to the contrary. If man be our enemy, and God be our help and second, what need we fear? Ps. xvi. 8, 'I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. God is set before us either in a way of reverence or in a way of dependence; either for seeing him in all our ways, making him our witness, approver, and judge, so it is an act of

holy fear; or as looking up to him as our helper and deliverer, so it is an act of faith and confidence. And he that thus often looketh to God is carried through all his fears and cares, and may easily despise all the frightful things in the world. Therefore why should your hearts be troubled? believe in God, and believe in Jesus Christ. It is a fault in christians to be immoderately fearful in times of trouble and danger. Faith puts itself under God's special protection upon a twofold persuasion of God's power and presence.

[1.] His power: God is greater than the creature, and all the terrors which sense can present to us from the creature: Dan. iii. 17, 18, '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 to thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' If men bind, God can loose; if they threaten to kill, God can save.

[2.] His presence: Heb. xiii. 5, 6, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee: so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.' The Lord will stand by his people, and deliver them, when it shall be for his glory. Now, till we come to this courage and constancy of mind, and fearlessness of men, we never have the generosity of christians.

2. Sorrow is vanquished by faith.

[1.] As it diverteth the heart from present things to future, and maketh things absent present, and recompenseth losses and disappointments in the world with the hope of greater things in the world to come. Faith showeth better things to be enjoyed: Heb. x. 34, 'Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' Spoiling of your goods is either by violence or by fire[1] and confiscation. It goeth near to the hearts of worldlings to part with their necessary and convenient earthly comforts; but to a believer it is more easy, for heaven is infinitely better and more precious than all the wealth of the world. If the world be our darling, or any created comfort be overvalued, it will fill our hearts with sorrow to be deprived of it. A christian, that hath heaven in hope and reversion, cannot be poor; he is richer than all worldly men, though God's providence hath given him little, or left him little.

[2.] The sting of present evils is removed by the pardon of sins and the sense of God's love. You are secured from death and wrath, and God in Christ is your father: Rom. v. 1–3, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.' If his love be shed abroad in the heart, it is no great matter what we feel in the body. The venom of the affliction is the curse due for sin; that is gone when we have first made sure of our personal reconciliation with God and acceptance with him in Christ.

[3.] Not only is the venom gone, but every condition is useful, and hath a blessing in it to the godly. We know this by faith: Rom. viii.

[1] Qu. 'fine'?—Ed.

28, 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God,' Ps. cxix. 71, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes;' and ver. 25, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.' Our wise and faithful God would not bring it upon us if he did not know how to make a good use of it. By this we may discern whether God chasten us in anger, yea or no, whether our crosses be curses. The cross which maketh thee better than thou wert, it cometh with a blessing, and as a blessing. It is not the sharpness of the affliction that we should look to, but the improvement. If it be improved, the bitter waters are made sweet; if we are more godly, wise, and religious. All God's dispensations to his people are good, and tend to good. Luther hath a saying, *Qui tribulantur sacras literas melius intelligunt, securi et fortunati eas legunt sicut Ovidii carmen*—Those that are in trouble understand the scriptures better; the secure and prosperous read them as a piece of Ovid. It maketh us more serious, keepeth us in a relish of spiritual things. While God is striking, we feel the grief, and would fain shift off the cross; but when we see the end, then we acknowledge it is good to be afflicted. If God write his law upon our hearts by his stripes upon our backs, and so light a trouble maketh way for so great a benefit, we should not grudge at it. Our happiness doth not consist in outward comforts, riches, health, honour, civil liberty, or comfortable relations, but in our acceptance with God and enjoyment of God. Good is to be determined by its respect to true happiness. Affliction therefore taketh nothing from our happiness, but addeth to it, as it increaseth grace and holiness, and so we are more approved of God, enjoy more of God.

3. Impatiency at what is past, or a fretting dislike of God's dispensations. Now by faith we are persuaded both of the greatness and goodness of God, and so our murmuring is prevented.

[1.] Faith has an esteem of the greatness of God. God is too great to be questioned. The more we see the greatness and majesty of God, the more is our pride checked: Job xxxv. 5, 6, '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?' It is a swelling against God's sovereignty, that he should have the disposal of us at his pleasure. Hab. ii. 4, 'Behold, his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.' The lifting up of the heart is opposed to living by faith. The lifting up of the heart is a proud, murmuring, conceited disposition under trouble, taxing and censuring his proceedings; such a soul will make defection: Heb. x. 38, 'Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.' Pride will not suffer the heart to submit to the will of God, and so scorneth to bear the cross of Christ. But now faith, that relieth upon God and his promises, suffereth God to take his own way, and that waiting upon God in his way is a sure path to a blessed issue. Pride is conceited of its own wisdom and power, as if we could secure ourselves better than by waiting upon God. Pride hath no opinion of God, or his dealings; but faith, which is an high esteem of God, referreth all to him.

[2.] Of the goodness of his conduct. Faith persuadeth us, with quietness and security, to cast ourselves into God's hands, who will guide all things well. Observe Christ's submission in his trouble: Mat. xxvi. 39, 'He prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt;' And David's, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26, 'The king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation; but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.' All discontents come from unbelief; we do not believe God's providence and fatherly care, but act as gentiles; nor his love in Christ; for if we did, we would let him alone to bring his children to heaven in his own way. Many times that is best for us which we do not think best for us. Peter was best pleased when upon Mount Tabor: Mat. xvii. 4, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here.' But Christ had other work for him to do.

Secondly, The causes of trouble are removed by faith. As (1.) Self-love; (2.) The life of sense; and (3.) Fancy or vain conceit. A man that is governed by these, and is under the influence of these, will never be free from trouble. But now faith persuading us of the love of God in Christ, cureth our self-love: 1 John iv. 16, 'We have known and believed the love that God hath to us;' and showing us better things to come, weaneth us from present sense: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.' And depending upon the wisdom and care of God, referreth the choice of our condition to him, and the carving of our lot and portion, as it maketh most for his glory: Phil. i. 20, 'Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death;' whether by things adverse or prosperous, whether the way be fair or foul. In short, there are certain propositions and conclusions, which are absolutely necessary to exempt us from trouble; and carnal self-love, the life of sense, and fancy or vain conceit, will never submit to them, but are only granted by faith, are the results of faith.

1. That spiritual benefit doth abundantly recompense and make amends for the loss of temporal interests. If an healthy soul be in a sickly body: 3 John 2, 'I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.' If the inward man may be renewed, though the outward man perish: 2 Cor. iv. 16, 'Though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' That a little faith discovered to be sound and saving is of more worth than the best gold upon earth: 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, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.' If sore trials discover reality of grace, better undergo them than be without them; and we should esteem and prize these seasons of exercising and trying grace more than times of the quickest and greatest gain in the world. A little comfort in a trial should make up all the pain, shame, and loss that attendeth it. Now self-love, sense, and fancy will never subscribe to this.

2. That God will never leave us wholly destitute, or to difficulties

insupportable: 1 Cor. x. 13, 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' Alas! many times, in the eye of sense, they are left and see no helper.

3. That all the bitter of outward trials is nothing to the sweets of inward communion, which the soul hath or may have with God thereby: Heb. xii. 11, 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.'

4. That hope against hope, and patience above strength, is the truest life of faith, and never wanted a most comfortable issue: Rom. iv. 18, 'Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations;' James v. 11, 'Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.'

5. That all the dispensations of God to his people, whatever harshness or hard aspect they have at first view, are yet stamped and marked with covenant mercy, love and faithfulness: Ps. xxv. 10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.' There is merciful and faithful dealing with him in every condition; for all this is but God's way to make them partake of his promises.

6. That every condition is useful, and hath a blessing in it to the godly: Cant. iv. 16, 'Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.' Out of what corner soever the wind bloweth, it is beneficial to Christ's garden, whether the bleak north wind, or hot south wind. The same Spirit sanctifieth afflictions who teacheth us how to serve God cheerfully in our prosperous condition. Whatever changes come upon us, a christian should be a christian still, and the savour of his spices should flow forth. The north and south wind be of contrary qualities, as cold and hot, moist and dry. The church needeth sometimes sharp rebukes, sometimes calm and gentle consolations.

7. That those things which seem to be for our temporal hurt do in the issue turn to our eternal good: 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.' Carnal self-love, sense, and fancy are all for our temporal benefit, and would fain be rid of temporal evil; but this would gratify our flesh, which feeleth what pleaseth it for the present, and so be for our eternal ruin; but faith owneth God's wisdom and gracious ordering, and can see an eternal benefit in a temporal loss. As a prudent sick man obeyeth his physician before his appetite and against his appetite, because he is persuaded of his skill and faithfulness, we trust God because he is wise and faithful, and taketh the best course with us, though if we consult with fancy and appetite, no such thing doth appear. Some afflictions fit us for glory, as they better our hearts; others hasten our glory, as they shorten our lives. In the eye of faith, persecution is the nearest way to heaven, and the sword of the enemy is but the key to open the prison-doors, and let out the soul that hath long desired to be with Christ.

II. The object.

1. Much of the triumph of faith ariseth from its object: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.' The strength of the ivy lieth in the oak or tree about which it claspeth. Much comfort dependeth upon the act of faith, as it seeth things that cannot otherwise be seen, maketh things absent present, raiseth the heart above its present condition; but most of the strength of faith is in its object. Other graces, their strength is more in the subject wherein they are seated, but faith and hope derive their strength from the object, because their nature lieth in adherence and expectation, and if this have not bottom enough to support it, all is vain.

2. Here is a double object propounded. And so, before we go deeper into the argument, we have the more advantages than if it were single and alone, for two is more than one. So Gen. xli. 32, 'For that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.' The object is doubled, that faith may be more full. This double prop for our faith should give us double strength in believing, when we have God to trust in and Christ to trust in. We that have sinned with both hands earnestly have a double ground of comfort and hope, the infinite mercy and power of God, and the infinite righteousness and everlasting redemption of a mediator. God alone is enough for our happiness; there is in him abundantly more than enough to satisfy all the capacities of the creature; but without a mediator, how shall we come to enjoy him? Though there be a sufficiency in the object of our happiness, yet as to the means, something else besides this is requisite. If man had kept innocent, one object of faith had been enough, but to man fallen a mediator is necessary; and it is an unspeakable mercy that God hath given us his Son, that by Jesus Christ we may come to him: John iv. 6, 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' And, on the other side, by the mediator Jesus Christ we come to the Father: John xii. 44, 'He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.'

3. Respect to one of these objects is taken for granted, the other is expressly recommended to us. Why is faith in Christ especially required? Partly upon a special, and partly upon a general reason.

[1.] The special reason was because their faith in Christ, as the promised Messiah, was not so well established as their faith in God. He was shortly to undergo ignominious sufferings, yea, death itself, which would tempt them to cast off the faith of his promises; therefore, to fortify them against the scandal of his sufferings, he saith, 'Believe also in me.' They would be troubled if they looked only to appearance, and did not believe in him, or look upon him in that quality and relation in which God sent him and he came into the world: Luke xxiv. 21, 'We trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel.' It saveth a great deal of trouble to be established in the present truths, and to understand what God is a-doing in our time. We should fortify our faith where it is likely to be most assaulted.

[2.] More general. Besides a faith in God, a faith is necessary which

closeth with and embraceth Christ as mediator: John vi. 29, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' He is sent of his Father to do us good, and authorised by God to exercise that office for us, and to us. Yea, we cannot believe in God unless we believe in Christ, for the distance between God and us is so great, that we cannot immediately converse with him, nor trust in him for any benefit, without a mediator: 2 Cor. iii. 4, 'Such trust have we through Christ to God-ward.' So it is said, 1 Peter i. 21, 'Who by him do believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope may be in God.' God was offended with man, and is fully satisfied with the ransom paid for sinners by Jesus Christ; he is pacified towards all those that flee to him by Jesus Christ, so that poor penitent sinners may now come and rest upon him.

4. Faith seeth many grounds of comfort, yea, of complete and full satisfaction in this double object. What will content you if God and Christ will not content you?

[1.] Here is God to satisfy us. There is an infinite latitude in the object of faith, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with all their powers and capacities to do us good. No pain so great but he can mitigate or remove it; no danger so dreadful or so likely but he can prevent it; no misery so deep but he can deliver us from it; no enemies so strong but he can vanquish them; no want that he cannot supply: Gen. xvii. 1, 'The Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.' When we have a want that God cannot supply, or a sickness that God cannot cure, or a danger that he cannot prevent, or a misery that he cannot remove, or can produce any enemies or creatures that are too hard for God, then we have leave to yield to trouble and despondency of heart. Choose God as your portion and chief happiness, and you shall want nothing: Ps. xxiii. 6, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.' Surely could we more believe in God, our hearts would be more balanced and kept steady, not tossed up and down with various occurrences. Whatever falleth out, we have a God still to rejoice in and depend upon: Hab. iii. 18, 'Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' He supposeth himself not only in some necessity, but in extremity; not only kept bare, but reduced to nothing: 2 Cor. vi. 10, 'As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.' You have all things in him.

[2.] Here is Christ as mediator. We have great advantage by that consideration.

(1.) Hereby we see God in our nature, and so near at hand, and ready to help us, and more accessible for us to come at, than as God considered in the mere deity: John i. 14, 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' God is come down, and become our neighbour, yea, like one of us, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Though he has removed his dwelling again into heaven, yet it is for our sakes; our nature is there, though our persons be not. He is sat down as our agent: Heb. viii. 1, 'We have such an high priest, who is sat on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens;' Heb. iv.

15, 'For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' God in our flesh will not be strange to us. We are bidden, Isa. lviii. 7, 'not to hide ourselves from our own flesh;' Gen. xxix. 14, 'And Laban said unto him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh; and he abode with him.'

(2.) In the mystery of redemption, all the divine persons put themselves in an order for our faith to take hold of. Faith may close with any one of the persons of the blessed Trinity, provided we divide not the divine essence in our thoughts; but in the mystery of redemption all is made obvious and handy to our faith; the Father considered as the fountain of the deity, to whom we come for grace and mercy; the second person clothed with our flesh, through whom we come; being assisted and enabled to come by the Holy Spirit, who is the third person: Eph. ii. 18, 'For through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.' This is that full and satisfying object with which faith closeth when it acteth most distinctly. In the Father, there we see original love or original authority, and infinite free grace: John iii. 16, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' In the Son, everlasting righteousness and redemption: Heb. ix. 12, 'Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' In the Spirit, infinite virtue and power, for the applying of Christ's purchase; for he createth a new spirit in us, he createth the fruit of the lips, Peace, peace. It is God that must be satisfied, and by God must this satisfaction be made, and by him that is God must this satisfaction be applied, before we can have the comfort of it. You have all in one verse: 1 Peter i. 2, 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.' So ver. 21, 22, 'Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God, seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.' In the Father we see elective love, in the Son there is full redemption, and by the Spirit effectual application. The Father appoints blessedness to us, the Son purchaseth it for us, and the Holy Ghost carrieth it on powerfully and invincibly. The salvation of poor sinners is a work wherein all the persons of the blessed Trinity are engaged, and do concur therein by a several distinct personal operation. Surely that is a noble work wherein such agents are employed; and our hearts must be raised to give equal glory to all the persons, knowingly, and distinctly, and explicitly; the Father out of his good pleasure electing sinners to grace and glory; the Son by his obedience and suffering purchasing the same for them; the Holy Ghost by his power working grace in them, and preparing them for that blessedness which the Father hath appointed, and Christ hath purchased for them.

(3.) In believing in Christ as mediator, our troubles are stopped at the fountain-head. It is not the wrath and fury of the creature, but the wrath of God, which maketh us miserable; and nothing can fully

comfort us if God be apprehended as an enemy, or not fully reconciled to us. Now 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself,' 2 Cor. v. 19. There was enmity stopped; God in our nature suffering for us, dying for us, and paying a full ransom for our sins; so that now all true believers may draw nigh to him as a reconciled God; for Christ hath merited favour for all those who come to God by him.

(4.) By believing in Christ as mediator we may be assured of his purchase of glory for us, which is the great cordial against all trouble whatsoever: 1 Thes. v. 9, 10, 'For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.' He biddeth them 'comfort one another with these words,' ver. 18. When a great judgment is a-coming upon men because of their sins, a believer is affliction-proof, because he hath secured his eternal interests by Christ. Here our Lord Jesus telleth them he was going to heaven to prepare a place for them. Whilst we flatter ourselves with temporal hopes, we lie open to a delusion and a disappointment. If we are kept alive, if we stand in the judgment, whether we sleep or wake, day and night, here is our comfort; other things must be left to God's will.

Use. Direction what to do in a time of troubles and dangers.

1. Hope of exemption from the trial is not that which Christ prescribeth, but minding of higher things. We are poor creatures, tainted with carnal self-love, and governed by fancy and appetite, and place all our hopes and happiness in having our supplies and supports under the view of sense, and in being free from trials. Now Christ referreth not to sense, which would gratify this humour, but to faith; 'Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me.' We love ourselves more than God, and the ease of the body more than the welfare of our souls, and the world more than heaven, and our temporal pleasure and contentment more than our spiritual and eternal benefit; we would have our consolation here. No; Christ referreth us to another cure, not to seek the ease of the flesh, but the sure repose of the soul; he referreth to the objects of faith, not the delights of sense. Spiritual peace is the best counter-balance for worldly trouble and bitterness: John xvi. 33, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good comfort, I have overcome the world.'

2. Those higher things which we should most regard are chiefly reconciliation with God and assured expectations of the heavenly rest. These are the two grand comforts which Christ insists upon in the sermon which ensueth the text. If we be reconciled to God, and have the pledge of it, the Spirit of God to dwell in us, and to sanctify and comfort us when dejected, it is enough: 'I will send the comforter,' ver. 26; and 'I am going to prepare a place for you,' ver. 2. These are Christ's two comforts. It doth not become a christian to be dejected in his troubles, but he must be sure his comforts come from spiritual grounds, from 'God's love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost,' Rom. v. 5, and from the hopes of heaven: Luke xii. 32, 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' These are God's comforts, and these give joy in tribulation.

3. There is no having these things till we have chosen God for our God and everlasting portion, and do make use of Christ as mediator. I put it into these notions, because the faith spoken of in the text is not a speculative assent, but a practical belief, and that lieth in a choice of God as our everlasting portion and happiness, and a coming to God by Christ: Heb. vii. 25, 'He is able also to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.' The first step which the soul taketh towards heaven is the making God our chief good and last end; this goeth before faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, for faith in Jesus Christ as mediator is but subordinate hereunto, as the means leading to our chief end. These two acts are the abridgement of the gospel: Acts xx. 21, 'Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.' Our act towards God is called repentance, because we have deviated from our happiness; we have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and till we grow wise, and change our course, we shall never return to it. Repentance is a considering of our ways after we had gone wrong, and so run ourselves into ruin and mischief. The second act is faith, because the things we believe are above nature. Jesus Christ's whole undertaking, birth, death, resurrection, ascension, the promises of the gospel, are above nature. God, and our duty to him, are in a great measure evident by natural light. It is supposed in the text men will easily believe in God; it is required that they believe in Christ; let us make use of him as the only means of our recovery, by his merit and efficacy reconciling us to God, and changing our hearts, reconciling us to God's grace, and restoring his image.

4. The advantages we have by God and Christ must be often thought of, for a serious consideration is the great help of faith: Heb. iii. 1, 'Consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.' Our knowledge is not operative but by lively and active thoughts: Heb. xii. 2, 'Looking unto Jesus.' God worketh by our thoughts: Ps. cxliv. 15, 'Happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' As under the law they were to consider their happiness: Deut. iv. 7, 'For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?' So are we to consider of the great privileges of the gospel, God reconciled, and pardon and life bestowed on us in and through Christ.

SERMONS UPON LUKE XII. 48.

SERMON I.

For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of them will they ask the more.—LUKE xii. 48.

THESE words are rendered as a reason why those servants that know their master's will are beaten with more stripes than those that knew it not, because they did not improve their advantages. And Christ pleadeth the equity of it from the custom of men, expressed in their common proverbs or sentences, that go from hand to hand among the people. A beneficiary that hath received much from his benefactor is obliged to a greater gratitude. A factor that hath his master's estate in his hands must make a return according to the degree of the trust. These things being evident by the light of nature, and granted among all men, our Lord accommodateth them to his purpose, which is to show God's proceedings with men are according to the degree of their advantages, 'For unto whomsoever,' &c.

In the words observe four things—

1. A double conveyance of benefits to us. Whatever a man receiveth, it is either given as a gift or committed as a talent. For, first, he saith, 'To whomsoever much is given;' and presently, 'To whomsoever men have committed much.'

2. These things are not given to all in the same measure; there is a difference in the distribution; some have 'much,' others have 'little.'

3. Whether men have received much or little, it is all in reference to an account; this is signified in the words, 'required,' 'asked.'

4. Answerable to their mercies shall their account be; much for much, and little for little. To whom anything is given, of him something shall be required and asked; but to whom 'much is given' and 'committed,' of him shall they 'ask the more;' not more than is committed, but more than is required and asked of another; as where the soil is better and more tilled, we look for the better crop, and we expect that he should come sooner that rideth on horseback than he that goeth on foot. These are the points.

Doct. 1. That what we have received from God is both a gift and a trust. *Datum* and *commendatum* differ. A thing may be given as a gift that is not committed as a talent; as money given to a beggar, and an estate put into the hands of a factor.

1. There is some difference in the benefits themselves. There are *dona sanctificantia et administrantia*, gifts for sanctification, and gifts for ministry. The one are given us for our own good, the other for the profit of others. Gifts are for the body or community in which we live, saving graces for the salvation of the person that hath them. The one sort serve to make us useful to men, the other to make us acceptable to God. A carnal man may come behind in no gift. As we use stamps of iron to leave an impress upon pieces of silver and gold, so God may make use of their gifts who shall perish for ever to form Christ in his own children; for these are given us indeed, but for the good of our brethren. But sanctifying graces are given *nobis et nobis*,[1] both to us and for us; not only to do good to others, but for the saving of our own souls; such as saving-knowledge, faith, hope, love of God, &c. Now there being such a difference in the things themselves, well might our Lord use these two words, 'given,' 'committed.' But—

2. Here it noteth rather the double conveyance of these benefits. They are given, for they are *dona Dei*, the gifts of God; and they are *talent a commendat a nobis*, talents committed to our trust. The giving noteth grace in the giver, which is God; and the committing a charge in the receiver. As they are given, they call for thankfulness; but as they are committed, for faithfulness; both must be regarded by us.

I. As they are gifts flowing from the mere grace of God; for it is not said, From him that hath much, but, To whomsoever much is given. The conveyance is by deed of gift, or free and liberal donation. They are *a Deo*, from God as the author; for 'every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,' James i. 27. And they are *ex dono*, for the manner; for what more free than gift? and what hath less of debt than grace? I will prove it thus—

There is a difference between men and men; it must come about some way or other. Now, that anything should come to us, either it must be—

1. *Ex debito*, as a due debt to our natures; then all would be alike happy and alike gifted and graced. But by nature all are equal; they have the same common nature and the same common misery. All have one Maker. Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? If there were two principles, a good and an evil God, and you made by the good and they by the evil God, as the Marcionites dreamed, then it were another matter; but that is a blasphemous error. For they differ or agree; if they differ, which of them is stronger, that he could impede and hinder the other? For agree they cannot, as Origen reasoned against them. No; we were all made by the same God, and he made us all of the same matter, the first man out of the dust of the ground, and for the rest of the world, the apostle telleth us, Acts xvii. 26, 'He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth.' All their parts, essential properties, and faculties are the same. They are all men endowed with

[1] Qu. '*nobis et pro nobis*'?—Ed.

reason, have an immortal soul; and for the body, 'our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren,' Neh. v. 5. Yea, they are all involved in the same common misery; all sinners, all children of wrath, and guilty of eternal damnation. Now there being such a parity and equality in misery, what can be due to our nature? The apostle useth this argument, Rom. iii. 22, 23, 'The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' That righteousness which God freely giveth by Christ must save all, for there is no difference between one and another. Though there may be a diversity of states in the world, yet that doth not take away identity of nature. Others are reasonable creatures as well as we, and we are sinners as well as they. If God doth bestow any common and saving gifts upon any, it is merely of his free bounty.

2. Or else it must be *ex pretio*, by way of purchase. But we have nothing to pay, for all is God's already. There is indeed a price given to purchase all necessary grace for us; but not by us, but by Christ, 'who gave himself a ransom for all,' 1 Tim. ii. 6, to redeem us to God.

3. Or *ex merito*, by way of merit or great desert on our parts. But a creature can merit nothing of his Creator: Rom. xi. 35, 'Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?' God is debtor to no man. The fountain oweth nothing to the stream, but the stream all to the fountain. Nor doth the sun owe anything to its beams, but the beams owe their all to the sun. It remaineth then that it must be *ex dono*, by way of gift, free gift. There is no cause in the creature why God should make this difference, no inherent worth to move him so to do; all is of free donation.

Use. This showeth—(1.) Whom to thank; (2.) Where to seek any good gift or grace that we stand in need of.

1. Whom to thank. Whatever excellency you have, or however you are dignified from others, are not all these things the free gifts of God? And should you boast of that which is God's free gift, and of which you are but receivers: 1 Cor. iv 7, 'Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?' The apostle intimateth there that to give is a blessed thing, but to receive is an humbling thing. Wilt thou glory of that which never could be thine unless it had been bestowed upon thee by the singular grace and mere favour of another? The glory belongeth not to the party receiving, but to the person giving. Therefore we should not rob God of his glory, and sacrifice to our own net and drag. As we have nothing but from God, so we should have nothing but for God. All the gifts you have you receive from him, and not from yourselves; and therefore you must use them for him, and not for yourselves.

[1.] Do you differ in health, strength, beauty? it is from God. He might have stamped the deformity of our souls upon our bodies, and we might all come into the world blind and maimed, with crooked bodies, distorted limbs, that the shape of our bodies might discover the depravation of our souls. If it be not so, give God the praise, and pity others. We read, John ix. 1-3, 'As Jesus passed by, he saw a man that was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying,

Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God might be made manifest in him.' We are not to make a perverse judgment, or censure others, but to admire the secret wisdom of God, and bless him if he hath given you a better constitution and a body fit for work and service.

[2.] Do you differ in the endowments of the mind, in a quick wit, clear understanding, solid judgment, and the vivacity of natural parts, whilst others are more heavy and blockish? Who must have the glory of this, God or you? Job xxxii. 8, 'There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.' You are to help the weaker, and glorify God that you have a more acute discerning, otherwise your understanding may undo you, and your unsanctified wit may be your eternal ruin, as many wit themselves into hell.

[3.] Is it that you flow in wealth and honour, and have great power and interest? Will you therefore vaunt yourselves unseemly, and despise and oppress the poor? There are three proverbs, Prov. xiv. 31, 'He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker,' Prov. xvii. 5; 'Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker;' and again, Prov. xxii. 2, 'The rich and the poor meet together, the Lord is the Maker of them all;' that is, they live one among another, and have need of one another. Now God, that forbiddeth the poor to envy the rich, doth forbid the rich to despise the poor, for otherwise they dishonour God. This injury and contempt is to despise the wisdom of God, who would have some low and poor, others dignified with honour and estate. God hath laid this burden upon them. The heathens, that acknowledged a God and a providence, said, *εἰ τὶς τῆς φύσεως ἁμαρτήματα*, &c.—He that upbraided another with the defects of nature, did not upbraid the person so much as nature itself. So we that own a particular providence may know that to upbraid any man with his poverty, is to upbraid God who hath laid this burden upon them. We have cause to give thanks that we are not as they, that our Maker hath put a difference; when they labour hard for the supplies of life, they come to us more plentifully and easily.

[4.] But chiefly is this difference to be understood with respect to spiritual things; that we have the means of grace, and are called to the knowledge of the truth, while others are left to their own ways, sitting in the shadow of death. Surely it is a great favour that we are not put to spell God out of the dark book of the creatures, that we are not put to learn the majesty of God from those natural apostles the sun and the moon, nor his goodness from showers of rain and fruitful seasons. But shall not God have the thanks and praise: Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, 'He showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.' There is a kind of election and reprobation within the sphere of nature, or the dispensation of external means as they are ordered by God's providence. The benefit of scriptures and ordinances is a great benefit. How much hath God done for us above many others? Our lot might have fallen in places of the greatest idolatry and antichristian barbarism, where we might have sucked in prejudices against the gospel with our milk; but to

have a standing there where salvation is usually dispensed is a great mercy.

[5.] Is it that you have many common gifts and graces which are denied to others? Some have great gifts for the good of the body mystical. Common christians have common gifts, some have what others have not: Heb. vi. 4–6, 'For it is impossible for those who were once 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, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance,' &c., compared with ver. 9, 'But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.' To be nearer the kingdom of heaven is an advantage, and to have some common work of the Spirit, as compunction: 'After I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh,' Jer. xxxi. 19. Awakening grace: Eph. iv. 14, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,' 2 Tim. ii. 16, 'That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.' God's reproof: Prov. i. 23, 'Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you;' Job xxxvi. 10, 'He openeth also their ears to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.' God sanctifieth providences to make us serious: Ps. xciv. 12, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, and teachest him out of thy law.'

[6.] Is it that you are a christian, not by outward profession, but spiritual acquaintance with God? Gal. i. 15, 'It pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me.' There is a revealing Christ to us, and a revealing in us, that you are not carnal, obstinate, unbelieving, as others, but 'chosen out of the world,' John xv. 19, and 1 John v. 19, 'We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness;' that we are separated from the world, and called to the communion of God in Christ.

[7.] Is it that you are enabled in this estate to do anything that concerneth the glory of God? The Romans were wont to cast garlands into their fountains; so we must ascribe all to God: 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'By the grace of God I am what I am;' Luke xix. 16, 'Thy pound hath gained ten pounds.' You must not rob God, and put the crown on your own head. No; all must be laid at his feet: Rev. iv. 10, 'The four-and-twenty elders fell down before him that sat on the throne, and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.' They have their crowns from him, and hold them of him, and their only design is to improve them for him.

[8.] That among the serious worshippers of God there is any difference between you and others, either in gifts or graces, or knowledge of his will: John xiv. 22, 'Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?' That you are not lost in the crowd and throng; that God should call you out to any eminency of service. There is great difference among the people of God in degrees of grace. All barks that sail to heaven, do not draw alike depth.

I have instanced in all this, because this concerneth the people of God more than others, to keep them free from boasting. Pride in

others feedeth upon empty shadows, but in God's people on the best things, such as spiritual gifts, graces, privileges, singular mercies, and deliverances. Paul's abundance of revelations was ready to puff him up: 2 Cor. xii. 7, 'And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.' Hezekiah had received a remarkable deliverance: 2 Chron. xxxii. 24, 25, 'In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the Lord; and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign. But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him, but his heart was lifted up,' &c. And it is in them most unnatural to be proud of that which is given to destroy pride, for grace is given to humble us. They are common, not sanctifying and saving gifts that puff up: 1 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 'Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth: and if any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.' Pompous gifts are of a more swelling nature than spiritual grace, so that you bring a suspicion on your gifts and graces if you are proud of them; that they are common, not sanctifying saving gifts. Besides the danger, you take the course to provoke God to bereave you of his gifts, when you are puffed up with what should be used for the glory of God. If we should do so, he provideth a sharp cure; witness Paul's 'thorn in the flesh,' 2 Cor xii. 7.

2. Where to seek gifts and graces that are needful: 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God,' James i. 5. But then you must use means as well as pray. They that cry for knowledge and understanding must also dig for her as for hid treasure: Prov. ii. 3–5, 'If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; thou shalt then understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.'

II. These things are entrusted as well as given; for the word *committed* is used. It is given us as an estate to trade with. Here is not only the word ἐδόδη, 'given,' but παρέθεντο, 'committed.' That which we have is not only a matter of grace and favour, but a matter of charge and trust; a *depositum*, something deposited with us, that we must not only be chary of them, that our gifts be not lost by luxury, ease, and idleness, but we must be faithful in the use of them, that God may have glory, others benefit, and we comfort and peace for the present, and everlasting life for the future. All is an estate in trust; not for enjoyment barely, but for use and service. I will prove it—

1. From the nature of the gifts. They are not given us for themselves, but for some other thing. I confess they are of a various nature, and it is hard to bring them under one denomination. Reason, health, strength, time, parts, interests, power, authority, wealth, providences, such as afflictions, prosperity, ordinances, means of grace, yea, grace itself; all these are πρὸς ἀλλὸ not simply given us for their own sakes, but some other thing.

Reason, or such a life as is light: John i. 4, 'In him was life, and the life was the light of men.' Why was it given us but that we might have a mind to know God and an heart to love him? For therefore

doth God teach us more than the beasts of the field. It was a good saying of Epictetus, *Si essem luscinia, canerem ut luscinia*—If I were a nightingale, I would sing as a nightingale, &c. But alas! how often do men use their wit against God rather than for him!

So for strength and time. Is it given us only to be employed in the service of sin, or for the service of God in our generation? Is it to be strong to serve our lusts, or to have time to grow monsters in wickedness? No; we have strength and time to glorify God: Rom. vi. 13, 'Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.'

So for interests, honour, and power, and wealth. Is this given us to set up for ourselves? No, but to be factors and agents for God, to glorify him here in the world: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.' Every man should be what he is for God.

So for providences. Take the comfortable part of them, not afflictions, but deliverances. Afflictions are sent because we deny God his right: Hosea ii. 8, 9, 'For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal; therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool, and my flax given to cover her nakedness.' But for deliverances, why are we delivered, and enjoy so much of comfort, peace, and ease from trouble, to satisfy our lusts or to glorify God? They are branded as a wicked people that said, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations,' Jer. vii. 10. Because they were free and out of danger, therefore they might harden themselves in sin, and live in a forgetfulness of God.

So for ordinances and means of grace, which are advantages and opportunities put into our hands of being more good ourselves, and doing more good to others: Prov. xvii. 16, 'Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?' That is, why is the opportunity given, when men have no heart to solid wisdom?

So for grace itself. The very nature of it showeth it is a trust: Luke xvi. 11, 'If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?' To be trusted with an estate is not so great a trust as to be trusted with grace. This is a gift more precious, and should not lie idle. God trusts ordinary men with an estate, but his people with grace. When we suspect a vessel is leaky, we fill it with water before we fill it with wine. God expecteth more honour from new creatures than he doth from all the world besides, and that they should do more good in their places. This is the most precious gift, yet given in order to some other thing; it is made for God, that we should glorify him, and be capable of enjoying him to all eternity.

2. This is the end of the distribution. Wherefore hath God given these talents in any eminent degree, or in such variety to men, but that

they should trade with them, and be more fitted for his service? 1 Cor. xii. 7, 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.' There is indeed a threefold end of all our trading—the glorifying of God, the saving of our own souls, and the good of others; for, in a moral consideration, there are but three beings, God, neighbour, self.

The glory of God must be regarded in the first place, and with it is connected the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. For all the gifts that we have are for the master's use; and therefore, if we do not principally mind the glory of God and the advancement of Christ's kingdom, we pervert the gifts we have received. Yet this is rare in a self-loving world: Phil. ii. 21, 'All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.'

The saving of our souls must be regarded next to the glory of God; for next to God, man is to love himself; and in himself first his better part. The graces of sanctification, though profitable for others, yet are chiefly intended for the good of him that hath them; and the graces of edification, though profitable for the owner, yet are principally intended for the good of others. A man that hath sanctifying grace doth good to others with it; that is *utilitas emergens*, not *finis proprius*. It is not the direct end for which these graces are given, but other subservient gifts are for the good of the body.

Lastly, The good of others, their edification and benefit; for God hath scattered his gifts, that every part may supply somewhat for the good of the whole, as every member of the body hath its several use, by which the whole body receiveth benefit: Rom. xii. 4, 5, 'For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.'

Well, then, let us look to the end of the distribution. A man hath not wealth for himself, nor parts for himself, nor gifts for himself, to promote his own ends, but to bring in souls to God; not for pomp, but use. All have their proper and distinct offices, some to serve, others to rule; some to counsel, others to execute. Every one have their proper but distinct use; for God maketh nothing in vain, nor was the world appointed to be a hive for drones and idle ones. Wherefore hath God given some great wealth and power but, as the great veins supply the lesser with blood, that they might be more publicly useful? Wherefore hath he given ordinances, but that we may get grace by them, and save our own souls? They are represented sometimes as duties, they being not a matter arbitrary, but a part of the homage we owe to God; sometimes as privileges that we may not look upon them as a burdensome task; sometimes as means of our growth and improvement, that we may not rest in the work wrought; sometimes as talents for which we must give an account, to quicken our earnest diligence. Wherefore hath God given gifts, but that we may show forth his praise and edify others? Yea, wherefore hath he given grace itself, but that we might be both obliged and fitted to glorify him in the world? Eph. i. 12, 'That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.' They are set up as lights in the world to shine to others.

3. There is a charge expressly given with the distribution of the

talents: Luke xix. 13, 'And he called his ten servants and delivered them ten pounds, and said to them, Occupy, till I come.' They were to employ their industry to improve it to the greatest advantage of bringing in an increase to God. This charge is given by our proper and rightful Lord and it is committed to servants, not to strangers and freemen, who are at their own dispose, but to servants who are at the the command of their Lord, who hath made us and bought us. And this trust is accepted by covenant of all that profess themselves to be his servants; not implicit, as there may be between the devil and his agents; but explicit and formal, that we will be wholly his and for him. And we are accountable for the profession if we do not mind the use: for a man that hath an estate made over to him in trust and for certain uses expressed in the conveyance, hath indeed no estate therein at all, but with respect to those uses. Certain it is that we have the comfort more in the use than the possession. The solid comfort of wealth, power, and honour is never seen till we employ it for God. It is not tasted so much when you are gorgeously attired, and your tables are plentifully furnished, and when you glut yourselves with all manner of fleshly delights, as in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, relieving the oppressed. So for ordinances, the worth of them is known by use and improvement; not when we resort to them for custom and fashion's sake, but when we taste that the Lord is gracious, 1 Peter ii. 3. So the graces of the Spirit are most sweet when they do not lie idle; then we feel the comfort of them: John xv. 11, 'These things have I spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.'

Use. Let us improve our trust, and rouse up ourselves, and say, What honour hath God by my wealth, power, honour, greatness? what protection to his cause? what relief to his people? To this end consider—

1. What is your business in the world. Our Lord Jesus said, 'To this end I was born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth,' John xviii. 37. Every one is sent into the world for some end, for God would not make a creature in vain. For what end did you come into the world, but to glorify God in your place and calling? What part in the world would God have me to act? Most men are ready to go out of the world before they ask for what purpose they came hither.

2. Every one is trading for somebody, either for God, or for the devil and the flesh; either regarding his master's glory, or his own carnal satisfaction: 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.'

3. Consider how much you are entrusted with. Look within you, without you, round about you, and see how much you have to account for. For natural advantages, time, wealth, honour, estate: 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.' For ordinances: Mat. xi. 23, 'And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained till this day.' Where the gospel is most clearly preached, that place and

people is most clearly exalted and made nearest to heaven; but yet if these be not improved, they bring you into the deeper state of condemnation. Persons honoured and favoured by God with spiritual advantages, shall be brought as low as they were formerly advanced. Yea, for grace itself. You are to be accountable, not only for corn and wine and oil, but for the saving gifts of the Spirit. *Τι περισσὸν*, 'What do ye more than others?' Mat. v. 47. You are always to glorify his name, admire his grace, and live answerably to his love, and bring him into request among all about you.

4. Talents are increased the more they are employed, and we double our gifts by the faithful use of them; as the widow's oil increased in the spending, and the loaves in Christ's miracle were multiplied in being divided, and the right arm, by being much used, is bigger and fuller of spirits than the left. Grace groweth by exercise, but decayeth by disuse. Gifts, if they be not employed, are lost. How many poor withered christians are we acquainted with that are blasted, and have suffered a shrewd loss, by slacking their zeal, and want of diligent exercise! 'Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have,' Luke viii. 18. To *have* is to use or employ our present stock.

5. We must give an account to God. We must not think that when God hath given or committed anything to us, he will not look after it any more. No; he will call us to an account what honour he hath by us, as magistrates, ministers, or masters of families. Beasts are not called to an account, for they have no reason and conscience; but man is. God will ask, What you have done with your time, strength, and estate? An ambassador that is sent abroad to serve his king and country, if he could return no other account of his negotiation but that he had spent so much of his time in visiting the court ladies, and so much again in play, in cards, or dice, that he could not mind the employment he was sent about, would this satisfy the king that sent him? Or if a factor that is sent to a mart or fair should say that he stayed so long guzzling at the next alehouse, that the time was over ere he could part with his companions, and riotously wasted the money that he was to employ in traffic: these are odd things as they are represented to your imagination. Now consider how little better answer you can make to God, when he shall require and ask his own of you.

6. Consider what a sad thing it is to have gifts only to leave us without excuse. As the gentiles had the light of nature: 'God left not himself *ἀμάρτυρον*, without witness among them,' Acts xiv. 17. But what was the issue? 'The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse,' Rom. i. 20. God is not *ἀμάρτυρος*, without a witness, and they are *ἀναπολογητοι* without excuse; they have not the excuse of faultless ones. To others the word is preached *εἰς μάρτυριον*, for a witness to them: Mat. xxiv. 14, 'The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations.' But it is, Mark xiii. 9, 'For a testimony against them.' And the Lord would have Ezekiel preach, 'That they might know that a prophet

hath been amongst them,' Ezek. ii. 5. So that all the fruit is, God is clear when he judgeth, but they have no saving benefit by all this.

7. That in improving what is committed to our trust, our returns must carry proportion with our receipts: Mat. xxv. 16, 17, 'He that had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made them other five talents; and likewise he that received two, he also gained other two.' God will not accept of every rendering. For the mercies of common providence, it is said, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, he rendered something, but 'not according to the benefit done unto him.' So for the mercies of his covenant; where he pardoneth much, he expecteth to be loved much: Luke vii. 47, 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.' So for sanctification; he expecteth more from them to whom he hath given more grace. Paul saith, 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'I laboured more abundantly than they all.' So for all other talents, ordinances, and means of knowledge. God expecteth more from them to whom they are vouchsafed, than from another people; as is evident in his judgments: 'You only have I known of all the nations of the earth, therefore will I punish you for your iniquities.' The valley of vision had the sorest burden, Isa. xxii. 1. Yea, it is more easy to be saved for some than others. Righteousness consists in a proportion, which holdeth good both in our duty and God's judgments. But of this hereafter.

8. Consider how many encouragements God's stewards have to be faithful.

[1.] His right is clear, as appeareth by this double plain argument. God doth dispose of these gifts at his own pleasure by his providence, and by his laws he hath regulated the use of them, that thus and thus we shall employ them.

[2.] God hath given a liberal allowance to every steward which he employeth. He is well provided for; for he is an instrument of God's providence, first to provide for himself, and for his own: 1 Tim. v. 8, 'But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.'

[3.] Besides the gifts we are entrusted withal, there is co-operating grace to help us to be faithful: Phil. ii. 13, 'He worketh in us, both to will and to do;' else we should swallow the gift, and little mind the use: Col. i. 29, 'Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.'

[4.] There is an eternal reward to the faithful: Mat. xxv. 23, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' All his servants shall be highly dignified, as those whom Christ delighteth to honour.

SERMON II.

For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of them will they ask the more.—LUKE. xii. 48.

DOCT. 2. These gifts are not given to all in the same measure; for in the text there is intimated a difference in the distribution; some have 'much,' others have 'little.'

This is a thing often inculcated in scripture, as worthy to be taken notice of, and seriously improved by us. Therefore I shall give you—(1.) Some observations concerning it; (2.) The reasons of it; (3.) The uses.

I. Observations.

1. That every one hath some gift or other to be improved for God; some relation, some opportunity and advantage, whereby he may glorify his Father which is in heaven, honour the gospel, and be useful to others. In the parable of the talents, one had five talents, another two, another one; he that had least had one, Mat. xxv. 15. Some have public offices, and move in a higher sphere. Others are in a private condition, where they may glorify God as masters or as servants, as parents or children, husbands or wives, by performing the duty of their places. Fidelity in the meanest piece of service is acceptable to God, and tendeth to his glory and honour: 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.' He taketh notice of the poor bond-servant, who serveth God in his calling as well as of the freemen and masters; for God looketh not to the splendour and greatness of the work, but the honesty and sincerity of the doer, how mean soever he be. And this tendeth to God's honour: Titus ii. 10, 'Showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.' Religion is commended and well spoken of by means of the good carriage of a poor servant. *Dent imperatores tales, tales exactores fisci, &c.* It is very notable that every one offered to the use of the tabernacle in Moses' time, gold, or silver, or brass, or chittim wood, or goats-hair, or badgers skins; some that which was more expensive, others that which was more cheap and common, but every one according to his several ability. So when Christ went to Jerusalem, some strewed the way with garments, others cast down branches; some cried, Hosannah; that was all they could do. The meanest service hath its use, and is not without a reward: Mat. x. 41, 42, 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward;' and whosoever shall give to one of these little ones a cup of cold water, only in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' That is, he that doth support and enable a prophet to do the work of him that sent him, shall receive the same reward that he should, if he had been sent to prophesy; yea, the same as if he had received him that sent him, even Christ that sent the apostles, or God that sent Christ: 'For

he that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me,' ver. 40. And for the other branch, 'He that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward;' an holy man sent to plant holiness among them, or recommend holiness to them by his doctrine or practice, shall receive the benediction of a righteous man; the having a righteous man in one's house maketh you partake in his blessing. Nay, a cup of cold water given to another, because he is a disciple of Christ, that is, the least service or good turn done to a member of Christ, shall not be forgotten; as the least injury is taken notice of, as 'the putting forth of the finger,' by way of mocking, Isa. lviii. 9. The Lord would have none of those upbraidings.

So that I observe two things here. One is the difference. To enable a prophet is more than to entertain a righteous man; to entertain a righteous man is more than a slight good turn. The other is, that the smallness or meanness of the benefit whereby any of Christ's followers are helped and refreshed shall not diminish Christ's estimation of the man's good affection.

2. That there is great diversity in the talents themselves. Christ doth not give all to all, nor to all alike. The kinds of gifts are various; some are more earthly and bodily, as strength, wealth, and honour; these are gifts, and to be employed for God, bodily strength for the labours of the gospel: 'As God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord,' 1 Chron. xv. 26, by discharging bodily lassitude and weakness. So for the defence of his church. He giveth sometimes notable strength and valour to exercise it, as to Sampson, and David's worthies or mighty men, 1 Chron. xi. 10. Wealth, that we may 'honour God with our substance,' Prov. iii. 9, and 'make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,' Luke xvi. 9, and occasion others to bless God for us. So for honour and dignity, that we may protect and shelter God's people. As it is taken notice that Christ's grave was with the rich and honourable, Isa. liii. 9, meaning Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, John xix. 38, 39; these eminent men thought it their duty to own Christ in his lowest abasement. So it is taken notice of, Acts xvii. 4, 'A great multitude of the Greeks believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the chief women not a few.' So would God put some worldly authority and respect upon his gospel, lest it should seem only a frenzy of the people. But others are of a more spiritual nature, as gifts of the mind, wisdom, knowledge, faith, love, hope. With these especially God expecteth to be glorified; for when he hath given us all things necessary to life and godliness, he trusteth his honour in our hands, that we may do some worthy thing for him in the world, and quit ourselves above the ordinary rate of mankind, either for the glory of God, or the benefit of others.

Now among these gifts some are common, as knowledge, utterance, &c.; others saving, and 'such as do accompany salvation,' Heb. vi. 9, as faith and love, &c.

The common gifts are several: 'For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit,' 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9. Some are able to explain

truth soundly, others to apply it closely; some have the gift of prayer and utterance, others are good to inform the judgment; some to convince gainsayers, others to stir up lively affections. It was observed in the three ministers of Geneva, *Vireto nemo docuit dulcius, Farello nemo tenuit fortius, nemo doctius locutus est Calvino*—No man taught more sweetly than Viretus, no man held an argument more strongly than Farellus, no man spoke more learnedly than Calvin. Among hearers, some have more wisdom, some more knowledge, some more affection. Yea, in the penmen of scripture you may observe a variety: John is sublime and seraphical, Paul rational and argumentative, Peter writeth in a more easy, fluent, milky way. So in the Old Testament, Isaiah more court-like and lofty, Jeremiah more priestly and gravely, &c. Every one hath his different character and way of writing.

Among the saving graces you may observe a diversity, though all have all in some measure; for the new creature must not be maimed, nor in any part wanting; yet some are more eminent for one grace, some for another, as Abraham for faith, Job for patience, Moses for meekness, Timothy for temperance. And grace itself worketh according to the diversity of tempers; some are modest and mild, others bold and zealous; some are mourning for sin, others are wrapt up in the admiration of the grace of God in Jesus Christ; some are exemplary for strictness and weanedness from the delights of the animal life, others are industrious in service. So true is that of the apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 7, 'Every one hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that;' that is, some have this, others that special excellency, whereby to glorify God. And again, Rom. xii. 6, 'Having gifts differing according to the grace that is given unto us.'

3. They are not given to all in a like measure; some have more, others have less. This is also spoken in scripture: Eph. iv. 7, 'To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ;' Rom. xii. 3, 'As God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.' And once more: Eph. iv. 16, 'According to the effectual working in the measure of every part.' The measure of Christ respects the author, the measure of faith the benefit of the receiver, the measure of a part our office in the body. All have their peculiar function, according to their several designations; and all this, that every man may be doing according to his best capacity. With respect to this variety, some are weak, some are strong, Rom. xiv. 1; some have little, and some have great faith; some are fathers, some young men, some babes in Christ, 1 John ii. 13, 14. And our Lord in his charge to Peter concerning his pastoral office distinguisheth between *ἀρνία*, his little lambs, and *πρόβατα*, his sheep: John xxi. 15, 16, 'Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.' This is very suitable to the notion of a body, to which the community of christians is often resembled. For as in the natural body, all members are not of equal growth and bigness, so it is in the mystical body of Christ; there is a different measure in each part, that there may be a meet symmetry in the whole. Besides, all members have not a like office, therefore God's Spirit giveth not all a like measure of knowledge and other gifts. If all were of equal strength for faith, wisdom, and other graces, the matter and occasion of sundry principal duties would be taken away; there would be no need that

one christian should edify another, bear with one another, avoid the offence of another, give help to another, restore another.

Well, then, let us observe this measure; for plainly there is a threefold difference—

[1.] In the degree of the gifts; some have more means, some have more common grace, knowing their Master's will, which is a great talent and obligation; some have greater obligations, and therefore greater condemnation if they answer it not: John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.'

[2.] In opportunity: Phil. iv. 10, 'Ye lacked opportunity.' Certainly the lack or want of opportunity of doing good, not through our default, doth excuse or justify the forbearance of it. But when we have it, we should take hold of it: 1 Cor. xvi. 9, 'A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.' The door opened noteth opportunity; the resistance of adversaries is not a discouragement, but maketh it more necessary not to suffer it to be shut again. Now all have not like opportunity.

[3.] In degree of success. It is ordered as God pleaseth; some have more, some have less: Acts xvii. 34, 'Howbeit, certain men clave to him, and believed.' Seldom doth God light a candle but he hath some lost groat to seek; yet sometimes few are gathered, for God is debtor to none.

II. The reasons.

1. To show the free sovereignty of God, who may do with his own as it pleaseth him. And he will be known to be the supreme Lord in the distribution of his gifts and graces: 1 Cor. xii. 11, 'All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.' As for graces: Mat. xi. 26, 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' And as for gifts, God is arbitrary in his gifts, but not in his judgments. Gifts are not given as we will, but as God willeth. The Spirit is compared to wind, not only for his force but his liberty: John iii. 8, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' God doth not only dispense riches and honours as he pleaseth, and common gifts of knowledge and utterance, but saving graces. To some they are not given; and where they are given, to some it is in a larger, to others in a more scanty measure.

2. These things are given by Christ in a different proportion, that the world may know that all fulness is only in himself: Col. i. 19, 'It pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell.' The greatest gifts and graces which God bestoweth on any is far below that fulness which is in Christ. We have the Spirit by measure, but Christ without measure: John iii. 34, 'For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.' He giveth to none so much but still there is somewhat wanting; and they who have received most are capable of receiving more. In him there is not only *plenitudo sufficientiæ* but *redundantiæ*, a fulness of sufficiency, but of redundance; not only *plenitudo vasis*, but *fontis*, not only the fulness of the vessel, but of the fountain; and so a manifest difference between head and members.

3. To show his singular love, care, and providence for and towards the church. Such a body as that is needeth distinct offices, and because there is a diversity of employments and offices, which must not be confounded, therefore doth he enable his servants with needful gifts and graces: Rom. xii. 4, 'All members have not the same office;' some are designed for this function and use, and some for that. Now, as offices are divers, so are gifts and graces: Isa. liv. 11, 12, 'I will lay thy foundations with sapphires, I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.' The church is there compared to a beautiful palace and edifice. And mark, there is a diversity of employments, 'foundations, windows, gates, borders;' and there is a variety of gifts, expressed by the several kinds of jewels, 'sapphires, agates, carbuncles, and pleasant stones.'

4. God dispenseth his gifts variously, for the beauty, order, and comeliness of the whole universe of mankind. Variety is grateful; hills and valleys make the world more beautiful, so do the distinct orders and ranks of men; all eye or all belly is monstrous. Difference with proportion maketh comeliness, therefore one excelleth another, and several gifts and ranks of men there are for the more convenient proportion of the whole, as labour, service, counsel, wit, wealth, strength, &c. Without this variety it would be a lump rather than a body.

5. That every one in the sight of his own wants may be kept humble. When we are singular for any or many excellences, we are apt to grow proud and unsociable: 'The eye is apt to say to the hand, I have no need of thee; or the head to the feet, I have no need of you,' 1 Cor. xii. 21. Therefore, that we may have somewhat to commend us to the respects of others, and something to humble us, God hath scattered his gifts, that one should need another, that every one might have need of that gift of which he hath not the possession: 'As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God,' 1 Peter iv. 10.

6. That there might be no schism in the body, but the members of it may maintain mutual love and amity. Diversity of gifts was not intended to dissolve the bands of union, but to strengthen them rather. Therefore the apostle, when he had reckoned up the bands of union, he presently addeth, 'but to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ,' Eph. iv. 7. First he speaketh of what is one in all, then of what is not one in all, but diverse in every one. Every one hath his distinct excellency, to endear him to the rest. Diversity of gifts is an ordinary occasion of division and strife, of envy, pride, mutual disparagement, but in itself it is one of the strongest bands of union; whilst all in their way contribute to the good of the whole, and have the use of that excellency which they want themselves. Divers countries have divers commodities; one aboundeth in gold, another in spices, another with wine, wool, corn, flax, &c., to maintain a commerce between mankind; so here.

Use 1. To quicken us to improve our several talents for God, and be faithful according to that degree and place we sustain in the body.

2. Those that have the greatest gifts should not contemn those who have few or less. There is none but hath need of another. It is a base spirit that would shine alone, or set up one gift to the prejudice

of another: 'All are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas,' 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. *In veste varietas, sed scissura non sit.* Let us mutually help one another, and acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of God in all that we have, and be humble in what we want.

3. Let those that have few be content with the meanest gifts. You have no reason to repine at the giver. How little soever God hath given you, it is more than he owed you. If his distribution had been a matter of justice and debt, you might have said, Why has he not given to me as well as to another? But it is the act of a free Lord, and he may do with his own as it pleaseth him: Mat. xx. 15, 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is thine eye evil because mine is good?' And as you cannot repine against the giver, you should not envy the receivers. The accounts are easier, and the greatest dealers are not always the safest men. You that have received little shall account for little.

Doct. 3. That, whether we receive little or much, all is in reference to an account. That is intimated in the words *required, asked.*

Gifts are variously dispensed. Some have wit, others estate, others strength; some have offices, honour, authority; but all must be called to an account, and those that have any gifts must look to reckon for them. This requiring and asking is represented to us in scripture under the notion of certain records, rolls, or books kept between God and the creature, concerning what we have received and returned. Therefore I will prove—(1.) That there are books of account kept between God and the creature; (2.) That at the day of doom these books shall be opened; (3.) That all without exception shall be called to this reckoning; none so high as to be exempted from it, none so low as to be neglected in it; (4.) That the judgment shall pass upon all men according to the account then given.

1. That there are books of account kept between God and the creature; which is to be understood not properly but figuratively. Not properly, as if God, who seeth all things with one infinite act of understanding, did need books, as men for the help of their memories, or to confirm the truth and equity of his judgment by producing a record; but *ἀνθρωποπαθῶς*, after the manner of men, and for our better conception. Men use books, in which they write those things which they have given out upon trust, and of which they expect a return; and in allusion to this, because of God's exact and righteous judgment, the scripture speaketh as if our good and evil were all upon record. So Jer. xvii. 1, 'The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond.' The expression there is taken from characters cut or carved with iron and steel, or any strong tool, in marble, so as they cannot be defaced. So again, 'It is written before me,' Isa. lxv. 6. God did not forget or pass over, but observe and remember. Indeed there is a twofold book. The book of God's remembrance: Mal. iii. 16, 'A book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name;' whereby his notice is expressed. The sin that we commit, or the good that we do, doth not die with the action, as if no further memory of it should remain, but it is recorded. The book of our conscience: 'It is graven on the table of their hearts,' Jer. xvii. 1. It maketh a deep impression on their minds and memories,

as cannot easily be razed out. Nothing can escape the eye of the judge, and not easily the notice of conscience. Though one of the books be in our keeping, it is not easy to deface it, and blot it out. Now let us see what is written in these books.

[1.] What God doth for us, or to us; as opportunities of grace and mercy: 'These three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none,' Luke xiii. 7; John iv. 54, 'This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he came out of Judea into Galilee;' 2 Peter iii. 1, 'This second epistle write I to you.' *Tot convincor testibus, quo christianis sermonibus me monuerunt*—I have so many witnesses against me as I have heard sermons. So the same is true for deliverances: 'The Lord will set his hand again the second time, to recover the remnant of his people that shall be left,' Isa. xi. 11. So for motions of his Spirit: 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man,' Gen. vi. 3; it had done so long already. So for God's apparitions to Solomon: 1 Kings xi. 9, 'His heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice.' So Jer. xxv. 3, 'From the thirteenth year of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah, unto this very day (that is, the three-and-twentieth year), the word of the Lord hath come unto you, and I have spoken unto you, rising early, and speaking, but you have not hearkened.' God's expostulations in scripture, when he proceedeth to any particular judgment, are an instance of what he will do in the general judgment.

[2.] On the other side is written all the good and evil that we do. For good, the apostle speaketh of 'fruit abounding to their account,' Phil. iv. 17. The prophet showeth God taketh notice of our faithfulness, or owning God in an evil time: Mal. iii. 16, 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.' So of the conversion of any, be they never so few: Acts xvii. 34, 'Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed.' Kindness to his servants: Mat. x. 42, 'Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward;' 1 Kings xix. 18, 'Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.' On the other side injuries done to his people are recorded; he hath a bottle for their tears, a book for their sorrows: Ps. lvi. 8, 'Thou tellest my wanderings; put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?' So for all the sins we have committed: 'Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?' Deut. xxxii. 34. Nay, Job xiii. 27, 'Thou lookest narrowly unto all my paths, thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.' Every action leaveth a mark behind it. Nay, in the verse before, 'Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth;' as if God had taken account of his old sins. Many in this account shall hear of things long ago committed; their iniquities will find them out. If a man escape any remarkable judgment for one year or two, he thinketh all is forgotten. Ay! but these debts stand upon record against us till the book be cancelled or crossed. Thousands of vain thoughts, sinful actions, much

misspense of time, abuse of mercies, will then occur to our view, when our whole lives shall be set in order before us: Ps. l. 21, 'These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.' Now these are the accounts kept between God and us.

2. At the day of doom these books shall be opened: Rev. xx. 12, 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened.' God can forget nothing, and conscience shall be awakened to an exact review of all our ways. Security vanisheth, light is greater, judgment is nearer. Circumstances of conviction shall then be produced; the trial is to be open, the wicked are to be shamed, the righteous to be vindicated. God shall be justified when he judgeth: Ps. li. 4, 'That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.' Impenitent sinners are to be condemned for abusing the law of nature or despising the grace of the gospel: 2 Thes. i. 8, 'Taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

3. That all without exception shall be called to this reckoning; none so high as to be exempted from it, none so low as to be neglected in it: 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God,' Rev. xx. 12. They all stand on the same level. Magistrates must give an account of their trust, and so must meaner people: 1 Peter i. 17, 'If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work.' God is an impartial judge. Men are often biassed by the expectation of benefit, or terrified by the apprehension of danger. No person, no action can escape his judgment.

4. The judgment will pass upon all men according to the account then given. If we have been faithful and fruitful in improving God's talents, it shall go well with us in the judgment; if negligent and careless, it shall go ill: 'Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' Mat. xxv. 30. Though not persecuting, nor riotous, yet if unprofitable. The barren tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, as well as the naughty tree that bringeth forth bad fruit. God reckoneth with us now, but often doth not execute his threatening, or in the midst of judgment remembereth mercy. Then the doom is finally and irreversibly past, without hope of recovery, and there is no temperament of mercy at all to those that have lost their season.

Use. To reflect the light of these things on our hearts. Is our account ready? Most neglect or put off the thoughts of it. But do you take occasion hence to reckon with yourselves aforehand? See every day what you receive and what you return. Consider every day's mercies and every day's work. The profit of daily arraigning conscience is exceeding great.

1. It keepeth us sensible of our duty, which otherwise would be forgotten; heathens saw a necessity of this reckoning with respect to growth in moral virtue. Men would not easily commit evil, nor omit good, or perform it so coldly, if they did but say, as the town-clerk of Ephesus did to still the citizens, 'We are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar,' Acts xix. 40.

2. It would make us often to have recourse to grace, when we observe our sins, duties, mercies, comforts, and how the one aggravate the other. Surely we should every day make even with God, deprecate the strict judgment: Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' Get the books cancelled: Ps. li. 1, 'According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.' Augustus bought his guilt, who slept securely when he owed so great a debt. And this we must do daily: Mat. vi. 12, ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν, 'Forgive us our debts.'

3. It would make us more earnest to improve opportunities of receiving grace: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Isa. lv. 6, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near.'

4. More careful to improve our talents. We must give an account: Heb. xiii. 17, 'They watch for your souls as they that must give an account.' Use time, health, wealth, wit, authority, honour for God.

5. What watchfulness, diligence, faithfulness would this breed in us! James ii. 12, 'So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty;' 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.'

6. That we may be ready for the judgment, it concerneth us to begin betimes to mind this. This is the folly of men, that they put off their necessary work from time to time. The more of our lives is spent, the less is to come; the judgment is every hour nearer. The judge is at the door ready to judge; are we ready to be judged? None are ready to be judged but those that make even with God, and reckon with themselves often now. The saints do thus: 'Whose ox or ass have I taken?' 1 Sam. xii. 3. Paul: Acts xx. 26, 'I am pure from the blood of all men.' Our Lord Christ: John xvii. 4, 'I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.'

Doct. 4. Answerable to men's mercies shall their account be. Much for much, and little for little. For—

First, More shall be required of some than of others.

1. The more means, the more light and knowledge of God you should have: Heb. v. 12, 'For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.' So John xiv. 9, 'Have I been so long time with you and hast thou not known me?'

2. The more light, the more grace you should have, otherwise our condemnation is just, and will be the more grievous: John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.'

3. The more grace, the greater our christian performances should be, that we should do some eminent thing for God. Τί περίσσον, what singular thing do ye? Mat. v. 47, 'What do ye more than others?' You should be such that God may boast of you, as he did of Job: chap. i. 8, 'Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth

God and escheweth evil?' Where are there such men for holiness, wisdom, sobriety, meekness patience, so full of good fruits, so mindful of God's glory, and profitable to others? Then you would be ornaments to your holy profession.

4. Every additional mercy increaseth the obligation, be it inward or outward. Inward: 'If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious,' 1 Peter ii. 3. When you have received at God's hands the pardon of sin, the spirit of adoption, and hope of glory, when you have got conscience settled and established by grace, God expecteth you should draw in others: 1 John i. 3, 'That which we have seen and heard 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.' Outward, when many a prayer is answered, many deliverances are granted: Ezra ix. 13, 14, 'Seeing thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments?' New favours call for new work, and diligence in it.

5. The more helps and advantages we have, the crime is yet the greater. They are more responsible to God who enjoy ordinances in their power, plenty, and purity. How have others thriven in less time, and by smaller means by far! Christ marvelled twice at the unbelief of his countrymen: Mark vi. 6, 'And he marvelled because of their unbelief,' and at the faith of the centurion: Mat. viii. 10, 'When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said unto them, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.' When others with less means shine before you in knowledge, meekness, patience, and a blameless upright life, and an heavenly conversation, how just is your condemnation!

6. The more abilities you have of nature, still the debt returneth the more upon you. God considereth all men according to their advantages. A factor is more responsible for a thousand than an hundred pounds. Therefore they that have received so much from God, men of high place, great interest, excellent gifts, large estates, are more bound to glorify God than others. How should they tremble at this! Thus for what is required.

Secondly, How far it is required of you.

1. So far that it will cost you dear to abuse or not to improve the gifts of God: Rom. ii. 9, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the gentile. It shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you,' Mat. xi. 22.

2. It is so far required that your salvation is more difficult; for those that have not such means are saved upon easier terms, and the Lord spareth a people where they know no better. But what is an infirmity in them is an iniquity in you, for all sins receive an aggravation from the degree of light against which they are committed: James iv. 17, 'To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' God is no Pharaoh, to require the full tale of brick where he doth not afford stubble.

3. It is so far required that they are not spared, but often called to suffer the greatest trials. All that belong to Christ are bound to suffer great things for him; nay, they are to forsake all they have: Luke xiv

33, 'So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' Now though God spare his people till they be confirmed, and driveth as the little ones are able to bear, yet trials are suited to the grace we might have had *de jure*, though *de facto* we have it not: Heb. x. 32, 'After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;' Mat. xiii. 5, 6, 'Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had not root, they withered away,' which is explained: ver. 20, 21, 'He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.'

4. It is so far required that your punishment is more grievous. *Potentes potenter cruciabuntur*—Great men shall be mightily destroyed. Rich men, and of great power and abilities, have the hotter hell. Greater mercies the, greater sin, and the greater shall be the judgment.

5. Righteousness doth consist in a proportion. And it holdeth good both for our duty and God's judgment; for our duty that we should be fruitful, according to our means, opportunities, and helps; and for God's judgment, for it is said, God 'will lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet,' Isa. xxviii. 17; observes an exact proportion. Precise justice shall be to the wicked. The only exception is the ἐπιείκεια, the lenity of the gospel.

[1.] That a man who hath been unfruitful heretofore do change his course, and for the future live unto God. For the gospel admitteth of repentance, and grants a pardon to the negligent or unfaithful, if they will be faithful afterward, and break off their sins by after righteousness, diligence, and fidelity. The gospel looketh forward to the time to come: Rom. vi. 6, 'That henceforth we should not serve sin;' 1 Peter iv. 2, 3, 'That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God; for the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.' It respecteth not what penitent believers have been before their conversion and turning to God. Many have been long serving their base lusts and vile affections, eminent in wickedness; but they should double their diligence for the future. We should be the more diligent and serious to restore to the Lord his honour: 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'I laboured more abundantly than they all.' He saith there he was ἔκτρωμα, 'one born out of due time,' ver. 8, and that 'he persecuted the church of God,' ver. 9.

[2.] Where a man is faithful for the main, though he be culpably defective in not making such exact returns according to his precepts, yet he is not rejected, for the gospel pardoneth manifold failings and escapes: Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, 'If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' But the negligent christian, that is right for the main, meeteth with many troubles in this life, and in the life to come loseth some degrees of glory: 2 Cor. ix. 6, 'He that soweth sparingly

shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully.' God rewardeth in proportion to the several degrees of our charity and fidelity,

[3.] Ability is considered, and that is a return of much when we do our best. Look, as there may be a summer's day in winter, and a winter's day in summer, for the proportion, so much may be little, and little much, according to the estate or ability of the giver: Luke xxi. 4, 'All these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God, but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.' Though she had scarce enough for herself, yet out of that little she had been liberal. Some do twice as much good with a little as others with a great deal, for love will not be backward. Mark there, Christ sits by the treasury to observe what returns several persons made; he approveth the two mites of the widow before the larger offerings of the rich pharisees. So the apostle saith of the poor saints of Macedonia, 2 Cor. viii. 2, 'Their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality; because in the depth of their poverty they expressed a great bounty to others, though they gave less than the church of Corinth.

[4.] Opportunity in doing good is considered. Where opportunity is wanting, God taketh notice of affection. God considereth what is in our hearts: 1 Kings viii. 18, 'Whereas it was in thy heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.' He approved David's purpose, though opportunity served not as yet. So the apostle excuses the defect of the Philippians by lack of opportunity: Phil. iv. 10, 'Ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.' The want of opportunity, not through our default, doth justify for a time the forbearance of positive duties. But then we must take heed—

(1.) That it be not want of good-will, but of opportunity: 2 Cor. viii. 12, 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.' If he doth according to his ability, that which he is not able to do shall not be expected of him.

(2.) That we do not lose the opportunity by giving way to every discouragement: 1 Cor. xvi. 9, 'A great door and effectual is opened to me, and there are many adversaries.' The apostle would stay at Ephesus, for there was great hope of doing much good by propagating the gospel in those parts, though there were many which did oppose the truth.

[5.] Whether we do much or little for the quantity, God chiefly looketh to the affection. *Affectus pretium rebus imponit*—Affection gives a price to things, without this, pompous services are rejected: 1 Cor. xiii. 3, 'Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' If it be not out of love to God's glory, and aiming at others' good, it is not fruit abounding to our account. On the other side, 'Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward,' Mat. x. 42. God doth respect the heart of the giver. Many poor christians have a large heart, but can do little. God loveth not *copiosum, sed hilarem datorem;* not a large, but a cheerful giver, where ability and opportunity will afford it. A liberal and open heart will not be defective in quantity;

they think nothing too much for God, but all seemeth too little: 1 Chron. xxii. 14, 'Now behold in my trouble,' or in my poverty, 'have I prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver, and of brass and iron without weight.'

[6.] In employing our gifts, our faithfulness is measured and judged by our endeavour, not by the success: Isa. xlix. 4, 'I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work is with my God.' Though there be little fruit and effect in men, yet it is not the less regarded and rewarded by God. We read of a 'crown of righteousness,' 2 Tim. iv. 8, and of a 'crown of fruitfulness;' Rev. ii. 10, 'Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life;' 1 Thes. ii. 19, '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?'

Use 1. Let this assuage the envy and trouble of the meanest. If thy gifts be mean, thy account will be so much the easier. Alas! it is no easy thing to stand in the judgment. How much have others to account for!

2. To persuade those who have received greater gifts than others to do so much the more good with them. That which God will accept from others he will not accept from you. You will be deeper in the state of condemnation if your fruit be not proportionable. The rich in this world must be rich in good works: 1 Tim. vi. 18, 'That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.' Those that have more helps than ordinary should have the more grace: 'He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, &c., and looked that it should bring forth grapes,' Isa. v. 2; Heb. vi. 7, 8, 'The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God, but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.' So for them that have more grace. Others have common mercies, but you have the great and special mercies; and should not you abound in love and holiness? You are made partakers of a divine nature, and therefore you should be somewhat more than ordinary men. You have the Spirit, and will you not walk in the Spirit, and mortify the flesh by it? Surely God expecteth more from you, for he hath given you more, and will do more for you. As there is a great difference between heaven and hell, so should there be between your lives and theirs that shall perish for ever.

SERMON UPON DEUTERONOMY XXXII. 51.

Because ye trepassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel.—DEUT. xxxii. 51.

I SHALL give you some strictures or short notes on this scripture. The words contain a reason why Moses and Aaron were shut out of Canaan; because of their sin at Meribah-Kadesh, or the waters of strife. Their sin is doubly expressed here—(1.) 'Ye trespassed against me;' (2.) 'Ye sanctified me not.'

The one expression seemeth to imply a sin of commission, 'Ye trespassed against me,' that is, disobeyed God. The other a sin of omission, 'Ye sanctified me not in the eyes of the children of Israel.' Or rather, the one is a more general expression, it was a trespass; the other more particular, showing what sort of trespass it was, not sanctifying God.

For the first, this sin is called, Num. xxvii. 14, 'A rebellion against the commandment of the Lord.' In the text, a trespass or a transgression.

For the second, more particularly, not sanctifying God is a transgression with a scandal annexed to it. To sanctify God is to carry ourselves to him as to a God of such glory and power, to fear him above all, and to love him and trust him above all. In short, to do that which God commandeth, depending upon his word and promise, by which we ascribe to him the glory of his truth, goodness, and power, as counting him worthy to be feared and trusted, whatever temptations we have to the contrary. Thus, Isa. viii. 13, 'Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread;' 1 Peter iii. 15, 'Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.' There was a scandal annexed; for it is said in the text, 'Among the children of Israel, and in the midst of the children of Israel;' and elsewhere, 'in the eyes of the children of Israel.' They publicly dishonoured God before all the people. Moses used like words of unbelief when the people lusted for flesh at Taberah, as now he did at Meribah when they murmured for

want of water: Num. xi. 21, 22, 'And Moses said, The people among whom I am are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them? And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass to thee or not.' Unbelief will be always urging difficulties against God's promises. But there was no threatening then; that unbelief was only professed in secret, only before the Lord; but this was before all Israel. And both Moses and Aaron are charged with this sin; and being both partners in the transgression, they are both concerned in the chastisement; both are shut out of Canaan, and died, the one at Mount Hor, the other at Mount Nebo.

Doct. That the sins even of God's children may cost them dear here in this world.

1. I shall reflect on the instance in the text.

2. Give you general reasons.

I. To give you some reflections on the instance in the text. The history of it you have, Num. xx. The people, when the water failed, gather together against Moses and Aaron to chide, ver. 3; that is, to resist, or speak with bitter and reproachful words. They menaced, and therefore Moses and Aaron withdrew for fear of them, and because of their outrages, they fell upon their faces, praying in the door of the sanctuary, ver. 6; and it is said, 'The glory of the Lord appeared to them;' that is, in the cloud, as a sign that he heard their prayer and would save them. And the Lord biddeth Moses, ver. 8, to take his rod, and he and Aaron to speak to the rock to give out water enough for all Israel, for them and their beasts; and this speaking to the rock was to be done in the sight and hearing of all the people. Upon this Moses and Aaron 'gather all the congregation together before the rock,' ver. 10, 11, and then he said, 'Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch water for you out of this rock? And he lift up his hand, and with his rod smote the rock twice; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.' This is the account of the history. The question now is, Wherein was Moses' sin in all this? Some think in that Moses smote the rock, and spake to the people. It is not said that he 'spake to the rock, as he is commanded by God; he should only have spoken to the rock, not have smitten it. But when God biddeth him take his rod, it is most probable to imagine that he intended he should smite the rock with it, as was before done at Rephidim: Exod. xvii. 6, 'Thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.' But here there is no command of smiting, therefore some think he should only have lifted up his rod in the eyes of the people, as the signal of former miracles. Others think his error was in smiting twice, when once had been enough to declare their faith and reliance on God's promise. But the scripture doth seem to refer us to another cause, their disobedience and unbelief, not manifested in his smiting so much as in his speaking: Ps. cvi. 32, 33, 'They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes; because they provoked his spirit,

so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.' Therefore the sin was impatience mingled with diffidence, and this in the sight of all the people.

1. He was in a great passion, more than was usual with him at other times, as appeareth by the manner of his speaking, 'Ye rebels;' and also the doubling of his stroke showeth the heat of his anger. Now, 'the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God,' James i. 20. The passion was in itself a fault, but withal it disturbed him so that he could not discharge that duty which was incumbent upon him in the manner that he ought to do it, with faith and affiance in God, or so as he might set out his goodness, power, and truth. He spake in a provocation, not as became a meek and faithful servant of the Lord, that desired to glorify him in the eyes of the people.

2. There was unbelief and distrust in it, 'Must we fetch you water out of this rock?' A speech that savoured of doubting, which needed not, considering what an express promise they had from God. Therefore God saith, Num. xx. 12, 'Because ye believed me not.' They spake as if it were impossible to fetch water out of the rock, when God had assured them of the contrary; or at least such an abundance for them all as might be sufficient for all the multitude with their beasts and cattle. Or if their faith in God's power was clear, they might doubt of his mercy, that God would do such a thing for a murmuring and unthankful people.

3. There was scandal in it. In this they did not endeavour as they ought to set forth God's glory and power in the eyes of all the people. They should have charged the rock to yield forth water, and have given the people a good example of believing and obeying God's words in their greatest straits: ver. 12, 'Ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel;' that is, they did not publicly before the people show affiance in God, as became them. Therefore the words are to be noted: ver. 13, 'This is the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and he was sanctified in them.' Though Moses and Aaron sanctified him not by faith and obedience, yet God sanctified himself.

[1.] Among the people, by giving water for their thirst. So it is said, Isa. xlviii. 21, 'When he led them through the deserts, he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them; he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed forth.' And as for them, so for their cattle; yea, the wild beasts of the wilderness had benefit by this mercy of God to his people. So Isa. xliii. 20, 'The beasts of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls; because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.'

[2.] He was sanctified in Moses and Aaron by punishing their disobedience. Thus it is taken, Ezek. xxxviii. 16, 'That the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes;' that is, by punishing them for their sins, for thereby God makes himself known to be a holy and powerful God. So Lev. x. 3, 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh unto me, and before all the people I will be glorified;' either by doing good to them that serve him aright, or by punishing them that transgress his precepts.

This is the history. Now observe it in three things—

First, The state and quality of the persons.

(1.) Moses was an eminent servant of the Lord, faithful in all his house, Deut. xxxiv. 5, 'So Moses the servant of the Lord died.' Though men be holy for the main, yet it doth not justify their failings or excuse their evil actions, as if they were not sins, nor hinder God's wrath from breaking out upon them temporally, though they be exempted from eternal condemnation; for God is no respecter of persons: 'Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner,' Prov. xi. 31. If the faults of the righteous, whom God loveth with a fatherly love in Christ, be not without chastisement, surely the wicked cannot escape. Their sins are not by design, but by surprise, not committed with a strong will, but out of frailty; and being committed, they are retracted by repentance. As Moses often mentioned this sin, and at his death maketh here an acknowledgment of God's justice against him for it, that his example might be a warning to all people not to disobey God's commandments or disbelieve his word. Yet God will be known to be a holy God by the notable inconveniences God's people often bring upon themselves here in the world. This truth is ushered in with an *Ecce*, 'Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth;' that is, observe the just and most wise government of our supreme Lord. Behold it! it is a certain truth, and deserveth our most solemn consideration. Many miseries we may have in our pilgrimage, for they are recompensed upon earth, and our chastisements are confined only to the present life.

(2.) He was a very meek man: Num. xii. 3, 'Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth.' This commendation the Spirit of God giveth to Moses, though by Moses' own pen. Now meekness is a virtue which keepeth a mean in anger and avenging ourselves when we are offended, wronged, and contemned; yet this meek man could be thus angry: Ps. cvi. 32, 'They angered him also at the waters of strife;' and ver. 33, 'They provoked his spirit.' In the holiest men there are relics of sin unmortified, and such weakness as they may readily fall into sin in the hour of temptation, and such sin as may cost them dear. Who would have thought his spirit should be so grieved and embittered? It is a dangerous sin to mingle our passions with God's public service, or to go about the work that he sets us to do with any carnal perturbation. Therefore we had need watch over ourselves.

(3.) He was a man greatly provoked, yet this doth not exempt him from blame and correction. Though men are to be pitied who are provoked to sin, yet the provocation excuses not the sinner. Moses had led them by God's direction to this place, and there they murmured against him when they wanted water, and to such a height that he was fain to take shelter in the sanctuary to avoid their fury. But this doth not excuse Moses: Ps. cvi. 32, 'They angered him at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes.' Their peevishness provoked him, yet because he commanded not his passion, he was punished with an exclusion out of Canaan. Aaron upon another occasion thought to excuse himself: Exod. xxxii. 22, 'Let not the anger of my Lord wax hot; thou knowest this people, that they are set on mischief,' &c. But Aaron's sin was so great that God was very

angry with him, and thought to have destroyed him, if Moses had not prayed for him; as you may see, Deut. ix. 20, 'The Lord was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him, and I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.' Alas! these excuses are frivolous; it is along of others, and consider the great injuries I received. Every man is to answer for his own actions, and cannot be hurt by others without his own consent.

(4.) Both the persons were in public offices, the magistracy and the ministry, and the highest and most eminent of their rank; the one chief governor of Israel, the other high priest. God will spare none; yea, the higher they are, the greater are their offences, because of the influence of their example; and therefore their lot will be the harder; God will reckon with them when he passes by others. If any, the duty of whose place obliges them to be eminent in faith and holiness, miscarry, the provocation is the greater. As David's sin is aggravated by his office: 'I anointed thee king over Israel,' 2 Sam. xii. 7; and the priests are sorely threatened: Mal. ii. 7, 8, 'The priests' lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble at the law, ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.' Their negligence and errors are greater than others; they should be 'Examples to the flock,' 1 Peter v. 3.

Secondly, The nature of the crime.

(1.) It was a spiritual one. They did not sanctify God in obeying and depending upon his word before the eyes of the people. We only look to outward gross sins, but spiritual sins we take no notice of. There are sins *in genere moris*, and *in genere fidei*—sins against our moral duty, and sins against the rule of faith. There are *peccata majoris infamæ*, and *peccata majoris reatus*—sins of greater infamy, and more publicly hateful, and sins of greater guilt. Of the first sort are murder, adultery, theft, &c. Natural light puts a brand upon these: ἔργα σαρκὸς φανερὰ, Gal. v. 19, 'The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.' These smell rank in nature's nostrils, every one knoweth them to be great sins, and a child of God doth hardly fall into these sensual villanies. But there are other sins of a more spiritual nature, such as want of love to God, and faith in Christ, and hope of eternal life; or such necessary degrees of either as may enable us to honour him in the world. Few take notice of these, but God judgeth not as man judgeth; these may be more dangerous, as being not only against our duty, but our remedy. Few think distrustful thoughts, or distracting cares, or sinful fears, or immoderate sorrow are such grievous distempers as they afterwards prove to be, till they cherish them so long that they find the grievousness of the sin in the greatness of the punishment.

(2.) It was a sudden occasional passion, or fit of impatience. But by that we may give place to Satan, and grieve the Spirit of God: Eph. iv. 26, 27, 'Let not the sun go down on your wrath, neither give place to the devil;' and ver. 30, 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.' Therefore we should watch against the sudden disorders of our passions and affections, otherwise we may do that in a moment the effects of which will not

be altogether blotted out by a long repentance. If we give way to excessive anger, we open a door to Satan, and give him an advantage to excite us to more evil, and the work of grace may be so darkened in us that we may long miss of comfort. If we once let the fire be kindled, it will presently send up a black smoke, whereby we dishonour our profession and provoke God. And whatever just cause of provocation we have, we are to overcome and bridle the exorbitancies of our passions; for though we be provoked, we must not provoke God.

(3.) The sin consisted in this, that the exemplariness of their faith and obedience was somewhat obscured. We should look to this, to have a faith that will not only save ourselves, but tend to the glory of God: 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, '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; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him.' We may not be guilty of other men's sins. We must have grace, not only for our own private benefit, that we may be saved, but for a more public good, that God may be glorified and others edified by our example. Many make a hard shift to go to heaven; they may have grace enough for their own salvation, but yet have not grace enough for the honour and exaltation of God in the world. Now it is a great fault, especially in the eminent, if they neglect the glorifying of God in the eyes of others. Noah was raised up in his age to condemn the world: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world;' that is, of their security and contempt of God's warnings. Thus Moses and Aaron should have condemned the Israelites by their own faith and ready obedience. And if we do not mind this in ourselves, we are the more culpable before God: 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, in the day when he shall please to visit them by his saving grace, otherwise we are accountable for those sins we draw others into; and so a man may sin after he is dead, as his example outliveth him. In short, God is severe upon his scandalous children; though he may pardon their faults as to eternal punishment, yet they smart for it in this world.

Thirdly, The kind of the punishment. It was not exclusion out of heaven, but out of Canaan; they might not go into the promised land. This chastisement was grievous to Moses; he looked upon it as a notable inconvenience, and besought the Lord that he might go over: Deut. iii. 23, 25, 'I besought the Lord at that time, saying, I pray thee, let me go over and see that good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.' But, ver. 26, 'The Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me; and said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.' Nay, Deut. iv. 21, 'The Lord was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.' Thus you see, with all his prayer and entreaty, Moses could not get the sentence reversed;

all the favour he could obtain was to get it mitigated. He was permitted to get to the top of Pisgah and see it with his eyes: Deut. iii. 27, 'Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes; but thou shalt not go over this Jordan.' This was not vouchsafed to Aaron, for he died at Mount Hor; but Moses brought the people to the very borders, and thence had a prospect of the land of Canaan on every side. Thus God may wear away an unthankful generation by sundry calamities, and some good men that live among them may be also taken off before God produce and bring forth his beautiful work, which is the sum of all their hopes and the fruit of their pain and sorrow. Only they have the privilege of believers, to see the promises afar off, and to 'be persuaded of them, and embrace them,' Heb. xi. 13, which was some comfort to Moses.

II. The general reasons. The sins of the professing or really godly are most provoking.

1. They sin against a nearer relation, which is more than if a stranger did these things. As David heightens the injuries done to him: Ps. lv. 12, 13, 'It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me, then I could have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide and mine acquaintance.' So 2 Sam. xii. 11, 'I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house.' By proportion we may judge in this case, for our relation is urged to quicken our duty: 1 Peter i. 14, 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.' And if we do otherwise, we increase our punishment: Amos iii. 2, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities.' They were his peculiar and chosen people, and though he would not altogether spare others, yet he will certainly and more severely chastise them. So Deut. xxxii. 19, 'And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and of his daughters;' that is, those that were his children by a gracious calling.

2. They sin against greater helps and advantages than others do. Such as have more knowledge of their duty: James iv. 17, 'To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' Experience of the evil of sin, they have tasted of the bitter waters, and felt more of the sting of sin in the conviction of their consciences, and are scarce yet whole of the old wounds: Josh. xxii. 17, 'Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed to this day, though there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord?' Once more, they sin against a principle of life within, and so offer violence not only to the law of God but their own new nature: 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; neither can he sin, because he is born of God.'

3. They sin against greater obligations. Partly from the mercies of God, and so there is more unkindness and ingratitude in their sins: John vi. 67, 'Will ye go away also?' If the rotten multitude do desert him, yet will his disciples be prejudiced and weaken the confidence of others? The more proofs of God's love we have received, he taketh it the worse at our hands. So also there is an obligation, partly

from their own profession of a strict obedience: Eph. v. 8, 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light.' God hath distinguished them from others, and therefore they should distinguish themselves by eminence of holiness and obedience: Neh. v. 9, 'Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?' Partly there is a special obligation from their covenant vow. Now a people in covenant with God are faster bound to him than others, therefore their transgressions are the more heinous; as adultery is a greater crime than single fornication, because of the marriage-covenant, and sacrilege than theft, because it is a devouring what is holy, or alienating what is dedicated to God. Now God will avenge the quarrel of his covenant: Lev. xxvi. 25, 'I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant.'

4. Because of the effects of their sins.

[1.] Partly as they dishonour God more than others: 2 Sam. xii. 14, 'Howbeit because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die;' though God hath pardoned his sin. The scandalous sins of professors give great advantage to the enemies of the truth, who will be sure to make a wicked and evil use thereof. Therefore we should walk the more circumspectly and holily, lest through our sides our profession itself be wounded as well as our souls, and the Lord's holy name be blasphemed. The honour of God is not so much concerned in the actions of the ungodly as it is in the example of great men, or of those that are eminently godly.

[2.] As they harden and justify the wicked: Ezek. xvi. 51, 'Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins, but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they, and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done.' They do with the more pretence live in their sins, when they see the lapses and falls of the godly themselves.

5. There are special reasons why God should correct them for their sins here in the world.

[1.] To keep up the honour of his government, lest he should by forbearance seem to approve their sin, who are so near to him, and dignified with so many privileges. God is the impartial judge of the world, therefore he will do right; the disorders of his people are not passed by without some mark of his displeasure, for a warning to others, and that he may be known to be an holy and righteous God: Ezek. xxxviii. 23, 'Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord;' that is, by his judgments he will show that he is the ruler of the world, and ruleth with equity.

[2.] The other special reason is to show his love to his people; because they are his people, he will reclaim them, and will not altogether lose them, whereas he lets others walk in their own ways. That sharp afflictions may proceed from love appeareth from that of the apostle: Heb. xii. 6, 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' And that it is to reclaim them appeareth by that, 1 Cor. xi. 32, 'But when we are judged, we

are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world;' that being amended by our stripes, we may be kept from those punishments which shall light on the wicked to all eternity. So that it is an argument of his paternal love to his children and servants, when, to promote their repentance, he dealeth thus sharply with them, permitting them to be persecuted and troubled in the world.

Use 1. It informs us that God may be angry with his people. He was so with Moses: Deut. iv. 21, 'The Lord was angry with me for your sakes.' With David: 1 Chron. xxi. 7, 'And was displeased with this thing, therefore he smote Israel.' The Lord was displeased with David for numbering the people. So again, 2 Sam. xi. 27, 'But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.' God's anger is the offence taken, and his will to punish. Their sins are a great offence to him, a greater in some respects than the sins of others. If the ignorant world, who know him not, and are strangers to him and his grace, dishonour his name and transgress his laws, they do but according to their kind. He expecteth better things from you, whom he hath owned and adopted into his family, and embraced with the bowels of his tenderest mercies. Others run blindfold against God; you with open eyes strike at him, therefore it is a greater offence to him, and grief to his Spirit. His anger also implieth his will to punish. Though you be not vessels of wrath, as the reprobate, nor children of wrath, as all were in their unregenerate condition, yet you may be children under wrath. And it is a dreadful thing to be under God's anger; it is dreadful in itself, and it is dreadful in the effects. It may cost you dear here in this world; you may lose much of the comfort of your pilgrimage and sweetness of your service by your folly; for God will make you know 'what an evil and a bitter thing it is to forsake the Lord,' Jer. ii. 19, that the smart of the correction may teach you more wisdom.

2. It teacheth us a lesson of circumspection and watchfulness, that we fall not into God's displeasure. Good men may profane and pollute their best engagements for God with such excesses of passion as may be very provoking to him. Therefore christians had need always live with the yoke of Christ upon their necks, and his bridle in their mouths. Such a strict course may be tedious at first, but use and the pleasure of holiness maketh it easy. You are in danger, not only of obvious temptations, but sins that we little think of; therefore we need always to stand upon our guard, lest the faults of an hour may cost you many days' mourning. Well, then, let your eyes be in your head, and look right on: Prov. iv. 25, 26, 'Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee: ponder the path of thy feet, and let thy ways be established.' As he that would not stumble had need look to his way. Our end and our rule must always be before us. You are in apparent danger when your passions will not allow you season to deliberate, and reason to consider what you are a-doing; nay, sin already hath too much surprised the heart.

3. It teacheth us a lesson of self-reflection. When God denieth you many privileges and favours which are useful to your service, is it not because of some sin of yours which hath brought this evil upon you? Have you borne the name of God up and down in the world with

honour, and sanctified him in the eyes of the people, as you ought to do? Lam. iii. 39, 40, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord.' Surely we have no cause to complain of God, since all the evils we suffer we procure to ourselves; it is sin hath exposed us to manifold annoyances and afflictions. There is a cause, and a narrow search will show us for what cause, and then our affliction will not be so bitter as repentance will be sweet and lovely to us.

4. It teacheth us a lesson of patience and humble submission. We should look up to the hand of God in all punishments, corrections, and trials, as David did on Shimei's cursing: 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 'Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.' He looked upon God as the supreme cause, correcting him for his sins, against whom he was not to repine; not that Shimei had any command from God so to do, but was only permitted by his providence. We must not look to the stone, but to the hand that casts it; and this should breed humility and patience in us. If we had not provoked God to anger, to cast us into these troubles, they would never have come. Therefore we must accept the punishment of our iniquity: Micah vii. 9, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.' When God is angry, we must humbly stoop under his afflicting hand without repining.

5. It teacheth us a lesson of prayer, We must not give over the cause as hopeless, for we have to do with a good God, who aimeth not at our ruin, but the righting of his own glory. Moses prayeth to reverse the sentence, but in this case God would not do that, to preserve the harmony of his providence; for Moses was only to lead them to the borders, but Joshua to bring them into Canaan, who was therein a type of Jesus Christ, who leadeth his people into the land of rest. But yet God gave him a sight, though not leave to enter; there is a mitigation. And David prayeth, Ps. vi. 1, 'O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.' It is a mercy, if the judgment break not out in all extremity against us.

6. It teaches us a lesson of thankfulness, because eternal mercies are sure; whatever liberty God taketh in the disposal of our temporal interests, we may still bless God for Christ and heaven. Ay! you will say, if we could do so. I answer—Where God giveth a penitent and submissive spirit, it is a sign we shall not be condemned with the world.

SERMON UPON ACTS XVII. 30, 31.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.—Acts xvii. 30, 31.

The words are the conclusion of Paul's speech to the men of Athens, wherein, having disproved their idolatry, he cometh to show them the right way of returning from their sin and misery to their duty and happiness.

In them we have—(1.) An exhortation, ver. 30; (2.) An argument and motive to enforce it, ver. 31.

1. The exhortation, which consists of two parts—(1.) A censure of the past times; (2.) The duty of the present time. Wherein, (1*st.*) The duty itself, repentance; (2*d.*) The universality of its obligation, He 'commandeth all men everywhere to repent;' that is, all without difference of nations, the call being now general.

2. The argument or motive to enforce it. The argument is—(1.) propounded; (2.) confirmed.

[1.] Propounded, 'Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.'

[2.] Confirmed, 'Whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.'

To possess you with the full scope of this scripture, let me explain all these clauses.

I. I begin with the exhortation, which consists of two parts—(1.) The censure of the past times; (2.) The duty of the present time.

First, In the censure of the past times two things are said of them—(1.) That they were times of ignorance; and (2.) That God winked at them, or overlooked them.

1. That they were times of ignorance, and that easily leadeth into error. But now the light of the gospel was brought to them, God did more peremptorily insist upon his right, and commanded them to repent, and to turn from dead idols to the living God; for the practices of ignorance will not become a time of knowledge: 1 Peter i. 14,

'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.' There was a time when we knew neither the terror, nor the sweetness of the Lord, but securely lived in sin; what we did then will misbecome us now. So Rom. xiii. 12, 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.' While they were heathens, they lived in ignorance of God and the way to true happiness, and in a profane godless course, and an utter carelessness and neglect of heavenly things. As in the night the wild and savage beasts go abroad foraging for their prey; but, as the psalmist telleth us, Ps. civ. 22, 23, 'When the sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens, and man goeth forth to his work;' so in this spiritual night of ignorance, sin reigneth, and brutish affections carry all before them, and a man is governed by sense and appetite, and not by reason and conscience; but when the day dawneth, the man should show himself, and reason should be in dominion again; and though before they neither minded God and their own souls, nor considered their danger, nor their remedy, yet now they should awake, and return and seek after God. Sins are more aggravated in times of more full gospel light; for when light is come into the world, and men 'love darkness rather than light,' John iii. 19, then to our error there is added stubbornness and obstinacy; and whatever connivance God used before, this will bring speedy ruin upon us.

2. The second thing which is said is that God winked at these times. There—(1.) We must open the meaning; (2.) The necessity and use of this reflection.

[1.] The meaning. Certainly it is not meant of God's allowing of their idolatries; that would entrench upon his honour, and hinder their repentance for former sins, and resolution of taking a new course for the future. What is the meaning then? for some interpret the clause as speaking indulgence, others as intimating judgment, which though to appearance they seem contrary, yet both may stand together.

(1.) Some think it speaketh indulgence, as we translate it, 'winked at,' that is, looked not after them to punish or destroy them for their idolatries. Ignorance is sometimes made an excuse *a tanto*, though not *a toto;* as Acts iii. 17, 'I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers;' and 1 Tim. i. 13, 'I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly.' It somewhat mollified the sin.

(2.) Others think this clause speaketh a judgment. The vulgar readeth *neglexit*, God neglected those times, or regarded them not. As the Greeks complained, Acts vi. 1, 'That their widows were neglected,' *παρεθεωροῦντο*, overseen; so here, *ὑπεριδὼν*, overlooked, or not regarded. So God is said elsewhere to deal with an apostate and sinning people: Heb. viii. 9, 'They continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not;' I took no notice of them to do them good. So God regarded not those times of ignorance, gave them not such helps and means as afterwards, or as now he did when he sent the gospel to them. To this sense I incline, partly because it is so explained in a parallel place: Acts xiv. 16, 17, 'Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways; nevertheless he left not himself without a

witness.' And partly because it agreeth with the thing itself: Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, 'He hath showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them.' The grace of external vocation is a great mercy, and the apostle would have them apprehensive of it; for when God sendeth the light of the gospel, he showeth the care that he hath of the lost nations: Eph. iii. 5, 'Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.' Partly because God did punish the ignorance and error of the gentiles by giving them up to vile affections: Rom. i. 24, 'Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness.' It is a severe judgment to be given up to our own lusts, and blindness and hardness of heart. But yet I do not exclude the former sense, because though the idolatry of the nations continued for many years, yet God continued many signal temporal mercies to them.

[2.] The necessity and use of this reflection.

(1.) It is an answer to their cavil, ver. 18, 'He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods.' Now the apostle replieth that the gods of their fathers were idols, and not gods. But how can it stand with the providence of the true God to permit it and forsake mankind so long? Those times of ignorance God overlooked, sent them no means nor messengers then, but now he doth; and so he teacheth them and us that it is not sufficient to follow the religion of our forefathers, unless they had followed the will of God. If God overlooked them, and vouchsafeth you more grace, you must not be prejudiced by the tradition, but improve the present advantage.

(2.) He, as much as in him lieth, taketh off the prejudice of the practice of former times by a prudent and soft censure. As also elsewhere: 1 Cor. ii. 8, 'Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.'

(3.) He insinuateth that ignorance doth not wholly excuse those that err, but rather commendeth the Lord's patience.

Secondly, The duty of the present time.

1. The duty pressed is repentance. The word is μετανοεῖν. Repentance is a returning to our wits again. We were sometimes ἀνόητοι, 'foolish,' Titus iii. 3. When the conversion of the nations is spoken of, it is said, Ps. xxii. 27, 'All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord;' as if they were asleep, distracted, or out of their wits before the light of Christ's gospel shined into their hearts, not making use of common reason. We never act wisely nor with a condecency to our reasonable nature, till we return to the love and obedience of God.

2. This is here represented not as an indifferent and arbitrary thing, but as expressly and absolutely commanded. God's authority is absolute; if he hath commanded anything, contradiction must be silent, hesitation satisfied, all cavils laid aside, and we must address ourselves to the work speedily and seriously, without delaying, or disputing, or murmuring. God doth not advise or entreat only, but commandeth, or interposeth his authority. Now to break a known command, especially

of such weight and moment, is very dangerous: Luke xii. 47, 'That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes;' James iv. 17, 'To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.' A man in the dark may easily err and go astray; but while we know better, and what is the express will of God concerning us, we must set ourselves to do it.

3. As universally required, 'All men everywhere;' not only Jews, but gentiles; and not some sort of gentiles, but all; you, Athenians, and all the world; this universally bindeth. Some must turn from their idols, but all from their sinful ways, Whosoever will not repent when God calleth for repentance, they smart the more for it. Impenitency under the means is the worst sort of impenitency. I may say as Christ, Luke xiii. 5, 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'

II. The argument or motive. Which we consider—(1.) As propounded; (2.) As confirmed.

First, As propounded. Where note—(1.) The time, 'He hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world;' (2.) The manner, 'In righteousness;' (3.) The person, 'By that man whom he hath ordained.' These circumstances must be opened, and then we must consider how they make an argument.

For opening the circumstances.

1. The time appointed, but not revealed, 'He hath appointed a day.' The word *day* is not taken strictly for such a space of time as is usually signified by that notion, but it is put for a certain fixed space of time. The work cannot well be dispatched in twenty-four hours. There is *judicium discussionis*, and *judicium retributionis*, a judgment of search or trial, and a judgment of retribution. Though by the absolute power of God they may be commanded into their everlasting estate in an instant, yet the causes of the whole world cannot be discussed in an instant, especially when God designeth the full revelation of his justice in all his proceedings with men. Therefore, the apostle calleth that day, the day of 'the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' Rom. ii. 5. When this time will be we cannot tell, for God hath not revealed it: Mat. xxiv. 36, 'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only;' and therefore it is curiosity to inquire, and rashness to determine: Acts i. 7, 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.' It is enough for us to believe the thing, which is not strange to reason, that God should call his creatures to an account. Natural conscience is terrified with the hearing of it: Acts xxiv. 25, 'As Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.' And the same guilty fears are incident to all mankind: Rom. i. 32, 'Knowing the judgment of God;' they know also that they who have done such things as they have done are worthy of death. That we are God's subjects is evident to reason, because we depend upon him for life, being, and all things. That we have failed in our subjection to God, in denying the obedience due to him, is evident by the universal, daily, and sad experience of the whole world; that error and sin will not take place to all eternity, but that there must be some time when the disorders of the world shall be rectified; is a

truth that easily maketh its own way into the consciences of men, but is fully determined by the gospel.

2. For the manner, 'He will judge the world in righteousness;' that is, then the whole world shall receive the fruit of their doings, whether they be good or evil. But doth God ever judge the world otherwise than in righteousness? I cannot say that, for 'far be it from the judge of all the earth not to do right,' Gen. xviii. 25. He never doth anything unjustly or unrighteously now, but then he will fully manifest his righteousness. He now judgeth the world in patience, but then in righteousness. There is a difference between a defect of justice and a transgression of the rules of justice. There is no injustice in God's dispensations of present providence, but yet there is a defect, or not a full measure or manifest demonstration of his justice showed now on the godly or the wicked. Therefore it is said, Eccles. viii. 14, 'There be just men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and again, there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous.' He doth not pass this censure upon the wise and righteous providence of God, but either speaketh according to the judgment of flesh and blood, which is apt to judge hardly of so strange a distribution, or according to the visible appearance of things, when evil things happen to good men, or good things to evil men. For outward things being not absolutely good and evil, are dispensed promiscuously, and in the day of trial God hath his end in these things, for humbling and exercising the good, and hardening the wicked: but in the day of recompense, then it shall be only ill with them that do evil, and well with them that do good, and the retributions of his justice shall be fully evidenced.

3. The person, 'By that man whom he hath ordained;' meaning thereby Christ. But why doth he call Christ *man*, rather than God?

[1.] Partly with respect to the gentiles' incapacity to apprehend the mystery of the Trinity, or the incarnation of the Son of God; and it concerneth us to dispense truths as people are able to bear them; as Christ taught καθὼς ἠδύναντο ἀκούειν, 'As they were able to bear it,' Mark iv. 33. Therefore Paul would not offend them by doctrines which they could not yet understand.

You will say the resurrection was as offensive.

Ans. That was ἐν πρώτοις one of the first points of the apostolical catechism: Heb. vi. 1, 2, 'Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God; of the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.' So that the apostle could not preach the very rudiments of christianity if he had not mentioned that.

[2.] Christ is to discharge this office in the visible appearance of man. As the judgment was to be visible, so the judge. The judgment is not to be acted by the Father or the Spirit, but by Christ in the human nature; therefore his coming is called 'an appearance;' Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;' and 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 to all them that love his appearance.' And when the judgment is spoken of, Christ is often designed by this expression, the Son of man: Mat. xxiv. 30, 'They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory;' and Mat. xvi. 27, 'For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.' He is the visible actor in the judgment, sitting on a visible throne, that he may be seen and heard of all, and the godhead doth most gloriously manifest itself by the perfections of his human nature.

3. This power is given to Christ as a recompense of his humiliation. For therefore hath 'God 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,' Phil. ii. 9, 10, which is at the day of judgment: Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 'We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me.' Then all creatures in heaven, earth, and hell are to own the sovereign power and empire of the crucified Saviour. Some do it willingly, as the elect angels, and men; others do it by constraint, as the reprobate and evil angels, when they are forced to stand before the tribunal of Christ to receive their final doom and sentence. This is the last act of his kingly office, and the fruit and consequent of his humiliation. Therefore this Christ spake of when he stood before the tribunals of men: Mat. xxvi. 64, 'Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' The despised man, who was before them as a criminal in their repute, summoneth them to answer before his tribunal at that day, when his shame shall be turned into glory, and the scandal of his first estate shall be fully taken off, and those that despised him as man shall be forced to acknowledge him as God.

Secondly, The subsequent proof: 'Whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.' That is a sufficient testimony to convince the whole world. The resurrection is a certain proof and argument of the dignity both of Christ's person and office. It is an attestation to his person: Rom. i. 4, 'Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' To his office and doctrine: John v. 27–29, 'And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 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 well, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.' How doth this make faith to all the world? for that is the word, πίστιν παρασχὼν. *Ans.* God hath not given faith to all men, but he hath given an argument to all men that is a ground of faith, from whence faith may evidently conclude that Christ is our judge, for he hath raised him from the dead. Where is the force of this demonstration? Others were raised from the dead, as Lazarus and the like, and yet they are not judges of the world. I answer—Christ died in the repute of men as a malefactor, but God justified him when he would not leave him under the power

of death, but raised him up and assumed him into glory, thereby visibly declaring unto the world that the judgment passed upon him was not right, but that he was indeed what he gave out himself to be, the Son of God and the judge of the world, to whom power is given over all flesh, to save or destroy them. If he live with the Father in glory and majesty, it will necessarily follow that he was not a seducer, but that holy and righteous one by whom God will execute his judgment.

Secondly, What influence this hath upon repentance.

1. The very day appointed inferreth a necessity of change both of heart and life; for how else shall we stand in the judgment who have broken God's laws, and are obnoxious to his wrath and displeasure? If we should never be called to an account for what we have been and done here in the world, we might then freely indulge ourselves in all fleshly delights, and do what we please. But this is a principle of fear and restraint, that for all these things God will bring thee into the judgment: Eccles. xi. 9, 'Rejoice, O young man in thy youth and let the heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.' None of us can hide or withdraw ourselves from that great tribunal, before which we are to give an account of what we have done and received in the body. And therefore it is best, while we are in the way, to make our peace with God and break off our sins by repentance; otherwise what quiet can we have in ourselves? or how can we keep ourselves when we are serious from trembling at wrath to come? We may smother conscience, and baffle all convictions for the present; but, christians, you and I must be judged. Now when God riseth up to the judgment, what shall we answer him? Job xxxi. 14, 'What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?' That must be thought on beforehand. If we have no answer which will satisfy now, much less then.

2. From the manner or strictness of that day's account, he will judge the world in righteousness: Eccles. xii. 14, 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.' Hypocrisy shall be disclosed, sincerity shall be rewarded, nothing shall be hidden from God's search; no person shall be exempted, no work, either open or secret, but God will bring it into judgment. His infinite wisdom knoweth all, and his infinite justice will give due recompense to all. The businesses of all nations and persons shall be openly examined. What then is our duty but to exercise ourselves both in faith and repentance, that our judge may be our saviour, and it may go well with us when this search is made?

3. Chiefly from the person, sufficiently attested by the miracles of his life and resurrection from death. God hath determined and ordained the person by whom the whole world shall be judged. And from thence we may judge of the rule; it is by his doctrine, and by our receiving or not receiving Christ. Surely it is our interest to be in with him who will cite us before his tribunal; to accept his person as our Lord and Saviour: John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' To believe and entertain his doctrine as the message of God: John v. 24, 'He that

heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.' To imitate his example: 1 John iv. 17, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world.' To trust in his merit: Ps. ii. 12, 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him.' To love him and live to him: 1 Cor. xvi. 22, 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha.' If he say, Come, ye blessed, or, Go, ye cursed, we must abide by it to all eternity. Woe to them that neglect his offers, contemn his ways, oppose his interest, oppress his servants. But blessed are they whose Redeemer is their judge; he who shed his blood for them, must pass the sentence on them; and one that is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone is the final judge between us and God. Will he be harsh to his sincere disciples? But to say all in a word, surely this consideration should do the work effectually, because his gospel and covenant is nothing else but a free promise of pardon upon condition of repentance: Luke xxiv. 47, 'That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.' And to this end the apostles were to preach that Christ is judge: Acts x. 42, 43, 'He hath commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he who was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.' Nothing showeth the necessity of remission of sins so much as the judgment, and the necessity of repentance to remission so much as the judge, who in his covenant hath made this condition. Nothing doth befriend the great discovery of the gospel, which is free pardon of sin by Christ upon repentance, so much as the sound belief of this truth, that Christ is judge.

Doct. That the great purpose and drift of the gospel where it is sent and preached is to invite men to repentance.

This appeareth abundantly by the scripture, that repentance is one of the first and chief lessons which the gospel teacheth. When the gospel kingdom was to be erected or set up, John the Baptist crieth, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' Mat. iii. 2. So when Jesus himself began to preach, his note is the same: Mat. iv. 17, 'He began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' His doctrine and the doctrine of the Baptist is all one in substance, and necessarily it must be so. The gospel findeth men under the tyranny of Satan, and offereth to bring them into the kingdom of God. So when he sent abroad his disciples first to the Jews, Mat. x. and afterwards to the world, Luke xxiv. 47, 'That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.' The disciples were faithful to their commission: Acts ii. 38, 'Peter said unto them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.' But to give you some reasons of it, I shall—(1.) Inquire what is repentance, (2.) What the gospel doth to promote it; (3.) How convenient and necessary this is for all those that are willing to come out of the apostasy of mankind, and to return to their obedience to God.

First, What is repentance? Sometimes it is taken largely for our whole conversion to God through the faith of Christ, as in the text: 'He commandeth all men to repent;' that is, to turn from their sins, and believe the gospel: 2 Tim. ii. 25, 'In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;' where the owning of the christian faith is called repentance. Sometimes strictly, as opposed to or rather distinguished from faith, as Acts xx. 21, 'Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;' where repentance is said to be towards God as the end, as faith is conversant about Christ as the means. And there it signifieth a return to the love and obedience of our Creator, which was our primitive duty before the fall, as faith implieth all the duties that belong to our recovery by Christ. In short, in the strict sense, there is not only a sorrow for what is past, which is a beginning and help to the other part; for, 2 Cor. vii. 10, 'Godly sorrow working repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of;' but also a full purpose of heart to live unto God;' Gal. ii. 19, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. Sometimes repentance is described by one term, called 'Repentance from dead works,' Heb. vi. 1; where by dead works are meant sins, which render us liable to death; and often by the other, called a turning or returning to God: Zech. i. 3, 'Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord,' Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.' From him we fell, to him we return; and so it includeth an acknowledgment of our sins, with grief of heart, and a resolution to forsake them, that we may live unto God; both of which, if they be hearty and sincere, will be evidenced by 'newness of life,' Rom. vi. 4, or doing works meet for repentance: Acts xxvi. 20, 'That they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.' The sum of what he preached was reduced to three heads, the two first by way of foundation, the third by way of superstructure. The two first imply an internal change, the third the outward discovery of it. By 'repentance' is meant there a bethinking ourselves, or considering our ways, after we have gone wrong, with a broken-hearted sense and acknowledgment of the misery into which we have plunged ourselves by sin; by 'turning to God,' our seeking happiness in God by Christ, and giving up ourselves to him to do his will; and by 'works meet for repentance,' a suitable and thankful life. All practical divinity may be reduced to these three heads, a sense of our misery by nature, a flying to God by Christ for a remedy, and the life of love and praise, which becometh Christ's reconciled and redeemed ones. This is repentance.

Secondly, What the gospel doth to promote it.

1. It requireth it indispensably of all grown persons. In the text, 'He commandeth all men everywhere to repent.' And our Lord, telleth us that the great end of his commission was to call sinners to repentance: Mat. ix. 13, 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' The gospel findeth us not innocent, but in a lapsed estate, under the power of sin, entangled in the love of the world, and the snares of the devil, and obnoxious to the wrath of God. Now Christ

came to recover us from the devil, the world, and the flesh, unto God, that we may love him again, and be happy in his love; so that they quite mistake the nature of our recovery who dream of a mere exemption from wrath, without an healing our natures, or restoring and putting poor creatures in joint again, which were disordered by the fall or that we can live in the love of God, before we are changed both in heart and life. No; Christ took another course to call us, not only to pardon and eternal glory, but to repentance; or strictly to enjoin this duty upon us, that by his grace we might recover a disposition of heart, which in some measure might incline and enable us to love, please, and obey God, and that under pain of his displeasure we might break off our sins, and live unto God; for he came not to give liberty to any to live in sin.

2. By its promises, for it offereth pardon and life to the penitent believer, and to them only. None can enjoy the privileges of the new covenant but those that are willing to return to the duty which they owe to the Creator. This is gospel: Luke xxiv. 47, 'That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name;' compared with Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.' God and Christ are agreed that salvation should be dispensed upon these terms, and no other. We are not within the reach of the blessing and comfort of the promise till we repent.

3. By its ordinances, or the sacraments and seals of the covenant. As baptism, which serves for this use: Mat. iii. 11, 'I baptize you with water unto repentance;' and Acts ii. 38, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.' This is the initial ordinance, which is our first covenanting with God; and therein we bind ourselves to forsake all known sin, and to live unto God; and from that time forward we must reckon ourselves as under such a vow, bond, debt and obligation: Rom. vi. 11, 'Reckon yourselves also to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' What! doth our mortification or vivification depend on our esteem or conceit? Will that kill sin or quicken holiness? The meaning is, count yourselves obliged to die to sin and to persevere in holiness by your baptismal vow and covenant. In the Lord's supper, one great benefit offered and sealed to us is the remission of sins: Mat. xxvi. 28, 'For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins;' that is, supposing we make conscience of our baptismal vow, and renew our resolutions against sin, lest we grow cold and remiss in them.

Thirdly, How convenient and necessary this is for our recovery to God.

1. For the honour of God. Surely Christ communicateth the effects of his grace in a way becoming the wisdom of God as well as his justice. Now as the justice of God required that his wrath should be appeased, so his wisdom required that man should be converted and turned to God, because God, in dispensing pardon, will still preserve the honour of his law and government; as he doth it in the impetration, so in the application; as to the impetration that was not without satisfaction; so to the application, that is not without repentance, or a consent to live according to the will of God. Now this would fall

to the ground if we should be pardoned without submission, without confession of past sin, or resolution of future obedience; for till then we neither know our true misery, nor are we willing to come out of it; for they that securely continue in their sins, they despise both the curse of the law, and the grace of the gospel.

2. The duty of the creature is secured when we are so solemnly bound to future obedience. Our first hearty consent to live in the love and service of our Creator, with a detestation of our former ways, is made in a solemn covenant manner, called therefore the bond of the covenant: Ezek. xx. 37, 'I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.' So Num. xxx. 2, 'If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, and swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.' And besides, it is made in our anguish, when we drink of the bitter waters, and feel the smart of sin: Acts ix. 6, 'And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' And so the fittest time to induce an hatred of sin, and also love to God and holiness, as having then the sweetest and freshest sense of his love and mercy in providing a saviour for us, and offering pardon to us: Ps. cxxx. 4, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared.' Our thoughts are most conversant about these things: Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.'

3. It is most for the comfort of the creature. There are some principles planted in the heart of man for the restraint of sin, which may be baffled for a time, but our fears will return upon us; and till the soul be subject to God it can never be comfortable, nor at ease within itself; and it is in vain to think we shall find rest for our souls till sin be more hated and God more loved: 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 of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' The same reasons that enforce the necessity of a satisfaction to God's justice do also enforce the necessity of repentance, for else the heart of man is so constituted, that it will be a stranger to comfort. It is true God is not quick and severe upon every miscarriage, but yet the soul apprehendeth him an holy and just God, and therefore must be set to serve the 'living God,' or else the conscience is not 'purged from dead works,' Heb. ix. 12.

Use. Is to press us to mind this work of repentance. We put all upon faith, but overlook repentance; yet the gospel aimeth at this, and without it the grace thereof is not rightly applied. It is a duty of great use, for God's glory, man's obedience, duty, and comfort dependeth on it. And it is indispensably necessary, by God's authority, *necessitate præcepti,* and by the new covenant constitution, *necessitate medii.* And dare we be slight in it? The times of our ignorance show how necessary it is, and the light of the gospel doth more enforce it. Christ upbraided the cities where his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Mat. xi. 20–22, 'Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they

would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you.' And there is a judgment will pass upon us: and if we repent not, who can stand in the judgment? Ps. cxxx. 3, 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?'

What shall we do?

1. Expect not extraordinary dispensations. We have advantage enough by God's word: Luke xvi. 30, 'If one went to them from the dead they would repent.' There Christ impersonateth our natural thoughts, there is no need of that, conscience is awakened with the word. Christ is risen from the dead, and hath sent this message to us.

2. Rouse up yourselves: Ps. xxii. 47, 'All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord;' Ps. cxix. 59, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' Man is inconsiderate, and will not give conscience leave to work.

3. Observe God's checks. We are negligent, therefore God seeketh to awaken us: Prov. i. 23, 'Turn you at my reproof.' Smothering convictions breedeth atheism and hardness of heart.

4. Do what you can: Hosea v. 4, 'They will not frame their doings to return unto their God.' Then we are the more inexcusable in our impenitency when we will not so much as think and endeavour, or use the outward means which tend to repentance, or set about the work as well as we can. If we shut the door upon ourselves, who will pity us? God may do what he pleaseth, but we must do what he hath commanded, bend our course that way, for he has commanded us.

5. Ask it of God. Pray for it: Jer. xxxi. 19, 'Turn thou me, and I shall be turned.' Surely he is able to help you out of your difficulties: Mat. xix. 26, 'With God all things are possible.' He is willing, for he faileth not the serious soul: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance and forgiveness of sins.'

SERMONS UPON MARK X. 17–27.

SERMON I.

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?—MARK x. 17.

ANY reigning sin maketh us incapable of faith, and by consequence of salvation, of which we have a notable instance in the conference that passed between Christ and a young ruler of the Jews. The story begins in the words read, 'And when he was gone forth into the way,' &c. The words give an account of a question put to Christ. And here—

1. The time and place, when and where this question was put to him, 'When he was gone forth into the way.' In the 10th verse we read he was in some private house, where the pharisees did resort to him, and dispute with him about divorce; and ver. 13, 'They brought young children to him, that he might bless them.' Now when he had pleaded their right, and 'laid his hands upon them, and blessed them,' Matthew tells us that 'he departed thence,' chap. xix. 15; and by the wayside, as he was in his journey to some other place, this ruler comes to him. Thus doth our Lord find new occasions of doing good; in the house, and by the wayside. Acts x. 38, it is said, 'He went about doing good.' The life of Christ was a constant course of service to God and bounty to men; he went about, and he went about doing good. This is the time and place, when and where.

2. The next circumstance is the person by whom the question was put. The text saith only, 'There came one running to him.' What this one was we shall find by laying several scriptures together. (1.) This one is said to be *νεανίσκος* 'a young man,' Mat. xix. 20; (2.) *Πλούσιος* 'a rich man,' ver. 22, 'He had great possessions.' (3.) *Ἄρχων*, 'a ruler,' Luke xviii. 18. What is meant by that? Possibly one of the chief pharisees, for they were called *ἄρχοντες*, rulers, Luke xiv. 1, or a ruler of the synagogue; or, as Grotius thinks, one of the magistrates of his town, or rather the head and chief of his family. The honourable families among the Jews had their heads and chiefs, whom they called their rulers. Now such a ruler, a young man, an honourable person, a head and chief of his family, he comes to Christ, and puts this question to him.

3. The manner of his address to Christ; it was voluntary, 'He came,' saith the text, that is, of his own accord. It was zealous and earnest, 'He came running to him.' It was humble, 'He kneeled down to him;' and besides, it was civil and respectful; he calls him 'Rabbi,' and gives him the title of 'good,' 'Good master.' He comes with a kind compellation which shows his reverence and respect to Christ. This was the manner of his address.

4. The question itself, which is weighty and serious, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' Out of all these circumstances take this observation—

Doct. That men may go very far in a sense of religion, and yet come short of true grace.

I give it with respect to the context. This young man is a pregnant instance. He went far, for, as this text delivers his character to us, you will find few his equals, and the most part of the world left behind him. Here is a young man, a rich man, a nobleman, that is troubled about salvation, and seems to forget himself and his dignity; he comes running to Christ, kneels to him, and puts a serious question; but yet he came short; the context shows that, for when he heard of Christ's terms, he went away sorrowful.

To make good the observation—

1. I shall show what was commendable in this young man.

2. Where the defect and fault was; for here seems to be nothing but what is fair and plausible; he comes, and he comes kneeling to Christ, and says, 'Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?'

I. There is something, yea, much commendable in him, and worthy of imitation, and that will appear by considering—(1.) The question which he puts; (2.) The quality of the person that propounded it; (3.) The manner how.

First, The question asked, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' This, for the substance of it, is a good question and very necessary for all to ask. Our hearts would be in a much better frame than they are if we did ask it more and ask it oftener: Oh! how shall we do to be saved?

1. It is not a question about another man, but himself. We read of an impertinent question put by Peter to Christ: John xxi. 21, 'Lord, what shall this man do?' Many do not look inward, and are busy about the concernments of others; but here it is not, What shall *they* do, or what shall *others* do? But, Good master, what is *my* duty? what shall *I* do to be saved?

2. It is not a curious question, or the proposal of some intricate doubt and nice debate: Titus iii. 9, 'Avoid foolish questions.' Curious questions argue wantonness; they that are heart-whole will dispute and wrangle about unprofitable needless points, but neglect those that are most weighty and necessary; and it is a true rule, *Deficit in necessariis qui redundat in superfluis*—Those that wholly give up themselves to vain janglings neglect more necessary and profitable matters. But the young man's question is not about curious speculations, but a weighty point, 'What shall I do to be saved?'

3. It is not about the body, but the soul. There are things necessary

for the outward man ; and questions of that nature are too rife with us : 'What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and what shall we put on ?' Mat. vi. 25. All men's care is about the body, and these worldly questions do most perplex their hearts, How shall I be clothed and fed ? But this young man's question is not about any matter of the world, but the saving of his soul, How shall I do to live for ever with God ?

4. About his soul ; he doth not ask a frivolous or small thing, but a thing of the greatest moment in all divinity, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ?' A weighty matter, the weightiest of all others : Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousnesss ;' Prov. iv. 7, 'Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding.' And certainly such a question as this discovers a good spirit. (1.) That he was no Sadducee, for he inquires after eternal life, which they denied. The young man was one that did believe in heaven and hell, and inquires after the way how to escape the one and obtain the other. (2.) It discovers some thoughtfulness about it. Many of Christ's own disciples dreamed of an earthly kingdom ; they were ever putting questions to Christ about it : Acts i. 6, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ?' But his thoughts were more upon the kingdom of heaven than upon a temporal reign, which they fancied to themselves. (3.) It discovered that he was very sensible of the connection that is between the end and the means, that something must be done in order to eternal life. There are some men that would have heaven and happiness, but are loath to be at the cost : Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his.' *At oportuit sic vixisse ;* but we must live so, if we would die so. It is presumptuous folly to hope for the end without the means ; there are means leading to the end, which must be inquired after and regarded by us. Well, then, so far the pharisee is right, that without 'holiness no man shall see the Lord.' (4.) This question so put discovers that he was sensible that a slight thing would not serve the turn, not a little saying and outward profession. This was not a vain and loose person, but a moral man, and one that had done much ; yet, 'What good thing must I do ?' (5.) This was the errand and great thing that brought him to Christ, to find the way to heaven and true happiness. The man was rich, but he saw that his happiness lay not in riches, but in everlasting salvation, and thereupon he goes to Christ to learn how he should do to obtain it. There were many which followed Christ upon other accounts ; some for his miracles, he cured their diseases ; others for the loaves, John vi. 26 ; but he comes to him about eternal life.

5. This question was seriously put ; he did not ask it in jest, but in the greatest earnest. When men are convinced, things now begin to be real, and seem other than formerly they did ; they think, and speak, and talk like men in another world. Sin is another thing, they were wont to marvel what made men keep such ado about sin. What great harm was it to take a little forbidden pleasure ? That it was hard measure to be held so closely to duty. But now they have other thoughts ; some are anxious, all are solicitous and careful, and enter into consultation about the means of salvation. When the Corinthians were

made sorry by Paul's letter, 2 Cor. vii. 11, 'What carefulness it wrought in you.'

In short (that I may gather up all I have said), necessary questions are better than those which are nice and impertinent, and practical questions are better than speculative, and questions about spiritual and eternal things are better than those that only concern temporal. Questions about the soul are better than those which concern the body, as far as the soul excels the body, and heaven excels the world. Where was the fault of all this? I will show that by and by; only I mention now, there was a leaven of legalism; he thought to earn heaven by his doing, 'What good thing must I do?' as Matthew repeats the question, Mat. xix. 16. Thus far we have the character of the man fair; he was one that comes about a very serious and momentous question to Christ, a question that should be more on our heart.

Secondly, Let us consider the person by whom it was put, by a young man in the prime of his age, by a rich man in the fulness of his wealth, by a man of good rank as well as a good estate, by a ruler while he was in his power and empire.

1. We find him to be νεανίσκος, a young man. Julius Pollux tells us that νεανίσκος is one that had not yet accomplished his fourth septenary, that is, not yet full twenty-eight years of age. Young men are usually vain, and there is nothing they mind less than the salvation of their soul. If an old man had put this question to Christ, it had been the less remarkable; it is time for them to think of another world that have one foot already in the grave; but this young man comes to Christ to inquire after eternal life. Oh! that other young men would imitate his example, and go so far as he who yet fell short, as we shall see in the process of the story. There is an ignorant and profane conceit which possesseth many men's minds that it is not necessary for young men to study the scriptures, or to trouble themselves much with thinking of heaven and life to come, because they are young, and strong, and lusty, and likely to live many years; therefore they think it is more proper for them to follow the world, and to mind the things of this life, and let old men alone to think of heaven. But this is flat contrary to the word of God, which requires us to 'Remember our Creator in the days of our youth,' Eccles. xii. 1. He that gave all deserves our best, that our first and flowery years should be consecrated to him, while the effects of his creating bounty are most sensible upon us: Ps. cxix. 9, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?' The world will say, What have young folks 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 repenting, and of cleansing our hearts from sin, and providing for our last end and great account. Oh no! God demands his right of the young man, that his heart be seasoned betimes with grace. In the word of God we read of Josiah, a young king; of Phineas, a young priest; of Daniel, a young prophet; and Timothy, a young evangelist. Oh! that young men would apply their hearts to religion, and make progress therein!

[1.] Consider how convenient and reasonable it is that God should have our first and best. The flower and best of our days is due to

God, who is the best of beings. Under the law the first-fruits were God's; the sacrifices were all offered young and in their strength: Lev. ii. 14, 'If thou offer a meat-offering of the first-fruits unto the Lord, thou shalt offer the meat-offering of the first-fruits, green ears of corn dried by the fire.' They were not to stay till they were ripened. God will not be kept out of his portion. When wit is dulled, ears heavy, body weak, affections spent, is this a fit sacrifice for God? In respect of eternal life, which we look for, we should begin betimes to lay a foundation. If a man has a great way to go, it is good rising early in the morning; many set out too late, never any too soon. And for the conveniency of it, young men are most capable of doing God service; they are best able to take pains in the service of God, and working out their own salvation; they are fittest in regard of strength of body and mind; the faculties of their souls are most vigorous, and the members of their bodies most active; they have quick wits, much firmness of memory, and strength of affection. It is not fit to lay the greatest load on the weakest horse; the weak shoulders of old men are not fit for the burden of religion.

[2.] Consider how necessary it is, because the lusts of youth being boiling hot, need the correction of a more severe discipline. Young men are inclined to liberty and carnal pleasures, and are more apt to be led aside from the right way by the motions of the flesh, and are self-willed and headstrong in their passions, therefore they need look after the world to come, and to exercise themselves in holiness more than others do. As the boiling pot sendeth up most scum, so in the fervours of youth there are the strongest inclinations to intemperance and uncleanness. Who so eager in desires, so bold in enterprises, so confident and presumptuous as they? Therefore they ought to be most heedful, watchful, and seriously religious, lest they be caught in the devil's snares. We read of 'youthful lusts;' 2 Tim. ii. 22, 'Flee also youthful lusts.' Therefore youth had need to be seasoned with the doctrine of the scriptures: 2 Tim. iii. 15, 'And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' The heat and violence of their lusts is broken with a care of the world to come.

[3.] Consider the profit of it.

(1.) The work is more easy the sooner it is taken in hand; whereas the longer it is delayed, the more difficult. Sin groweth stronger by custom, and more rooted: Jer xiii. 27, 'I have seen thy adulteries and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredoms, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?' There is not such another tyrant in the world as sin; by every act it gathereth strength. A twig is easily bowed, but when it groweth into a tree, it is not moved. The man that was possessed of a devil from his childhood, how hardly was he cured! Mark ix. 21. When the disease groweth inveterate, medicines do little good. If you would know what you should do to inherit eternal life, learn it young, and then 'the way of the Lord will be strength to you;' Lam. iii. 27, 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.'

(2.) You hereby provide for the comfort of old age. If you serve

God in your good days, he will help you the better over those evil days wherein there is no pleasure: Isa. xlvi. 3, 4, 'Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all that remain of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb; and even to your old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs I will carry you.' It will be then no grief of heart to you when old, that you were acquainted with God young; whereas, on the other side, the vanities of youth will be the burden of age. *Inania juventutis gaudia sunt acerba senectutis gravamina*—Ambrose.

(3.) Our great work, that must be once done, is put out of hazard when we think of heaven seriously while we are young. Most defer this main care out of hope of long life. The young as well as old may die; the far smaller part of mankind arrive to old age. Life is most uncertain, and such a weighty business as this should not be left at peradventures. Nadab and Abihu were taken away young, and in their sins; the bears out of the forest devoured the children that mocked the prophet. Therefore, the danger being so great, you should make sure of escape from hell, and of a title to heaven betimes. When children come to the full use of their reason, they stand on their own bottom, whereas before they are reckoned to their parents; and then woe to them if God crop them off in their flower, and they die in their sins when they are upon their own personal account. All this is spoken to show that younger as well as elder persons should inquire after eternal life.

2. This man was πλούσιος, a rich man, one who had great possessions. Rich men usually quench their reason in sensuality, and wallow in all manner of carnal delights, but cast off all thoughts of eternity. But this man, though he had enough to live happily in the present world, yet he thinks of the world to come. Oh! that all you that are rich in this world would go and do likewise! Usually men, when they are well at ease, look no further. This is a question rarely moved by men of that sort, 'What shall they do to be saved?' They think heaven is a fit notion to entertain the fancies of the poor and afflicted withal, a pleasant thought wherewith to comfort and relieve their sorrows; but this rich man, though he had great possessions, yet he hath his trouble upon him about his salvation. It is true in general, of all men there will be but few saved, and among the rich but few of those few: 1 Cor. i. 26, 'Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.' Usually where is religion more bitterly scoffed at and vilified than among the rich and full-fed worldlings? They throng their hearts with pleasures, and make it their business to run from one carnal contentment to another, as if they would verify that fool's saying, Luke xii. 19, 'Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' All their time is spent in sporting, eating, drinking, dressing, and undressing; this is the business and entertainment of their lives. Oh! when shall we hear one savoury word from these concerning eternity and the life to come? But surely it is their duty, as well as of poorer men, to seek an interest in heaven and in the world to come, if indeed there be such a thing, as scripture and reason and conscience will tell us that there is. Certainly we shall not always tarry here, and there will a time come when it will be of no profit to

us that we have lived more plentifully than others, unless we have made provision for a better life. Rich men are wont to command others, and we must command them whose office it is to come to them in a greater name. What to do? 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches.' Charge them that they do not scornfully refuse the gospel, and think to bear it out with their wealth and greatness; so I interpret 'trusting in uncertain riches.' There will a time come when they shall stand on the same level with the poor, therefore let it be their great business to get in with God, and to be useful in their places; to sow to the Spirit rather than to the flesh, that they may be sure of a good estate in the world to come, and take hold of eternal life. This rich man was not satisfied with his estate; he comes with this question, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?'

3. He was ἄρχων, a ruler, not a vulgar and obscure plebeian, but a man of eminency and authority, a nobleman (to speak in the English language), or the chief of his family. Men of this rank are usually either seeking how they may raise their name and estate in the world by the favour of princes, aiming to be built up every day a storey higher, with new additions of honour and title; this is their great business; it little entereth into their thoughts to have their names written in the book of life; or else abusing their power and greatness, by opposing Christ, his interests, servants, and kingdom; and therefore the psalmist saith, 'Be wise now therefore, O ye kings! be instructed, ye judges of the earth,' Ps. ii. 10. Most men have stumbled upon the corner-stone, and taken no warning by those that have been broken in pieces before them. Or else they are such as are afraid and ashamed to be reckoned among the followers of a despised Christ, as that which would lessen their grandeur, and make them of no reputation among men of their rank and quality; that they should be taken notice of, if they favour religion, and the things of God: John vii. 48, 'Have any of the rulers or the pharisees believed on him?' that is, in the Jewish dialect, have any of the nobles and chiefs? But this man, though a ruler, he comes with his case of conscience to Christ, and he comes openly, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' We have seen his question, and found it to be serious and momentous, such as becomes us all to make, and we have considered his person.

Thirdly, Here is the manner of his address, and thence you may observe—

1. The voluntariness of it. He came not called by others, but he came of himself; not driven by afflictions, or by any bodily or outward necessity, but came to Christ. Many of Christ's own disciples and menial servants came not so. Peter came not till Andrew brought him; yea, the other apostles were all called. Here we read of no calling, no inviting, but he came of his own accord, and that not upon the impulsion, or urging of any bodily necessity. Many came to Christ, but thanks to their calamities and necessities that drove them; they were blind and lame, or possessed with devils, or had their sick to cure; but this man comes without any collateral respect, nothing but a desire of satisfaction to his grand scruples, 'What shall I do to obtain eternal life?' This brings him to Christ.

2. The earnestness and fervour of his coming, 'He came running.' This nobleman seemed to forget and neglect the dignity of his condition; he doth not walk in state, but, when Christ was gone out of the house where he was before, lest he should miss of him, he runs after him. This shows his zeal and forwardness to meet with Christ, and to put this question to him. He had an earnest desire to confer with Christ, and is not ashamed even then to run after him when Christ was a despised person. When David danced before the ark, and Michal scoffed at him, as if it argued lightness, 2 Sam. vi. 16, he said, 'If this be to be vile, I will be more vile.' It was disgraceful in that age for this ruler to come to Christ, much more to run after him. Nicodemus, a man of his rank, was convinced, yet he durst not publicly own Christ, but came to him by night, so as least to be taken notice of; but this man runs after him in the highway, and sets all other respects aside, that he might seek a salve for the sore which run upon him, so great and earnest was his desire to have his conscience satisfied, 'What must I do to inherit eternal life?'

3. Consider his humility and reverence to Christ; he kneeled to him, in token of civil honour and reverence to him, as an eminent prophet and teacher. He was not persuaded, as we that profess ourselves christians are, of the Godhead of Christ, only he took him for some great prophet and a man of God, therefore he cometh and tendereth his petition kneeling. One would think all this respect and fair meaning might be without any fault, and that he had a very good heart, a man that should come, and run, and kneel to Christ, and beg him to answer this question.

4. There is his compellation, 'Good master.' He came not treacherously to entrap Christ, as the lawyer that asked the same question, but not with the same intent: Luke x. 25, 'Behold a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' This man came not to tempt Christ, but to learn of him, out of a good intention and purpose, and with a mind and affection in some degree sincere. The man had some good qualities, for it is said, 'Jesus loved him;' he had moral sincerity, for he did not dissemble; but he came not with a supernatural sincerity, for there was a reservation in his heart, as appears by the sequel; his resolution to follow Christ was not absolute, though he esteems him, and makes fair offers to him. We have seen the first part, namely, what was commendable; a young man, a rich man, a nobleman; he comes with such earnestness, with such a question to Christ, with such a desire to be satisfied, with an intention sincere.

II. But where was his defect? By all that hath been said, a man would think that all this while I have been describing some rare saint. Such is his zeal and forwardness after spiritual and heavenly knowledge, and such is our coldness and carelessness about everlasting concernments, that we should easily think, Surely this is enough, and wonder God should require anything more, and to go further than this man.

1. His fault was that he asked, in the pharisee's sense, what good thing he should do. That will appear by Christ's answer in the process of the story. If the question had been only, By what means must I be saved? or, What is the way to heaven? Christ would have answered

him, as the apostles did in a like case, Acts xvi. 31, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' If the question had been put to him in a broken-hearted manner, and by one that was sensible of his misery and inability, and had come to Christ and said, 'What shall I do?' he would have taught him. Now the pharisee's error was double—he thought that men might be saved by their own works, and that those works were in their own power. He thought of nothing else but of being saved by the merit of his own works, that those were full out-weight with God, and did deserve eternal life; as the Jews elsewhere: Rom. ix. 31, 32, 'Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.' They were ignorant of the law and of themselves; ignorant of the law, and therefore sought justification by the works of the law, and not by faith; and ignorant of themselves, and therefore presumed of their own strength, as if they were able to do whatever good was prescribed to them. As the Jews said to Christ, John vi. 28, 'What shall we do that we might work the works of God?' They were confident of their own merit and strength. Here was his fault, that he was, as other Jews were, both ignorant of the law and ignorant of himself: of the law, that there is no standing before God by that covenant; and of himself, that he had full strength to perform it. Men by nature retain so deep an impression of the covenant of works, and are ignorant of the perfection of the law and their own impotency, that they know no way of attaining eternal life but by their own works, and doubt not but they shall do well enough; if Christ will tell them their duty, they will do it. In short, this young man was conceited of a righteousness as in himself and from himself, and if Christ had answered him according to that humour, he had done no more good upon him than if a physician should say to a lame man, Run, and you shall be cured. And therefore Christ's business was to bring him to a brokenness of heart by the knowledge of the law, of himself, and his own weakness, as you shall see afterwards.

2. His next fault was, his love of riches and worldly things, which is a dangerous obstruction, and a let to salvation. Fair intentions and good offers profit not where any one thing is loved more than God, where the world is not overcome, and the fleshly mind and interest is not mortified; for we must not confine it only to riches, but pleasure, and honour, or any such thing. For when Christ had taught them that he was Lord and sovereign, and could give laws—he gives him a law to try him, 'Sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and come take up the cross, and follow me'—he went away sorrowful. Unless every affection and interest of ours be laid at the feet of Christ, we are not throughly converted to him. From this story, consider, whoever believes must determine God is his chiefest good, and Jesus Christ is the only way to God; there must be an intention of God as the last end, and a choice of Christ as the only means; there must be brokenness of heart, a renouncing the world, and an entire dependence on Christ as the only Saviour to bring us to God.

Use. This may humble us, that we go not so far, and to caution us that we do not rest here.

First, To humble us. Alas! most men go not so far as this young rich man, that comes thus seriously to Christ about a question of eternal life. It is a saying of Athanasius, *Utinam omnes essent hypocritæ*— Would to God all men would go so far as hypocrites. He means it not as to dissimulation, but partial obedience. It were a blessed thing for the world if all men went so far as this young man; so as—

1. To have their thoughts taken up about eternal life. The most part of the world never consider whence they are, nor whither they go, nor what shall become of them to all eternity. We busy our thoughts about our temporal interests, and are carking how we may live in the world, and maintain ourselves, but never take care how we shall live for ever. If you go from house to house, you will find this question very rare, 'What shall I do to obtain eternal life?' Go up and down among people everywhere, and you meet with no such language as this. Go to young and old, poor and rich, great and small; we have many thoughts in us how to dispose of our present affairs, but few think of the world to come. Should a man's thoughts be taken up about furnishing his inn, where he tarries but a night, and neglect his home? Thus we busy ourselves about the affairs of this life, when to-morrow we must be gone, and mind not the world to come, where we must abide for ever. Not once a year doth such a thought run in our minds; we never ask or speak about it, nor will we suffer any to do so; so far are we from being diligent and earnest to get it resolved, this is the least part of our care.

2. To be sensible it is no slight matter to have an interest in the world to come. Most men think they shall do well enough for heaven; a small matter will serve the turn for that, and there needs not such great solicitude about it. This was a moral man, no debauched person, yet he is troubled, and makes inquiry after eternal life. Many think a slight saying, God have mercy upon me, or a little overly trust upon the mercy of God will serve the turn.

3. To have such a sense as to choose fit means. He had heard the pharisees long, but was not satisfied; their doctrine was cold, without any spirit and life, and their zeal was all for externals and bodily exercise, that was of little profit. Eternal life was a thing sparingly spoken of by them, but more plentifully by Christ; therefore he goes not to the scribes and pharisees and chief priests, who arrogated to themselves the knowledge of mysteries. Many heap up teachers to please their own lusts.

4. To be so concerned as to be earnest in the means. This man ran after Christ when he missed him in the house, and they will not come to the congregations of the faithful where this great question is discussed, 'What they shall do to inherit eternal life?' Eccles. v. 1, 'Be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools,' and James i. 19, 'Be swift to hear.' But we are cold, slack and negligent. Many are even ready to thrust the means from them, and say unto God, 'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,' Job xxi. 14. Those means that should do them good are tedious and irksome; therefore this should humble us, that we go not so far as this pharisee.

Secondly, To caution us; do not rest in a common work.

1. In a desire of heaven as your only happiness. Alas! this is a

common thing both to regenerate and unregenerate: John vi. 34, 'Lord, evermore give us of this bread.' Is any man such an enemy to himself as not to wish it? Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his.' A natural man may discern that true happiness lies not in outward things, but in eternal life, as this man did, and accordingly may have a desire as he had.

2. Do not rest barely in a desire that moveth us to the use of some means, unless it bring us to a perfect resignation to God. This man had a good mind to heaven; he cheapens it, but is not willing to go through with the price. Many have good desires and intentions, but will not 'sell all for the pearl of price,' Mat. xiii. 44; they will not come up to Christ's terms, namely, to lay every affection and lust at Christ's feet, and wholly resign themselves to be guided by him in his own way to happiness, and so they may go to hell notwithstanding all their desires.

3. If we would not rest in a common work, then two things we must take care of, which are opposite to the double defect of this young man—brokenness of heart, and unbounded resignation of ourselves to the will of God; bring yourselves to that, and the thing is done. (1.) Brokenness of heart. This young man hath a great opinion and conceit of his own righteousness; being full of his own righteousness, he came to be approved by Christ rather than be directed. Here lay his great fault; he inquires the way to heaven, but yet believes himself to be in the way already, yea, far gone in that way; holy in his own estimation; therefore you must cherish an humble sense of your own nothingness, for Christ bid him do that. (2.) Resignation of yourselves to God's will. Have a care of the love of riches, or any carnal affection. If you be wedded to any temporal thing, it will be your bane, and destroy all religion, and make you go away sorrowful after many fair offers and many good meanings. It is difficult for the rich, but even the poor have their difficulties too. He that starves as well as he that surfeits hath his difficulties in the way to heaven. Every man hath a tender part of soul, some carnal affection that he doth allow, reserve, and is loath should be touched; therefore, till there be an unbounded resignation, and we fully throw ourselves at Christ's feet, it is impossible ever we should come to the kingdom of heaven. The soul is never right with God whilst we stand haggling and dodging with God. No; give up yourselves to him without reservation, to be guided and ordered by him at his will and pleasure; as Acts ix. 6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' They that are sincere do not dispense with themselves in anything, and say, Thus far they will go, and, The Lord be merciful to me in this; but they absolutely follow Christ. See Luke ix. 59, to the end. Herod did many things; this young man had a forwardness and urgent desire. Thus it is with many; heaven must fall into our lap, or we will have none of it; if it puts us to pains or cost, it is too dear a bargain for us to deal withal; we snuff at God's terms as troublesome, and fling off. No; we should be glad to accept of mercy on any terms, and take heaven at God's price.

[1.] This unbounded resolution must be seriously made: 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;' Mark xiii. 45, 46, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.'

[2.] It must be faithfully performed. You must not only renounce but overcome when it cometh to trial, subdue your lusts, run all hazards for Christ, thwart affections, slight disgraces, nicknames, and scorns, and lay all down, nay, life itself, at Christ's feet: Mark xix. 27–29, '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 which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel; and every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.' We must pluck out a right eye and cut off a right hand, Mat. v. 29, 30. Many will perform such duties as cross not any strong bent of their lusts, they will forbear some sins that are not so rooted in their natures, nor grown strong by custom, nor are set on by any forcible temptation, but fail in other things of greater moment, or more nearly concerning them.

There are four points of great weight and moment, which should ever be remembered by them that would make out their gospel qualifications, or new covenant plea of sincerity.

(1.) That any allowed evil habit of soul or reigning sin is inconsistent with that faith that worketh by love, and only maketh us capable of the great privileges of the gospel. That appeareth by the nature of conversion, which lieth in three things—a turning from the creature to God, from self to Christ, from sin to holiness: John v. 44, 'How can ye believe that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' 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;' 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;' 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.) That the usual bait of reigning sin is the world. The great difficulty of salvation lies in a man's addictedness to worldly things or temporal satisfactions. When these are highest in our esteem, or dearest to our hearts, it weakeneth God's interest and our care of salvation, and our sense of the world to come: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not;' 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off;' Phil. iii. 19, 'Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.' The world taketh us off from the serious pursuit of heaven: Luke x.

41, 42, 'Martha! Martha! thou art careful, and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful;' and makes us shrink at trials: 2 Tim. iv. 10, 'Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world.'

(3.) That our inclination to worldly things is various according to the temper and constitution of men. As the channel is cut so the river runs: Isa. liii. 6, 'We have turned every one in his own way.' Some are carried away by pride, some by vainglory, some by sensuality, some by worldliness. Uprightness and sincerity lies in observing the tender part of the soul, and preserving ourselves from that sin which is most natural to us: Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.'

(4.) That many times, when pretences are fair there is a secret reserve in our hearts. The devil seeketh to deceive men with a superficial change and half reformation, and moveth them to take on the profession of religion, and yet secure their fleshly and worldly interest. The most dangerous cheat of our souls is by halving it between God and mammon: 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.' When we are not so mortified as to subject ourselves entirely to Christ's direction upon the hopes of eternal life, or the happiness of the world to come, and to part with all things in the world, when it is necessary so to do; or else we must part with this salvation. Many think they are not worldly because they have some thoughts of heaven, and do something for it in seeking after it; but the business is whether you seek it in the first place, and make it your principal end and scope, to which all other things are subordinated and referred? whether you can forsake all rather than miss heaven? Jesus Christ, though he prized good beginnings, and would not discourage any, yet admitteth none to the privileges of grace that are but half converted, whose hearts are in secret league with the world, though they seem to be affected with the offers of eternal life.

SERMON II.

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God.—MARK x. 18.

WE have seen the young man's question, here is Christ's answer, in which observe two things—

1. His expostulation with him, 'Why callest thou me good?'

2. His instruction of him, 'There is none good but one, that is God.'

First, For the expostulation, 'Why callest thou me good?' He doth not simply blame him for giving this title to him, but argueth with him about it—

1. To show that he loves no compliments or fair words, which proceed not from sound faith and love to him. Christ saw that he was

ignorant of his divine authority, and foresaw that he would not take his counsel, and therefore expostulates with him, 'Why callest thou me good?' As elsewhere, Luke vi. 46, 'Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' *Cui res nomini subjecta negatur, is nomine illuditur*—It is a mockery to give titles to any one when we we do not answer it with suitable endeavours; as those that gave Christ honourable titles, 'Hail! king of the Jews!' but buffeted him, and spit upon him; and so here, 'Why callest thou me good?'

2. He takes occasion to draw him from his error of conceiving him as a mere man. The attribute of good belongeth truly and properly to none but God. Now, saith Christ, is that thy meaning, to acknowledge me for such? Our Lord was now about to try his obedience by a special precept, and therefore it was first necessary that he should be apprehended and acknowledged as God, and lawgiver to the souls of men. Mere moral goodness could not qualify him for that. Christ will be known to be God by those that come to him, or else they cannot worship him aright.

3. Our Lord would teach us by his own example to cast all the honour we receive upon God. We may own goodness in creatures, but not to the wrong of God; at least, all must be acknowledged to be transferred by him, and we must be faithful to the supreme giver. This is a common sin, that when God doth any good by the creatures, the minds of men stick in the creatures, and never look up to God, and from thence came idolatry first into the world. Therefore, to cure this evil, when we receive any praise and commendation, we should refer it to 'the Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift,' James i. 17. The apostles, that did not set up a trade for themselves, but went abroad as factors for Christ, were very jealous of usurping divine honour. When Peter had made a lame man walk, Acts iii. 12, 'Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?' He was loath that the glory of God should be hidden. So Acts xiv. 14, 15, when the men of Lystra would have worshipped them, 'They rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do you these things? we also are men of like passions with you.' On the contrary, it cost Herod dear for owning the applauses of the people: Acts xii. 22, 23, 'The people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man: and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.' The receiver is as bad as the robber, and therefore Herod was smitten for taking what the people ascribed to him. We should be very tender in this point, when good is done by us or ascribed to us, to refer all to God, who is the author of all that little good we do for him. This is the constant practice of humble and self-denying spirits: Luke xix. 16, he doth not say, 'my industry,' but 'thy pound hath gained ten pounds.' And when Paul had been much in labours, much in afflictions and mighty in spirit, he said, 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'By the grace of God I am what I am;' and 'not I, but the grace of God that was with me.' So Gal. ii. 20, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' As the heathens were wont solemnly to cast their crowns and garlands into their fountains, this is to crown the fountain of all our mercies. God's children, that

are seen in the work, disappear in the praise, that God only may be acknowledged; and therefore they are rather buffeted than pleased with their own praises. Look, as Joab when he had conquered Rabbah, sent for David to wear the honour of the conquest, 2 Sam. xii. 27, 28, so should we deal with God, cast all our crowns at his feet. If we do anything, let God have all the glory. Christ himself hath taught us so to do, 'Why call you me good? there is none good but one, that is God.'

4. I suppose the chief reason was to beat down this pharisaical conceit. This young man was too highly conceited of his own and others' external goodness and righteousness before men, 'Good master, what good thing must I do?' not looking to the inward power of grace in the heart. The pharisees, whose leaven he was tainted with, had this conceit, as if men were of themselves good, and perfectly good; and therefore, to teach him humility and self-annihilation, he takes this advantage from the compellation given him, to inform him that in proper speech God only is good, and that humility and brokenness of heart doth better become men than the conceit of their own goodness and righteousness and self-sufficiency; and therefore, 'Why callest thou me good?'

Secondly, I come to Christ's instruction of him, 'There is none good but one, that is God;' and there you have two propositions—

1. That in some sense there is no man good.

2. That God only is good. Εἰ μὴ is put not exceptively, as if God were a man, but adversatively; no man is good, but there is one good, that is God.

Doct. 1. There is no mere man that is absolutely and perfectly good. It will be needful to explain this. I shall do it negatively, and affirmatively.

First, For the negative part.

[1.] It is not to be so understood as if in no sense man were good, for it is said in Luke vi. 45, 'A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good.' Some degree and kind of goodness may be ascribed to men; and it is said of Barnabas that he was 'a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost,' Acts xi. 24; and Joseph of Arimathea was said to be 'a good man and just,' Luke xxiii. 50. Therefore certainly in some sense a man may be said to be good.

[2.] This is not so to be understood as if there were no distinction between men, but they were all equal in sin. No; but as Jeremiah had two baskets of figs, some very good and some very bad, so there are two sorts of men in the world, some good, some bad; some that walk after the spirit, and others that walk after the flesh; some that mind earthly things, and others that mind heavenly things. This is an everlasting distinction between man and man, that will outlive time. The distinction of great and small ceaseth at death, but the distinction of good and bad lasts for ever, and issueth itself into these two places, heaven and hell. It is a misconceit for any to go away with this thought, that because Christ says there is no man good, therefore there is no distinction between the state of nature and the state of grace, between the regenerate and unregenerate. There are some that are totally wicked, that make a trade to do evil; there are others that have a principle

of goodness infused into them; some 'whose spot is not the spot of God's children,' Deut. xxxii. 5, and others who though they have sin remaining in them, yet it reigns not over them.

[3.] It is not so to be understood as if it were unlawful wholly to acknowledge that goodness that is in others. We have God's own example to warrant us. God, as soon as he saw that anything was good, he uttered and declared it, and said it was good: Gen. i. 4, 'God saw the light, that it was good.' He said it first of light, then of other creatures. God would be no author nor example of smothering the due praise of good actions. That man hath little goodness in himself that will not own it in others. Indeed we are forbidden to 'call good evil, and evil good,' Isa. v. 20, as the world is usually guilty of this misnomer. None are good but those that flatter them in their sins, and none are evil but those that are zealous for God. This preposterous judgment is forbidden, but it is nowhere forbidden to call good, good, and to own the graces of others; that were enviously to defraud the virtuous of their due respect.

Secondly, Positively. How is it then true that no man is good? *Ans.* Three ways—No man is of himself good, nor perfectly good, nor good comparing him with God.

[1.] No man is of himself good, but only by participation of God's goodness. As all the stars derive their light from the sun, so do we derive our poor weak ray wherewith we shine, from the Father of lights: James i. 17, 'Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' It is God that makes us to do good, and receive good, for 'he worketh all our works in us,' Isa. xxvi. 12, and hath a greater share in the good that we do than we have ourselves. All the tribute that we pay him, we have it out of his own exchequer; for we have all and every part from God; he giveth the will, the very first motion and inclination to any good; and he giveth the deed and the final accomplishment: Phil. ii. 13, 'It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.' Our good works are more God's than ours; we may say of them, as Austin of his illegitimate child, *In eo nihil habui præter peccatum*—Lord, I had nothing in this child but my sins. So it is true of the fruit of our souls as well as of our bodies, nothing is ours but the defect, all the good is God's; yea, as he sweetly saith in another place, speaking of this very case, in his comment upon the 137th psalm, *Opus tuum vide in me, Domine non meum; nam meum si videris damnas me, tuum si videris coronas me; nam et quecunque sunt opera mea abs te sunt, ideo tua magis quam mea sunt*—Regard, O Lord, in me, not my work, but thine own; if thou regardest my work, thou damnest me; if thine own, thou crownest me, since whatsoever good I have, I have it from thee, and therefore it is rather thine than mine. Well, then, no mere man is good, that is, good of himself.

2. No man is good, that is, absolutely and perfectly good. The perfection of righteousness, so as to do good without sin, is not to be found in any man, no, not in the best man upon earth. In heaven indeed they are made perfect: Heb. xii. 23, 'To the spirits of just men made perfect. But here upon earth 'there is not a just man that doeth good, and sins not,' Eccles. vii. 20, but either at one time or other he will sin; or

in the same action none doeth good and sins not. Noah, Abraham, Lot, Moses, David, Peter, they had all their *nævos*, their blots and blemishes; nay, in all things, in their best actions there is somewhat faulty and defective. Nehemiah, where he doth appeal to God for the remembrance of his great works, he desireth God to spare him according to the greatness of his mercy: Neh. xiii. 22, 'And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come, and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath-day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.' And we read of Aaron's 'bearing the iniquity of the holy things,' Exod. xxviii. 38; and 'in many things we offend all,' James iii. 2. Some in all things, and all in some things, either by way of omission or commission. This is true of regenerate and unregenerate.

[1.] As to the unregenerate. When God looked upon his creatures as they passed his hands, he saw all was good, Gen. i. 31; but when he looked down from heaven upon men in their natural condition, and as they had made themselves and defiled themselves, so 'they were altogether become filthy and abominable, and there is none that doeth good, no not one,' Ps. xiii. 3; and 'there is none righteous, no not one,' Rom. iii. 10; that is, pleasing and acceptable with God; it is true of them, none is good.

[2.] As to the regenerate, none is good, that is, wholly free from sin. Paul complains, 'I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing,' Rom. vii. 18. And Christ saith to his own disciples, those who were the children of God, those to whom he makes a promise of the Spirit, Luke xi. 13, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children,' &c. Even the children of God are evil in this sense, that is, not perfectly good. *In optimis non nihil est pessimi*—There is some evil in the best. (1.) There is evil in their natures; there are the relics and remainders of much sinful corruption, the flesh and spirit; like Hannah and Peninnah, always vexing and thwarting one another: Gal. v. 17, 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.' The most of the sanctifying grace which we have is the least part of that which we want and that we should have. In the best, sin is like a wild fig-tree; cut off the boughs and branches, yet still there will be some strings that will be sprouting out again; or like the leprosy in the house that could not be cured by scraping, till it was pulled down to the ground. There is a tincture of the old leaven which remains in the best heart. (2.) There is evil in their best actions: Isa. lxiv. 6, 'But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;' not only our sins, but our righteous operations; the productions of the soul cannot exceed the force of our principles, and if there be a double principle, there must be a double operation. (3.) There is new evil which we contract by our actions: John xvii. 10, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.' He that is purged from sin, and washed, contracts new soil. *In bono itinere pulverem colligis*, saith Bernard—In the good we do we contract filth, as we gather new dust in our walking up and down. So that none is perfectly thoroughly good.

3. No man is good in comparison with God. That goodness that we have in participation from him will appear no goodness in compari-

son with him. If the heavens themselves, the purest part of the world, are not clean in his sight, how much more evil is man? Job xxv. 5, 6, 'Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not, and the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man that is a worm, and the son of man, which is a worm?' Elsewhere it is said, 'He chargeth his angels with folly,' Job iv. 18. If he charge his angels with folly, that is, if he seeth mutability in the angelical nature, take it in itself, and without his confirming grace, there is folly in the angels, then what is man, whose foundation is in the dust? When the prophet Isaiah had seen God in a vision, and heard the angels cry, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!' Isa. vi. 3, what then? ver. 5, 'Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips,' &c. When he had seen God, then he bewails his own vileness. So Job xlii. 5, 6, 'Now mine eyes have seen thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' The consideration of God's holiness and dignity obscureth all the glory and praise of the creature. As when the sun is up, the lustre of the stars is no more to be seen than as if they were not, so when God is thought on, and we are compared with him, there are none good, no not one. While we compare ourselves with one another, one may be called bad, another good; but when we compare ourselves with God, no man is good. Look, as it is in respect of entity or being, none is but God; when other things are compared with God, they are called things that are not; so it is true of goodness, we are not good when compared with a holy God. 'I am more brutish than any man,' saith Agur, Prov. xxx. 2. This was a lesson Christ would teach the pharisee, to bring him to humility and self-annihilation.

Use 1. I might take occasion hence to confute two popish errors. One is touching the state of perfection in this life, that some men endowed with special grace may keep the law perfectly; but if they could do so, they could be without sin, and perfectly good. Now who can say, 'I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin,' Prov. xx. 9. Will they reply, that some are free from sin, but out of humility they forbear to say so, *propter periculum inanis gloriæ*, for fear of vainglory? But there is a truth in the thing, *non tantum humiliter, sed veraciter dicunt;* where are the saints that dare say they are free from sin? It is not a complimental speech: 1 John i. 8, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' He doth not say, as Austin observes, *Nulla est humilitas in nobis*—There is no humility in us; but, *Nulla est veritas*—There is no truth. When Paul said he was 'the chiefest of sinners,' 1 Tim. i. 15, and 'the least of the apostles,' and 'not meet to be called an apostle,' 1 Cor. xv. 9, it was not a fit of humility, but a pang of conscience that forced him to make that confession. Another error this confuteth is the doctrine of merit; for if no man be good, no man can merit anything at all at God's hands. The best of God's children have no other claim but the mercies of God and the merits of Christ: Rev. vii. 14, 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' It was not their innocency and faithfulness that recommended them to God; those that are most righteous in active or passive obedience need washing; it is Christ's

satisfaction must make them white; they could not appear before God in their own holiness. Therefore Paul desireth, Phil. iii. 9, 'To be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' They were cleansed from the guilt of their sins, not by their own sufferings, but by the blood of Christ.

Use 2. This should ever keep us humble in ourselves, for all the good in us is of God; and it should keep us in a self-loathing frame and posture of spirit, for there is none of us perfect, especially when we come to God.

1. It should ever keep us humble, for all the good that is in us, natural and spiritual, is not of ourselves, but of God: 1 Cor. iv. 7, 'Who made thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou hast not received?' If we be proud of anything, it is that we are more in debt than others; for all is from God, for of ourselves we cannot so much as think a good thought: 2 Cor. iii. 5, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' A thought is less than a desire, and a desire less than an action; now we are so far from perfecting a good action, that we cannot frame a good desire, and so far from lifting up a good desire, that we cannot think a good thought of ourselves; and John xv. 5, 'Without me you can do nothing.' He doth not say, *Nihil magnum*, no great thing, not work miracles, but *nihil*, nothing. All the glory is due to him.

2. It should keep us in a self-loathing frame and posture of heart, because the good that is in us is so imperfect and mingled with so much evil of sin. Time was when we were altogether evil, and made a trade and profession of sin: Gen. vi. 5, 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' And now God hath infused a little good into us, it is like a flower in the midst of many weeds that are ready to choke it, or like fair water running through a sink, that doth always taint and defile it; and therefore this should make us 'loathe ourselves for our ways and doings, that are not good,' Ezek. xxxvi. 31. And especially when we come to God in our addresses to him, this should stir up self-loathing and holy shame in us; for then the third consideration comes in, that none is good in comparison with God. When we repair to God, we have actual thoughts of his purity and holiness, and therefore should be more deeply possessed with a sense of our own vileness and baseness: Job xl. 4, 'Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee, I will lay mine hand upon my mouth;' Gen. xviii. 27, 'Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.' If the seraphim clap their wings on their faces, as abashed at God's holiness, Isa. vi. 2, oh! how much more should the saints, when they set themselves in God's special presence, and behold God, as it were, looking with a full eye upon them, and looking him full in the face, how should they loathe themselves in a sense of their own vileness!

Use 3. It instructeth us, since none is good, where our happiness lieth, not in the plea of innocency, but in the pardon of sin: 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 iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.' Which must be humbly sought out in the name of Christ; not blessed is the man who hath no sin, but blessed is the man whose sin is pardoned; so it necessarily brings us to submit to the righteousness of Christ: Rom. x. 3, 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' The proud heart of man is loath to stoop, or be beholden to another; we prize a patched coat of our own rather than a velvet coat of another's. Nothing driveth us to a necessity of this submission so much as this consideration—

Doct. 2. That God only is good.

The goodness of God cometh under a twofold consideration—there is his goodness in himself, and his goodness to us. The one implies the perfection and excellency of his nature, the other his will and self-propension to diffuse his benefits; the one his perfection, the other his bounty. To speak of these distinctly.

First, The absolute perfection of his nature and being, which is such as nothing is wanting to it or defective in it, and nothing can be added to it to make it better. In the creature there is a more general and natural goodness, and a more special and moral goodness. The natural goodness is the due proportion of a thing to the law and nature of its being, when it is good in its kind; so this first goodness in God is the perfection of his nature. As Philo saith, ὁ οντως ὢν τὸ πρῶτον αγαθον, the first being must needs be the first good. As soon as we conceive there is a God, we presently conceive that he is good, as being the fountain and pattern of all the good that is in the creature. As the sun hath light in itself, and giveth light to all other things, so God, that is the principle of all good, must needs be apprehended to be good and perfect. In short, God is good, and only good, four ways—originally, essentially, infinitely, and immutably.

1. Originally. He is αὐταγαθος, good of himself, and from no other, which no creature can be. A creature is only good by participation and communication from God. The good he hath is from the Father of lights: James i. 17, 'Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' If God had his goodness from any other, then he were not the first cause and the fountain of all things; then there would be something superior to God, and so he could not be God.

2. He is essentially good. Not only good, but goodness itself. Goodness in us is an accessory quality, or a superadded gift, but in God it is not a quality, but his essence. The goodness of God and the goodness of a creature differs, as a thing whose substance is gold differs from that which is gilded and overlaid with gold. A vessel of pure gold, the matter itself gives lustre to it; but in a gilded vessel, the outward lustre is one thing, and the substance is another. The essence and being of an angel is one thing, and its holiness another; the holiness may be separated from the essence, for the essence and being of the angels was continued when their perfection and goodness was lost; so man's substance is one thing, his holiness another, but in God his goodness is his being. Our first parents continued their being when

they lost their integrity; but God cannot be God if he be not good, for goodness is his very essence.

3. God is infinitely good. A creature's goodness is limited, but since the perfection of God is from himself, and not from another, there is nothing to limit it or to give it any measure, and therefore it must be infinite. The goodness of the creature, since it comes from God, is limited according to the measure wherein God will dispense it, to some more, to others less, according as his wisdom thinks fit. God is an ocean without banks or bottom; the goodness of a creature is but a drop from the ocean, or as a nutshell filled with the water of the sea. God loves himself as much as he can be loved. God is so infinitely good as he cannot be better: 1 Sam. ii. 7, 'There is none holy as the Lord.'

4. God is immutably good; it cannot be diminished or augmented, for in infiniteness there are no degrees; it can never be more than it is, or less than it is; for God actually hath all possible perfection; there can be no addition made to it. And since he hath it by his essence, and from himself, there can be no subtraction from it, for then God would lose his being; but the goodness of a creature may still be increased to further degrees, or be diminished. No angel is so good but he may be better, and may be diminished and lessened into nothing. Our state is full of changes; as the sea hath its ebbings and flowings, so hath grace a gradual increase or decrease. At first man was *peccabilis*, he might sin; afterward *peccator*, a sinner; then he is purified by grace. God is pure, but we are purified, and we may lose all again, if we consider the nature of the thing, but not because of the promise of the covenant. We were once defiled, but God's goodness ever is and ever was in the same fulness.

Use 1. To humble us in our converses with God. He is good, but we are evil; he is heaven, but we are hell; he is perfect, but we are poor defective creatures. Therefore in all our approaches to him we should come the more humbly to him, and go the more holy from him; for it is sad when we come to the good God, and are never the better. If we go to the fire, we expect to be warm. Oh! when you come to the fountain of goodness, we should come away better.

Use 2. To make us thankful. Where we reap any good, comfort, or benefit by man or any of the creatures, we are to bless God, and to be thankful to him especially, from whom all that good cometh. Though we ought not to be unthankful to the instruments of good, yet we ought especially to bless God, for the goodness of the creatures cometh from him: 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me.' So Gen. ix. 25, 26, 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.'

Use 3. If we would have good wrought in us, let us look up to God. As rivers are supplied from the sea, the gathering together of all goodness is in God: Exod. xxxi. 13, 'I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.' All we have is a derivation from his fulness, and as a candle lighted at a torch doth not diminish the light of the torch, so God doth not lose by giving.

Use 4. Let us love God, and love him above all things, for he only

is good. Goodness is that which is amiable and desirable; so when God is said to be good, we say he is of such an essence as is most amiable and desirable. Therefore let us love God above all things with our chiefest love, for he is most worthy of our love, and by preferring his glory above all things that are dear to us, being content for his sake to part with all which we have in the world, and also to long and wait for that time when we shall fully enjoy him. If the object of love be good, there is none good but one, which is God; he is good of himself, good in himself, yea, goodness itself; there is no good above, or besides, or beyond him; it is all from him, if it be good.

1. He is primitively and originally good, good of himself, which nothing else is, and therefore he is called 'the fountain of living waters,' Jer. ii. 13. The creatures are but dry pits and broken cisterns. Other things, what goodness they have is of him, therefore it is infinitely better and greater in him than in them.

2. He is the chiefest good. Other things are good in subordination to him. All the goodness that is in the creature is but a spark of that good which is in God. If we find any good there, it is not to detain our affections, but to lead us to a greater good; not to hold us from him, but to lead us to him, as the streams lead us to the fountain, and the steps of a ladder are not to stand still upon, but to lead us higher. If the prince should woo us by messengers, and we should leave him and cleave to the messengers, this were extreme folly, and a great abuse and wrong to the prince. By the goodness of the creatures, God's end is to draw us to himself as the chiefest good. Here is goodness in the creature, but it is mixed with imperfection; the goodness is to draw us to God, the imperfection to drive us from the creatures.

3. He is infinitely good. In choosing God for our portion, one hath not the less because another enjoyeth it with him; here is a sharing without division, and a partaking without the prejudice of copartners. We straiten others in worldly things so much as we are enlarged ourselves; finite things cannot be divided but they must be lessened, they are not large enough to be parted. But this good is infinite, and sufficeth the whole world; every one possesseth this portion entire, as the same speech may be heard of all, and yet no man heareth the less because another hears it with him, or as no man hath the less light because the sun shineth to more than himself. The Lord is all in all; the more possess him the better: as in a choir of voices, every one is not only solaced with his own voice, but by the harmony of those that sing in consort with him. Many a fair stream is drawn dry, or runneth low by being dispersed into several channels, but that which is infinite cannot be lessened.

4. He is eternally good, immutably good, and so the most durable portion: Ps. lxxiii. 26, 'God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' The good things of this life are perishing, and of a short continuance. We leave other good things when we begin to take possession of God. At death wicked men perceive their error, when the good which they have chosen cometh to be taken from them; but a man that hath chosen God for his God entereth into the full possession of him. Well, then, other good things may busy and vex us, but they cannot satisfy us; this alone sufficeth all; it giveth health,

and peace, and honour, and glory. Necessities that are not satisfied by him are fancies, and the desires of them are not to be satisfied, but mortified. If we have not enough in God, it is not the default of our portion, but the defect of our capacity.

Secondly, Good is good as it implieth his bounty and beneficence. So he told Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 19, 'I will make all my goodness to pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy;' so Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, 'The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.' *Bonum est primum et potissimum nomen Dei*— Damascene. Goodness is the first and chiefest name of God. We cannot conceive of him by anything that concerneth us so much as by his goodness; by that we know him, and for that we love him. We admire him with reverence for his other titles, but this doth first insinuate with us, and command our respect to him. The first temptation that ever was in the world was this, to weaken the conceit of his goodness to the creature; the devil would fain have persuaded Adam and Eve that God was not so good to them as they thought, but that he envied their happiness. The heathens had a conceit that the Godhead was envious, harsh, and sour in his restraints. Still the children of God find it a great temptation; nothing withdraws their heart from God so much as this, when the esteem of God's goodness is lessened; therefore the psalmist cries out, 'Truly God is good to Israel,' Ps. lxxiii. 1.

Now this goodness of God's or his bounty, is twofold—

1. Common and general to all creatures, especially to mankind: Ps. cxlv. 9, 'The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works;' to all things, to all persons, he bestoweth many common blessings upon them, as natural life and being, health, wealth, and the like. Nay, he is good to the young ravens: Ps. cxlvii. 9, 'He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.' He is good to wicked men: Mat. v. 45, 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' Nay, even to idolaters: Acts xiv. 17, 'He left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.' God might have testified his godhead and being by acts of vengeance, but he would rather among the heathens testify it by acts of bounty; though they were a bad people, yet they had a good God.

2. His more especial goodness towards his church and faithful people, whom he blesseth with spiritual and saving benefits in Christ. So it is said, Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly;' Lam. iii. 25, 'The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.' There is a peculiar goodness which God hath to his people, and all his blessings to them come from it: 2 Thes. i. 11, 'That God would fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness.'

Use 1. The consideration of his goodness is matter of great comfort to the godly and faithful at all times but especially in the time of

trouble and distress. At all times: Ps. c. 5, 'For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations.' Here is the stability of the saints, which keeps them in life, and heart, and comfort in all conditions, but especially in a time of want and afflictions, inward or outward. It is a great cordial of the saints to think of the goodness of God. Do we want direction? Ps. cxix. 68, 'Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.' Do we want support and deliverance? Nahum i. 7, 'The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him.' Do we feel the burden of sin, or do we fear the wrath of God? Ps. lxxxvi. 5, 'For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive.' When his old sins troubled him: Ps. xxv. 7, 'Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to thy mercy, remember me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.' Do enemies insult, and boast, and threaten much? Ps. lii. 1, 'Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.' Though they have never so much might and power, and do never so much machinate against you, yet they cannot take away the goodness of God, therefore you have no cause to be discouraged. God may seem to break down the hedge, and forget his poor servants, and leave them as a prey to their enemies, yet he changeth not his affection to them. In the agonies of death here is our cordial and support. Austin, when he came to die, had this speech to those that were about him, *Non sic vixi, ut me pudeat inter vos vivere, nec mori timeo, quia bonum habeo Dominum*— I have not so lived as that I should be ashamed to live among you, and I have not so believed as that I am afraid to die, for I have a good God. This supports us, and is a very great cordial to our heart; he is a good God to all that put their trust in him.

Use 2. Let it move all to repentance: Rom. ii. 4, 'Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?' God is good, but not to those that continue in their sins. There is hope offered. Oh! come, try, see how good he will be to you: Ps. xxxiv. 8, 'O taste, and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.' If goodness be despised, it will turn into fury. In point of gratitude the goodness of God should melt our hearts into godly sorrow for sin. The kindness from men melteth us, it is as coals of fire, as fire melts a thing, and makes it capable of any impression. The borrower is a servant to the lender. God hath not lent, but given us all that we have. Oh! let it break our hearts with sorrow that we should offend so good and bountiful a God. Saul had but a rough military spirit, yet when he heard how kind David had been to him in sparing his life, 'He lift up his voice and wept,' 1 Sam. xxiv. 16. Methinks when we hear how good God hath been to us all our days, this should make us ashamed of the insolences and abuses we have put upon him. Every man will condemn him that wrongs one that never hurt him. God hath done us no hurt, but a great deal of good. What! will you sin against God, that is so good in himself, and so good to all his creatures, and return evil for all his goodness to you? I beseech you by the mercies of God, deal not so unkindly; how can you sin against him, and abuse all his mercies?

Use 3. Honour and praise him for this in word and deed: Ps. cxviii. 1, 'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good.' You all have tasted of the goodness of God, now what shall be done to the Lord for this? Certainly we should be good, and do good, that we might imitate our heavenly Father.

SERMON III.

Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honour thy father and mother.—MARK x. 19.

IN former discourses upon this context, you have heard of a necessary question asked, and that by a young man, concerning the way to eternal life. He doth not put it upon good words, or anything less than good works really to be done, 'What good thing must I do that I may inherit eternal life?' Yet, because he spoke in a legal sense, Christ accommodates his answer thereunto. First he gives answer to his compellation, 'Good Master,' and now to his question, to convince his conscience, and bring him to brokenness of heart, and now remitteth him to his rule.

1. He mindeth him of his pattern, 'Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, which is God.' This young man had too high a conceit of his own goodness, therefore Christ shows him that originally and absolutely that title belongeth to God only.

2. He refers him to his rule. Though we be not so perfect as God is perfect, yet if we answer our rule, the law given to us, it is enough for us creatures, and therefore the young man is put upon that trial. Thou art not good as God is good, so thou canst not be, for God alone is good; yet 'thou knowest the commandments, do not commit adultery,' &c. Observe here—

[1.] Christ directeth him to the commandments for an answer to his question. The question was, 'What must I do that I may inherit eternal life?' Christ saith, 'Thou knowest the commandments,' &c. That here is a direct answer to the question appeareth by comparing the evangelists; for we see, Mark xix. 17, 18, it is drawn dialogue-wise thus, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery,' &c. If thou lookest to be saved by doing, keep the law perfectly.

[2.] For the particular commandments, he instanceth in those commandments for his trial which were more apt to convince him of his sin and of his imperfection: and here it is notable that they are all of the second table, 'Do not kill, do not commit adultery,' &c. And there is one clause, 'defraud not,' that is left out in Luke; and in Matthew instead thereof there is put this general clause, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' Mat. xix. 19.

Three questions then are necessary for explication—

(1.) Why Christ refers him to the commandments?

(2.) Why the commandments of the second table are only mentioned?

(3.) Why, seeing it is plain that the six commandments of the second table are alluded unto, 'defraud not' is put for the last commandment, 'Thou shalt not covet?' for of the method wherein they are recited we need not move any doubt, for Christ beginneth with the negatives, and the affirmative precept is put last, as a thing not accurately to be stood upon.

Quest. 1. Why Christ refers him to the commandments? The reason of the doubt is this, because the fallen creature can never be justified or saved by his own works: Rom. iii. 20, 'Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight;' Titus iii. 5, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us;' 2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace;' Eph. ii. 8, 9, 'For by grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.' The scripture doth always run in this strain; yea, Christ himself puts salvation upon another score, upon believing in him: John iii. 16, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Why then doth Christ refer him to the commandments? I answer—Christ speaketh not this as if any man could be saved and justified by the works of the law. It was far from our Saviour's meaning to foment such an error; but the scope of his speech is to show that it is in vain to inquire for the way to heaven while men trust to their own righteousness; and therefore good works and obedience to the law are proposed to convince him of his impotency, to humble him in the sense of his guilt, to drive him out of himself, and to draw him to seek salvation by a better covenant, or if not, to leave him without excuse. That this was Christ's aim, to show him his sin, and miserable condition, and disability to be justified by the law, will appear by these following considerations—

It was necessary this man should be treated in this way, for the many errors wherewith he was tainted required it; as (1.) To draw him again to the service of God from those traditions and human observances in which the pharisees placed most of their religion and piety; and therefore Christ mentions not 'the traditions of the elders,' but 'the commandments of God.' (2.) To draw him from the law ceremonial, which was to be abolished, to the law moral. He mentioneth not the ceremonial law, which the Jews strictly observed, but moral duties. (3.) To beat down his presumption, whereby he believed that the law was easy for him to accomplish. Such as seek justification and eternal life by works must be taught that to keep the whole law in all points without the least sin is the only way to heaven by works, which way to every man now polluted by sin is impossible. There was no better course to humble a pharisee than by referring him to his own covenant rightly understood, to let him see the perfection and spiritual sense of it, and so to bring him to a knowledge of sin, that he might learn to seek God's favour by the Mediator, who is the 'end of the law for

righteousness to every one that believeth,' Rom. x. 4. That is to say, the end of giving the law by Moses was that men might thereby be brought to the knowledge of their sins, and so be necessitated to fly for refuge to Christ and his righteousness, who hath perfectly fulfilled the law for us. If any man think that this consisted not with the simplicity of Christ's instruction, especially when such a serious question was proposed to him, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' and that it may seem to countenance their error who sought righteousness by the law to refer such to the commandments: I answer—

1. Christ used the same method that God did in giving the law upon Mount Sinai. Why did God give it then but to break a stiff-necked people, trusting to their own strength, by this exact yoke of duty, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear? That, seeing their manifold guilt, in which all are inevitably involved by the violation of the law, they might be burdened and condemned in themselves, and so fly to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, as he was represented to them in the sacrifice and burnt-offering. That this was God's end in giving the law, see Rom. v. 20, 21, 'Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord;' and Gal. iii. 19, 'Wherefore then serveth the law? it was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.' Suitably here Christ having to do with a man that was puffed up with an opinion of his own righteousness and strength, as if he had already discharged the whole duty of the law, and was ready and able to do whatsoever should be further required of him in order to eternal life, to humble him, Christ referreth him to the commandments, and so layeth a groundwork of convincing him of base idolatry, in loving riches more than God and eternal life; so that his end was not to foster and increase his presumption, but by urging the law which he professed to stand to, to convince him of his own baseness, and the necessity of seeking another righteousness.

2. Practical conviction is best, and men never see their unworthiness so much as when they are held to their own covenant, and we are so far to condescend to the humours of men as to convince them and condemn them in their own way. As Festus told Paul, Acts xxv. 12, 'Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.' As a presumptuous sick man, that is strongly conceited he is able to leave his bed and walk up and down, the best way to confute him is by trial. Or a phrenetic person, or a man that is distempered with melancholy fancies, wise physicians indulge the humour a little, that by dealing with them in their own way they may afterwards the better dispossess them of their vain conceits. If men will go to heaven by doing, let them know what doing is required: Gal. iv. 21, 'Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?' If men will betake themselves to stand to or fall by the sentence of the law or covenant of works, let them see how it will succeed with them.

3. It was a truth Christ spake, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;' but we must consider his intention. Though men's trusting in their own works is displeasing to God, yet good works are

not displeasing to him; and therefore there can be no hurt in pressing men to these, yea, by the rewards propounded in the legal covenant. Therefore Christ might say, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;' the old legal proposal showing how valuable they are in their own nature, and the words being also capable of a gospel sense: Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;' Eph. ii. 10, 'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.'

Quest. 2. Why the commandments of the second table are only mentioned? for since those duties which belong to the first table are more excellent, as concerning the worship of God, and they are more strict and inward, and therefore would seem to be fittest to bring the man to a sense of his condition, why doth Christ refer him to the second table? I answer—

1. In these the pharisees conceived themselves to be most perfect, and yet these were a sufficient touchstone whereby to try and discover their unfruitfulness and their imperfection. Certainly if they be defective here, there is no standing by the law. If a man cannot go, surely he cannot run; if he cannot spell, surely he cannot read; if men be defective in the duties of the second table, certainly they are not able to keep the law.

2. These are most plain and easy to be understood, and the sins committed against them are most evident and apparent. The duties of the second table are of the lowest hemisphere, and wherein a man can do most if he can do anything; these duties are more written in a man's heart than first table duties. Heathens were fools in worship, as the apostle represents them, Rom. i. 22, 'Professing themselves to be wise they became fools.' Yet as to the duties of the second table, they were just, charitable, and temperate, and had a great command of their passions, though they were very sottish in their worship: for the benefit of human society God hath left second-table notions more clear upon man's heart.

3. In the externals of the first table the Jews seemed very zealous, but negligent they were of the second; and herein they commonly fail who hypocritically make fair shows of devotion and outward respect to God in worship; as Isa. i. 11, 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats;' when they neglected judgment and justice. So Isa. lxvi. 3, 'He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol.' So Micah vi. 7, 8, when they talked of 'rivers of oil, and thousands of rams,' the prophet tells them, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' that they should make conscience of justice and equity in their dealings, and be merciful and charitable. Second-table duties are of greater value than outward ceremonies; therefore, when Christ would convince such a man as this, he refers him to the second-table duties.

Quest. 3. Why μὴ αποστερήσῃς, 'Defraud not,' and 'deprive not,' is put for the last commandment, 'Thou shalt not covet?' Certainly that is intended, as is evident to any that shall consider Christ's answer; it fitly shows what kind of coveting is forbidden in the last commandment, namely, such covetings as tend to another's loss. It is a question that hath exercised some how to state the sin forbidden and the duty enjoined in the law.

1. The sin forbidden is coveting, by which is not meant the whole corrupt inclination of our nature, for that is not forbidden in any one commandment but in the whole law; nor all the first stirrings of that corruption neither, for a great part of them are opposite to religion, and they are forbidden in the first table; nor all those stirrings of corruption which tend to the loss and hurt of our neighbour, for when they proceed to a deliberate consent and purpose, they are forbidden in other commands, of not killing, not stealing, &c. But those first lustings by which the soul is urged to desire any good thing that is our neighbour's, though at first we have not a set purpose to get it by unlawful means, yet when we have a lusting desire of anything that may tend to our neighbour's loss, as Ahab had a lustful desire of Naboth's vineyard as a conveniency, though he promised to give him a better in the room of it, or to give him the worth of it in money; he would have it upon a valuable consideration, by sale or exchange, 1 Kings xxi. 2. So here, an inordinate desire to have some good thing out of our neighbour's hand, that is the sin forbidden by 'defraud not,' or 'deprive not,' when we would mend our own portion with the diminution of his.

2. The duty of the law is to rest contented or satisfied with our own portion, or the lot which God hath afforded us, so as not to desire to increase it, or to have anything to ourselves with the loss of another. It is notable that instead of what is here said, 'Defraud not,' it is, Mat. xix. 19, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' which, though it be a general that runs through the whole second table, yet it hath a special regard to the tenth commandment, and shows we are to desire the good of others as well as our own, and to think our neighbour as fit to enjoy anything that belongs to him as to think ourselves fit to enjoy that which is our own; to have a full complacency with our own, without a lustful wishing we had anything that is theirs. Not coveting their goods, or desiring any advantage by their loss, or lessening, is the sin forbidden.

Well, now, out of all we may conclude thus: The young man, as to the present posture and frame of his heart, was not fit to be taught faith in Christ, nor the doctrine of the gospel; being conceited of perfection by the works of the law, he was not fit to be sent to the gospel. In effect Christ saith to him thus: Examine thyself truly, whether thou hast or canst keep the law, for till that point be over, thou art not fit for other things. Go take the second table, the easier part of the law, art thou not defective there?

The point that may be observed from hence will be this—

Doct. That the best way to convince justiciaries or self-righteous men is by holding them to their own covenant, or the covenant of works. Or thus: The true way to prepare men for Christ is to cause them to see their misery and impotency by the law.

To evidence this I will show—(1.) What is the covenant of works; (2.) I will prove that all men by nature are under this covenant; (3.) This is that covenant which natural conscience sticks to; (4.) This covenant, rightly understood, is the most ready way to convince a justiciary, or to prepare men for Christ.

First, What is the covenant of works? I answer—It is the covenant made with Adam in innocency, in which life was promised under the condition of perfect obedience to be performed by a man by his own natural strength.

The parties contracting in this covenant are, God on the one side, and man created in the perfection of nature on the other side, God and Adam with all his posterity; and the terms of this covenant are perfect and unsinning obedience, and this perfect obedience to be performed by us by our own strength: Gal. iii. 12, 'The law is not of faith, but the man that doeth them shall live in them;' that is, the law covenant only promiseth life to him that observeth what the law prescribes, and so hath perfect inherent righteousness of his own; it offers life upon no easier terms than constant, universal, perfect obedience. Now the sanction and confirmation of this covenant is by a terrible curse explained by the apostle: Gal. iii. 10, 'As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' The law pronounceth a curse upon every man who fulfils it not in every tittle and every jot of it, and who continues not so to do from the first minute of his life to the hour of his death, which fallen man can never do; and therefore as long as he is under this covenant, he remains under God's curse and wrath. If he omit anything that is required, or commit anything that is forbidden, so that though he should but once sin, he is under the curse.

Secondly, I shall prove that all men by nature are under this covenant till they be reconciled to God by Christ. This covenant concerns all Adam's children until they have a new claim in the second Adam, for God contracted with Adam as a public person, representing all his posterity, and so it concerns not him only, but all his heirs. Take them in their infancy, they are under this covenant, therefore they are said 'to be by nature children of wrath as well as others,' Eph. ii. 3. All men are under the deserved curse of the law by reason of sin. Or take them in their grown estate: John iii. 18, 'He that believeth not is condemned already, because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God;' that is, because he is not freed from the covenant of works and the curse of the law by the Son of God. Every unbeliever is condemned already by the sentence of the law, which they lie still under before they lay hold upon Christ, the only remedy for their deliverance. The sentence of the law stands in force till you get it repealed by Christ. And some men will find that this covenant is in force against them at the day of judgment, for then there will be proceedings against them according to it. All the world are judged according to one of these two covenants: James ii. 12, 13, 'Some shall be judged according to the law of liberty, others shall have judgment without mercy.' Impotency doth not free any of Adam's sons from this covenant, because this impotency was contracted by our own sin,

and doth not make void God's right; as a creditor doth not lose his right by the debtor's inability to pay him. If a man bind himself and his heirs to pay such a sum of money, and he will vainly spend his patrimony, and so render himself unable to pay it, he and his heirs are still liable to a process as long as the debt remaineth unpaid or unremitted. We and all ours are bound to perfect obedience for the future, and to make satisfaction for sin past, which we, that are poor creatures, sold under sin, are never able to do. Therefore this covenant doth absolutely put us into such a state as that there is no remedy for us but by flying to Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, This covenant is that which natural conscience worketh on, and seemeth most so to do; so that when we urge men with this covenant, we do but beat them with their own weapons. When the covenant of works was made with Adam, all mankind were then in his loins; it was made with him in their name; and therefore men by nature do still retain a deep impression of this covenant, as appeareth in that as soon as conscience is awakened, it judgeth men according to this covenant; as Rom. i. 32, the apostle speaks of the heathens, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.' The benumbed consciences of heathens, when they came to themselves, they were afraid of judgment according to the tenor of this covenant; and the same is seen in the endeavour of a natural conscience to do something that may make a show of good works, and a tolerable plea by this covenant; as in that pharisee's plea, Luke xviii. 11, 12, 'I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.' Christ speaks it of those that trusted in their own righteousness; the pharisee brings a little trash, a few inconsiderable things, 'I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess;' and this is his righteousness. Again, that natural conscience works towards this covenant seems plain by the strange affectation of the righteousness of works which is in all men's hearts, and unwillingness to hear of any other: Rom. x. 3, 'They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' A man would fain have a personal inherent righteousness in himself; he is loath to be beholden to any other; he would patch up any righteousness of his own, and is prone to trust in it; a proud creature will not submit. Nay, even the regenerate, God's own children, though they are well instructed in the righteousness of faith, and sufficiently see the impossibility of a righteousness of works, though they have been under brokenness of heart, yet they are ever lingering after this covenant, with a natural desire of it, and to rest in their own duties; and that was the reason of that expression of Luther, Every one of us hath a pope in his own belly; something that pleads there for the merit of works.

Fourthly, This is the most ready way to convince a justiciary, and to prepare men for Christ by a sight and sense of their own sin and misery and impotency by this covenant; and this for several reasons—

Reason 1. Because every man is apt to flatter himself with a spurious covenant of works of his own making, which is the main let and hindrance to keep him from Christ and salvation. There is a twofold

covenant of works—one genuine and true, and of God's own institution; another apocryphal and feigned, a bastard covenant of works, and of man's invention; namely, that which a creature unable to perform the duty of the law, or to get from under the curse thereof, frameth out of his own brain, as by doing something in order to our acceptation with God, though not doing all that is required; and to make recompense for the defects in the weighty things by abounding in externals. There is a covenant man makes of himself, by a short exposition of the law, that he may have a large opinion of his own righteousness. It is not for the interest of their quiet and peace that the ell should be longer than the cloth, therefore, because they know they are not able to stand by the true genuine covenant of God's making, they make a covenant of their own, that so a blameless conformity to the outward letter of the law may make a recompense for their other defects, abounding in human inventions and observances of vain rites, as if this would make them acceptable with God. This is the great thing which keeps him off from submitting to the gospel way of faith and repentance, and humbling himself before the Lord.

Reason 2. It must needs be a powerful instrument to prepare men for Christ, because this covenant shuts up a sinner without any hope of relief, unless Christ and grace open the door to him. There are three places of scripture which speak fully to this purpose: Rom. iii. 19, 'That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God;' ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ, liable to his process and wrath, nothing to say for themselves, no plea to make by the first covenant: Rom. xi. 32, speaking of the Jews, he saith, 'For God hath concluded them all in unbelief.' By this covenant they are as it were shut up in prison, with no way to escape unless grace and mercy open the door. So Gal. iii. 22, 'The scripture' (that is, the law covenant) hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.' This covenant accusing, convincing, and condemning all mankind for sin, it doth as it were shut them up under the fearful curse, as a malefactor is shut up in prison; so that a man is forced to lay aside all confidence of any righteousness in himself, and fly for refuge to the promises; and to the righteousness of Christ. Let us see how this covenant shuts men up, and inevitably concludes them lost and undone. If this could be powerfully and thoroughly done, the work of conversion would not be at such a stand. Though all men be in such a cursed condition, yet it is a matter of no small difficulty to convince men of it, or to affect their hearts sensibly with it. Therefore if there were any way to shut them up without all hope, where there is not the least wicket or door open for escape from deserved wrath, then the work would powerfully go on, and they would be necessitated to fly to Christ. Let us see then how this law shuts men up, because the duty of it is impossible, and the penalty intolerable.

1. The duty is impossible. So full and exact is that righteousness that is required by the law covenant in order to life, that it is impossible for the fallen creature ever to perform it: Rom. viii. 3, 'What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.' The law promiseth no good to sinners, but only to the innocent; it reveals no way of taking away sin past, but only of punishing sin, no way for

man once a sinner ever to recover himself; therefore it is become weak, that is, impossible, through our flesh. The weakness of the flesh will not permit it to be fulfilled in that exactness which is required of us. If it could be exactly fulfilled for the future, yet there would be no hopes of life, because of sin past; therefore, to hope our good meanings, good intentions, and endeavours should help us, is to no purpose. A man must, from the first moment of life to the last minute thereof, be perfectly exact with God. Now man, that could not keep himself in innocency, it cannot be thought that he can recover himself when lost.

2. The penalty is intolerable: Gal. iii. 10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' The law is a mouth that speaketh terrible things, it curseth a man in his person, comforts, basket, store, in all things that he hath; all the miseries of this life are included in this curse: Lam. iii. 39, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?' Death itself is part of it; it is 'the wages of sin,' Rom. vi. 23, and the pains of hell: Mark xxv. 41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.' When the law shall take a sinner by the throat, and say, Pay me what thou owest, alas! what can a poor creature do to avoid the curse or overcome it? Every one of us, in thought, word, and deed, have broken the law of God; now wherewith shall we appease his wrath? We have nothing to give God, or that he will accept at our hands; we cannot hide or withdraw ourselves from the presence of the Lord, for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. We cannot abide this curse, for who can dwell with devouring burnings? Oh! what shall we do then to escape this horrible curse? There is no way but by flying from the sentence of the law to the throne of grace for mercy and pardon. There is no other hope left us, for they that do not betake themselves to the covenant of grace must stand or fall by the sentence of the law; so that this is the most powerful engine to awaken men's consciences, and prepare them for Christ. Therefore for good reason Christ sends this confident young man to the law, 'Thou knowest the commandments.'

Reason 3. There is none passeth into the new covenant till he be driven by the old, and therefore certainly this is the way to prepare a man for Christ, to have some sense and feeling of it in our own heart, and we see we are cursed and undone creatures, and so lie at God's feet with brokenness of heart: Rom. viii. 15, 'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' There is a spirit that goes along with every covenant; the spirit of bondage begets fear in all that are under the first covenant, and the spirit of adoption begets hope in all that are under the second covenant: Gal. ii. 19, 'I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.' Before we can lay hold of the second covenant, we must be dead to the law. Men are slight and careless until the curse of the law puts them so hard to it, that they are made to despair of getting heaven and salvation by obedience to it. Oh! then, they think of a new life and a new claim. The curse of the law follows them close, makes them utterly despair in themselves; then they are fit to live unto God. The apostle tells us

this is the great use for which the law now serveth: Rom. v. 20, 'The law entered, that the offence might abound;' Gal. iii. 19, 'Wherefore then serveth the law? it was added because of transgression;' that is, to convince sinners of their lost estate, that men might be sensible of their sins, and so forcibly constrained to make after another righteousness. None pass from one covenant to another but they have a taste of the first.

Use 1. To inform us how the two covenants agree, and are subservient to one another; for these two are not contrary, being both truths revealed by God; they have a mutual respect. The law serveth to make sin known: Rom. iii. 20, 'For by the law is the knowledge of sin;' and the gospel holdeth forth the remedy of sin: John i. 29, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' The law points out our need of Christ, 'who is the end of the law for righteousness,' Rom. x. 4. The gospel maketh an offer of Christ, that in him we may have what we could not attain by the law: 1 Cor. i. 30, 'For of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' The law discovers those duties wherein a man made righteous ought to walk and testify his thankfulness: Eph. iv. 1, 2, 'I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness,' &c. The gospel furnisheth him with spiritual strength to walk in those duties which the law prescribeth: 2 Cor. iii. 6, 'The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.' *Lex jubet gratia juvat*—The law commands, but grace helps us. Thus they fairly agree, and are mutually useful.

Use 2. To awaken our consciences to consider upon what terms we stand with God, and by what covenant we can plead with him, by the covenant of works, or by the covenant of grace. If we be yet under the covenant of works, and have not got the sentence of the law repealed, O miserable creatures! there is no hope: Ps. cxxx. 3, 4, 'If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' If God should deal with us in a way of strict justice, according to the tenor of the law and the covenant of works, no man can escape condemnation and the curse. There is another covenant, but how will you decline judgment according to the first covenant?

1. There is no hope of your pleading another covenant till you own the first covenant to be just, and with brokenness of heart you look upon yourselves as shut up under the curse, and you acknowledge yourselves lost and undone sinners. The great thing that this young man wanted was brokenness of heart, and therefore Christ would have him see himself in the law. The heirs of promise are described to be those 'that have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them,' Heb. vi. 18. It is an allusion to those that fled for their life. If one had killed a man by chance, and not out of malice prepense, there was a city of refuge appointed; and if he fled there before the avenger of blood, the next of kin, seized upon him, the man was safe. None are brought in to Christ, but they come as those that have the avenger of blood following them: they are driven, and must away from the first covenant by a deep sense of their misery. Men that are heart-

whole, and have only doctrinal notions about the two covenants, without feeling the force of either, and being driven out of themselves to lie at God's feet for mercy, they as yet remain under the old covenant, and need be prepared by this breaking work. Indeed, degrees are different, but all feel some trouble, some great horror and despair, but others with anxiousness and solicitude; the curse is at their heels, therefore they desire to be found in Christ. Now have you felt anything of the spirit of bondage? The deepness of the wound is not to be looked after, but the soundness of the cure; but yet some wound there will be. And therefore, till there be some grief, and shame, and sorrow, and bitter remorse because of sin, a smiting upon the thigh because of the indignation of the Lord, and humbling ourselves before God, we are not fit for mercy. We are not heirs of the promise if we do not hasten to the hope set before us.

2. They that do as yet trust to their good meanings and endeavours, and seek salvation by their own doing, must yield perfect obedience to the law of God, or else they cannot obtain eternal life; we make this to be our covenant, by sticking to any one work of ours: Gal. v. 2, 3, 'Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing; for I testify again to every one that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.' If another man had spoken this, possibly you would have judged him rash and uncircumspect; but 'I Paul say unto you;' I that have an apostolical authority, I that know the mind of Christ, I testify this again and again, that observing any one ceremony, as part of a man's righteousness necessary to salvation, cuts off the observer from all benefit by Christ; he is a debtor to the duty of the whole law, he obligeth himself to perfect obedience, without which the law cannot justify any; he saith it again and again, that man might take heed. This trust in his own righteousness in effect is a renouncing the gospel covenant. Christ must be our whole righteousness, and a complete Saviour, or not at all. If we rely upon anything besides him, or jointly with him as a meritorious cause of salvation, we lose all hope and comfort by Christ. This is the great concernment of the soul, therefore to be inculcated with such seriousness and earnestness.

3. By living in any known, allowed, reigning sin, shows we have no claim to the second covenant. Saith David, Ps. xix. 13, 'Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; so shall I be upright, and shall be innocent from the great transgression.' Our qualification under the second covenant is not a soul exactly perfect, but a soul sincere. Now, if any sin hath dominion over us, our sincerity is gone: Rom. vi. 14, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' There were no cogency in the argument if men under grace could live under the dominion of any one sin; they are shut up by the curse. We must look to Christ, and give up ourselves to him. This man in the text had the love of the world reigning in his heart, and Christ turns him away, and afterwards it is said, 'He went away sad.'

Use 3. To instruct us, if we would be prepared for Christ, what we must do; we must study the law, the purity of it, and the binding force it hath on all under it.

1. We must be able to understand it. Christ saith to the young man, 'Thou knowest the commandments;' he appealeth to him as to one that had some knowledge of the law. Those that live in the church should not be ignorant of the commandments or law of God, but well acquainted with them. God complaineth, Hosea viii. 12, 'I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.' To be strangers to the word of God, little conversant in it, and to make little use of it, is a great affront done to God. We should acquaint ourselves not with the letter only, as little children learn it by rote, but with the sense and purpose of it.

2. Meditate often thereupon: Ps. i. 2, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.' Deep and ponderous thoughts have most efficacy; without a study of the law men are without the law while they have it: Rom. vii. 9, 'I was alive without the law once.' Who more zealous for the law than Paul? Gal. i. 14, 'I profited in the Jew's religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers;' but while he did not ponder of it, he was without the law.

3. Judge yourselves by it. One great use for which the moral law serveth is to bring men to a sight and sense of their sins and imperfections, and humble them before God: Rom. vii. 7, 'I had not known sin but by the law, for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet;' and to undeceive them of conceits of their own goodness and righteousness. Look into thy bill, what owest thou?

4. Beg the light of the Spirit to show thee thy sin and misery: Rom. vii. 9, 'When the commandments came;' in the light and evidence of the Holy Spirit, 'sin revived and I died.' Men that have the letter of the law may be without the light and power of it. Without the Spirit we guess confusedly concerning things, as the man that saw men like trees walking, and have but general, cursory, confused thoughts.

SERMON IV.

And he answered, and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.—MARK x. 20.

You have heard of a necessary question propounded by a noble young man to Christ, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' We have spoken to Christ's answer. Now in this verse we have the young man's reply, 'All these have I observed from my youth;' wherein there is expressed, or pretended at least—

1. An universality of respect to the will of God, 'All these have I observed.'

2. An early beginning to do so, 'From my youth.' He was still a

young man, but by these words, 'from my youth,' he means, ever since I had the use of reason, as soon as I began to distinguish between good and evil, straight and crooked. Certainly this answer were good if it were true. Some goodnesss there is in it, therefore we will observe something from it; for it is said in the next verse, when he had answered thus, 'Jesus, beholding him, loved him.'

First, It is good in the first respect, as an universality of obedience is pretended; and I may drop this note—

Doct. They that would keep the commandments must observe not only one but all.

It is true of the law of God, as it belongeth to the covenant of works or to the covenant of grace.

1. As it belongeth to the covenant of works: Gal. iii. 10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' Every sin, the least, is damnable by that covenant, and deserveth a curse; if he should omit anything required, or commit anything forbidden, the curse seizeth upon his throat. So James ii. 10, 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' As one condition not observed forfeits the whole lease, therefore it concerns this legalist to make good his plea and conceit of perfection by the law, to say, 'All these things have I done.

2. But is not the covenant of grace more favourable? No; it gives not allowance to the least failings, but binds us to make conscience of all, as well as of some.

[1.] Because the authority is the same: Exod. xx. 1, 'God spake,' not one or two, but all these words; they are all ratified by the great God and lawgiver; so that the same reason that moves us to one, moves us to another also, that we do it out of conscience to God: we must 'walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work,' Col. i. 10. That we should obey parents, keep the sabbath, not steal, be careful of his institutions, not worship him by an idol; this is pleasing to God, and so is that.

[2.] The heart can never be sincere when we can dispense with anything which God hath commanded; and you cannot have the testimony of a good conscience approving your sincerity when you allow yourselves in the least failing: Ps. cxix. 6, 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments.' I confess it is chiefly meant of our final judgment; but in all conditions in the world, if we would be found faithful with God, and not left to shame, we must respect all his commandments: Luke i. 6, Zachary and Elizabeth 'were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless;' and, saith David, Ps. lxvi. 18, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' If you would not break your confidence and freedom of heart when you come to God in prayer, but come with assurance of welcome and audience, not one sin must be regarded. When we set up a toleration in our own hearts, and dispense with any one duty, it is either some pleasure or profit or honour that maketh the duty contrary to us; but this will not stand with sincerity, that any petty interest or affection of ours should be preferred before the will of God; for these men do not serve God, but

their own lusts, when they will only obey God so far as pleasure, honour, or profit, or some lust, will permit them to yield obedience to him.

[3.] God giveth grace to keep all. Wherever he renews and sanctifies, is throughout; he fills the soul with the seeds of all grace, so as to dispose and incline us to every duty, whether to God or man, the world or our fellow-saints: 2 Peter i. 7, 'Add to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.' An infant as soon as born into the world, though it hath not the bulk, stature, and strength of a man, yet it hath all the essentials of a man, and is a perfect man. In the new birth the inward man is perfect in parts; all grace is given that is necessary for all conditions: 'Ye are enriched in all things in Christ;' there is a suitableness to the whole law of God: Rom. vii. 22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man.'

Use. To reprove those that would keep some commandments, but not all. Herod did something at the motion of John the Baptist, but he would not leave his incestuous marriage with his brother's wife. Some persons may be very forward in some good things, but they will not leave this or that sin, their swearing, or lying, or uncleanness, or vain company, or gaming, or idle fashions; they refrain some sins, but not all; some duties you shall have them very forward in, but not all; they are halving it with God. There is such an union betwixt all the parts of the law of God, that one cannot be violated without a breach of all the rest. As one leak in a ship, if let alone, may sink it, so one sin indulged and allowed may prove the bane of the soul; and therefore take heed of obeying God by halves, and think not to please him, or have any true comfort in thy conscience, by any such obedience. The young man so far spake well, if he had spoke truly, 'All these have I kept.'

Secondly, There is another thing that is good in the reply the young man maketh, that is his early beginning: I have kept all 'from my youth.' It is certainly a good thing to begin with God betimes, and to frame our hearts to the will of God as soon as we come to years of discretion, and that upon a threefold reason—

1. Because it will be a help to us all our lives afterwards, before affections are forestalled and pre-engaged, to begin with God, and to have the inclinations of youth set right by a good education, to be restrained from our own will, and be trained up in a way of abstinence from bodily pleasures. A sober education prevents much sin: Ps. cxix. 9, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.' Mark, it is not wherewith shall a young man guide or direct, but cleanse his way. When men are well principled and seasoned in youth, it sticketh by them; nay, the vessel is seasoned already. The word *cleansed* presupposeth some defilement. A child is not like a vessel which newly comes out of the potter's shop, indifferent for good or bad infusions. No; the vessel is fusty already, and hath a smatch of the old man: we come seasoned into the world, for we were born in sin and in iniquity: Ps. li. 5, 'Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' Well, then, to begin betimes, what good may we get by it! Our work is to stop the growth of sin, and that we do not settle in an evil course, and that will

be a great advantage to us all our life after. On the other side, the want of a good education is a great disadvantage to grace, a maim hardly cured; it leaves a scar, and makes a man limp as long as he lives, if he doth not begin with God betimes, though afterwards he be converted; for when a man is not framed betimes to God, he suffers the canker of self-will to fret so deep, that reason, law, and religion hath much ado to bring them to the denial of themselves. To give you an instance in Adonijah, 1 Kings i, 5, 6, 'Who exalted himself, saying, I will be king.' A rough self-willed young man; he would have sovereignty and a crown, and not stay for it till David was dead, or submit to the appointment of a successor: 'I will be king;' and why? It is said, 'His father had not displeased him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so?' He had too much of his will when he was a youth. As Plutarch noteth of Coriolanus, a noble Roman, that for want of a good and seasonable education, being left young under the tutelage of his mother, and she left him to his own will, was so impatient and wilful that no man could hardly converse with him. O christians! when religion begins late, and men have to do with corruptions habituated and confirmed by long time and loose education, it cannot show itself with such lustre and advantage. Therefore it is good to break the will of young ones, to train them up to bear the yoke from their youth; otherwise though they should be subdued by grace and in a great measure broken, yet this disadvantage remains with them to their dying day. Those that are seasoned well with sober education, either they are not so bad as others, or it worse becomes them to do evil, and they cannot sin without many checks of conscience which others have not. Therefore a good and sober education is a great advantage, to be trained up from our youth, though it be but to moral virtue.

2. While parents and governors are careful to season those tender vessels, the Lord is pleased many times to replenish them with grace from above, and to give in his blessing upon their education, and many have been converted that way. We read of Obadiah, 1 Kings xviii. 12, 'But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.' Josiah, 2 Chron. xiv. 3, 'In the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father.' So Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 5, 'When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also.' His mother and grandmother were full of faith and sobriety, and they were seasoning of him, and training him up from his youth to be acquainted with the will of God; and what a notable instance of abstinence and sobriety did he prove: 2 Tim. iii. 15, 'And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.' Certainly it is much to have youth brought up in knowledge and in the power of godliness. Families are societies to be sanctified to God as well as churches, and governors of families have a charge of souls as well as pastors of churches, and therefore they should be careful of them, and may wait for God's blessing upon the education of youth. There be many offer their children to God in baptism (and they do well in so doing), but educate and train them up for the world and the flesh

which they renounce in baptism. You will bewail any natural defect of your children, and seek to cure it while they are young, if they have a stammering tongue, a deaf ear, or a lame leg; certainly you ought much more to bewail the want of grace. We murmur at outward defects, which is a taxing of providence, it being a fruit of the Lord's dominion; but these belong to our care: 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,' Prov. xxii. 6. Dye the cloth in the wool, and not in the web, and the colour is more durable. God works strangely in children, and many notable things have been found in them beyond expectation.

[3.] It prevents many sins which afterwards would be a trouble to us when we are old. Oh! many think that the tricks of youth are long since forgotten and forgiven; but alas! the guilt of them may fly in our faces afterward; nay, though they be pardoned, and the persons reconciled to God. The sins of youth trouble many a tender conscience in age; witness David, Ps. xxv. 7, 'Remember not the sins of my youth.' And Job, chap. xiii. 26, 'Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.' A good man may remember old sins with new fears that they are not pardoned. While it is easy to sin, it is easy to believe the pardon of sin (marvel not at the expression); while we are young, and sin freely, we think God will forgive those sins, and they will soon be forgotten; but as a man grows up into more tenderness of conscience, and into a greater awe, and sense, and esteem of God's holiness, what a holy God he serves, he finds it the more difficult to believe the pardon of sin. Good men have with much bitterness of soul called to mind the sins of their youth, when they see the sins of their younger days are so many, and the breaches of God's law so innumerable, whereby they have offended God, that either through ignorance or inconsideration they have so sinned against God that they have much ado to believe the pardon of the multitude of their youthful sins. New afflictions may awaken the sense of old sins, as old bruises may trouble us long after upon every change of weather. There are some that feel the sins of their youth in their bodies, when the pains and aches of their miserable age are the fruits of their youthful vanities and intemperance; as it is said, Job xx. 11, 'His bones are full of the sins of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.' They carry the marks of their youthful sins; their bones feel them till they lie down in the dust. Nay, God's children, that have repented, and God hath been reconciled to them through Christ, they have many a bitter remembrance of their youthful follies and vanities, that make their hearts ache at the thoughts of them: Jer. xxxi. 19, 'Surely after that I was turned I repented, and after I was instructed I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.' Therefore upon these considerations certainly it is very good to begin with God betimes, that it may not be a disadvantage to us after God shall call us to grace; for though the Lord may bless the education of youth with supernatural grace, yet youthful vanities may prove very bitter in the remembrance of them when we grow old.

Use. This is spoken to reprove us, because we always think it too soon to begin with God. Where is this timely care and forwardness? Alas!

we cannot say, 'All these have we kept from our youth;' but when we come to look to the commands of God, we may say, 'All these have we broken from our youth.' While they are young, most men live profane, and without all fear of God. Certainly there was some goodness in this man's speech, and that occasioned me to observe it, for 'Jesus, beholding him, loved him.'

But was it true? 'All these have I kept from my youth.' In a sense it was true, in regard of outward conformity, but not true in regard of that perfect obedience which was required.

1. It was true in regard of outward conformity. Externally he had kept them all, though not in the just extent of the law, yet he was as to men unreprovable, being no adulterer, no murderer, no extortioner, no thief; he did not lie certainly in this profession he made, he spoke as he thought, and out of simplicity and error rather than deceit; the man lived blamelessly, and did nobody harm, and therefore saith, 'All these have I kept from my youth.' Outward obedience and conformity to the law is a good and commendable thing in itself, yea, necessary, and required of us, but we are not to rest in it; but to escape the vices and pollutions of the world is so far praiseworthy. There are many that are openly profane and wicked in life, swearers, drunkards, sabbath-breakers; these come short of this young man, who yet came short of the kingdom of heaven. What will these say for themselves? Will they pretend that their heart is good? Can a pure fountain send forth impure streams? If the heart were good, would the life be so naught? If there be light in the lantern, will it not shine forth? If there be grace in the heart it will appear.

2. It was not true in regard of that perfect obedience which the law requireth, and so he ignorantly and falsely supposed that he had kept the law well enough, and done all those things from his youth. The falsity and presumption of this answer will appear by considering—

[1.] What the scripture saith of the state of man by nature: Gen. viii. 21, 'The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.' And he saith, 'All these have I kept from my youth.' Oh! how much do they forget themselves that boast of their own perfection!

[2.] The falsity of it appears by the sense of the commandment produced, 'Thou knowest the commandment,' saith Christ, 'Do not commit adultery,' &c., which will reach the most perfect man upon earth. It was a command of the second table, which wrought such tragical effects, and that stirred up those stings of conscience, and agonies of heart in Paul: Rom. vii. 7, 'I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet;' and thereupon he groundeth that general, ver. 14, 'The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.'

[3.] The falsity will appear by comparing him with other holy men of God; how differently do they express themselves from this man, that was so full of confidence! Compare him first with Josiah, who, when he heard the law read, 'he rent his clothes,' 2 Kings xxii. 11; and here Christ recites the law, 'Thou knowest the commandment;' and this young man saith, 'All these have I kept from my youth.' Oh! what a difference is there between a tender self-judging heart and a conceited justiciary! A tender conscience is all in an agony when it hears the law, and will smite for the least failing, as David's heart

smote him for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment. Again, compare him with the man that brought his son that was possessed with a dumb devil; he brought him to Christ to be cured, and Christ asked him, Dost thou believe I can do it? and he cried out with tears, 'Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief,' Mark ix. 24. That was a humble spirit indeed; there is a work of faith, 'Lord, I believe;' but he acknowledgeth mixtures of weakness, 'Help thou my unbelief.' But here is no lamenting of defects, 'All these have I kept from my youth.' Good souls, in the best actions they perform, will bewail the mixtures of sin; when they own anything of grace, they are still acknowledging their weakness and many infirmities. We may, and we must, acknowledge the good that is wrought in us, but still we may and we must be sensible of the mixtures of infirmity in our best actions. Again, compare him with Paul; he was one that had cause to stand upon his privileges as much as any; he had all those things which the finer sort of hypocrites can plead and rely upon before they come to Christ. Before he became a christian, he was 'as touching the righteousness which is by the law blameless,' Phil. iii. 6. He had a life free from all scandal and any outward vice; yet when he comes to look upon this, he says, 'I count all 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,' ver. 8. Paul was broken-hearted, touched with a sight of sin and deserved wrath; but this man, what an utter stranger was he to this blessed work of brokenness of heart! 'All these have I kept from my youth.'

In short (that I may gather up the discourse), here was wanting Josiah's tenderness, who rent his clothes, and the other man's humility, and Paul's self-denial; therefore certainly his answer shows that he was not truly acquainted either with the law or with himself. So that the note which I shall prosecute will be this—

Doct. That men are too apt to think well of themselves, or of their own goodness and righteousness before God.

Here is a young man drunk with a foolish confidence, and therefore boasteth that he had ever performed his duty. And to be sure he hath more fellows in the world, some that are as confident as he, but upon far less grounds. It is said of the scribe that came to Christ, Luke x. 29, 'But he willing to justify himself;' that is the temper and disposition of man. So Rom. x. 3, 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' So Rev. iii. 17, 'Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' Oh! how apt are many to conceit of themselves beyond what they ought!

Object. But what is the cause that men are so apt to overrate their own righteousness and goodness before God? I answer—Ignorance, error, self-love, negligence, and security.

First, Ignorance; they are ignorant of the law, and of the gospel.

1. Ignorant of the law, of the spiritual meaning of the law. They think they are well enough if they refrain from outward gross sins, and so say, 'All these have I kept,' because they keep it in an outward way;

as that pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, 'God, I thank thee I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.' Men please themselves in this, as if open and gross sinners were only liable to the wrath of God. Oh! how natural is it to us to cut short the sense of the law, that which may suit it to our own practice and our own course of duty! Ignorant persons think that no man is an idolater, or guilty of the breach of the first commandment, but he that doth grossly and openly worship stocks and stones, and beasts and serpents; and none a murderer but he that hath killed a man; none an adulterer but he that hath defiled his neighbour's bed; none a thief but he that robs by the highway side, or that pilfers another's goods. They look to the gross and outward sense of the law, and not to the inward spiritual meaning thereof. The Lord Christ rebukes this ignorance, Mat. v. 22, and shows that rash anger and contumelious words are sins; and he is a murderer not only that doth kill another, but he that breaks out into passion, that calls his 'brother, fool, he is in danger of hell-fire;' that lustful glances are adultery; that the law requires, not only an external conformity in manners and actions, but purity and righteousness in all our thoughts, internal motions, and the affections of the heart. Therefore the poor ignorant, self-deceiving man, that triumphs over sin as if it were wholly dead in him, because it breaks not out into open wickedness and enormous offences, is wholly mistaken; as Paul was alive without the law. Oh! this man is foully mistaken, for he knows not the law aright; for it doth not only command some external duties, and forbid some of the grosser sins, but reacheth the heart; it condemneth lust, evil concupiscence, and inordinate motions and stirrings. A man that keeps the law only outwardly can no more be said to keep the law than he that hath undertaken to carry a tree, and only takes up a little piece of the bark.

2. They are ignorant of gospel righteousness, which consists in the remission of sins and imputation of Christ's righteousness applied by true faith. What is the reason men are so apt to overrate their own righteousness? 'They are ignorant of the righteousness of God,' Rom. x. 3. They do not know the true plea in the gospel court, which is not innocency, but a broken-hearted confession of sin. That perfection of personal obedience which the legal covenant requireth they acknowledge not; and being ignorant of the second, they patch up a piece as well as they can of the duties of the law ill understood, that the ell may be no broader than the cloth. Ignorance then is one great cause of this disposition in men to justify themselves, ignorance of the legal and gospel covenant; they are ignorant of the nature, merit, and influence of sin, and of the severity of God's justice.

Secondly, Another cause is error. They are leavened with sottish principles, and that disposeth them to a conceit of their own righteousness. I shall name several of them.

1. That they live in good order, and are of a civil harmless life, and are better than others, or better than themselves have been heretofore, and therefore are in good condition before God; and yet a man may be carnal for all this. I will take this principle asunder. Take the positive part: A man may live in good order, be of a civil and harmless life, and yet be destitute of grace and of the life of faith.

There were moralities among the heathens far more exact than are to be found among many christians. As dogs excel man in acuteness of smell and sense, it is their perfection, so do many heathens excel abundance that go for christians, in temperance, justice, meekness, and a command of their passions; they that were never acquainted with Christ and the Spirit were civil and harmless; therefore to be a mere moral man certainly is not enough. Paul saith of himself, before he was acquainted with Christ, that he was 'as touching the righteousness which is of the law blameless,' Phil. iii. 6; and the apostle hath taught us to live 'godly,' as well as 'soberly and righteously in this present world,' Titus ii. 12. There is a living in communion with God, as well as being fair to men; and therefore a man may be civil and harmless, but such are not vicious, rather than virtuous and gracious; the mere rational life is one thing, and the spiritual life another thing. Then take the comparative part; they live better than others, so did the pharisee: Luke xviii. 11, 'God, I thank thee I am not as other men are;' yet Christ saith, Mat. v. 20, 'Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Among blind men the purblind is a kind of king, and guide of them all. A man may not be as bad as others, and yet not so good as God requires: Gal. vi. 4, 'Let every man prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.' It is a miserable thing when a man hath no other ground of confidence but the sins of others; he is good because others are worse; he hath no rejoicing in himself, but only from the sinfulness of others. Or suppose that a man be better than himself was heretofore, there is a moral change as well as a supernatural, a reformation as well as a regeneration. As a wanton young man that came in to Xenocrates' lecture half drunk, with his head crowned with rosebuds, and when he heard a discourse of temperance, he was converted by his lecture, and betook himself to a sober course, so a man may cast off his youthful vanities, and may be changed from being riotous to be more sober, and yet be far from grace. A sow washed is a sow still. What is short of regeneration is short of salvation. Therefore do not think because of a civil orderly life you do enough; this is a sottish principle, and keeps us from the righteousness of God.

2. Here is another of their errors; they are born and bred up in the bosom of the church and true religion, and because they are baptized, and profess the faith of Christ, therefore they think they ever had faith and a good heart towards God, and do not see why or from what they should be converted. It was a wonderful thing to Nicodemus to hear that a man should be born again, as strange as if a man should 'enter again into his mother's womb,' John iii. 4. They are wholly ignorant of any change of soul or state, and mind it not. So the Jews, when Christ told them of being made free from the bondage of sin, John viii. 33, 'We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man, how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?' Alas! men neglect their inward spiritual estate, and are not sensible of setting their souls free from the fetters of lusts and carnal affections, that they may pursue their chiefest good. Nothing so hard and heavy as spiritual bondage, and yet is little known and little discerned in the world. They live in

the bondage of sin with as much delight as fishes in their own element, and all this while they are puffed up with carnal dreams of their own privileges and worth. These are the men that are said 'to need no repentance,' Luke xv. 7, that is, in their own conceit, those that do not see why, or from what they should be converted.

3. They own no difference between a state of nature and a state of grace; they know no such thing as passing from death to life, and therefore are never troubled about it: 'All the Lord's people are holy,' Num. xvi. 3, and it is factious to make such distinctions: 'They have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the clean and unclean,' Ezek. xxii. 26. As if all were of one lump, and all should fare alike, and therefore think themselves as good as the best.

4. That those that are blameless before men and well spoken of in the world need not doubt of their acceptance with God. Oh no! God's trial is one thing, and men's another. Men see no further than the outside, but God regards the frame of the heart: 1 Sam. xvi. 7, 'Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.' Therefore though a man cannot be justly taxed before men, yet this is nothing before the all-seeing God: Ps. cxliii. 2, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' *Non dicit, cum hostibus tuis, sed cum servo tuo.* David doth not say, Lord, enter not into judgment with thine enemies, but with thy servant.

5. Another sottish maxim is, that petty sins are not to be stood upon. They shall do well enough if they never sin more nor worse; as the omission of good duties in their closets or families, lesser oaths, vain speeches, idle sport; whereas Christ saith, 'By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned,' Mat. xii. 37. Light things may weigh heavy in God's balance. Well, then, until the soul be dispossessed of these sottish conceits, it cannot be but they must overween their own righteousness, and think too well of themselves and of their estate before God.

Thirdly, Self-love is the reason of it: Prov. xvi. 2, 'All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits.' A man is very blind and partial in his own cause, and will not own any opinion and conceit against himself. There is an emphasis in that, 'his own eyes.' Surely man would favour himself, and be friendly to himself; we have a double instance of this in scripture. Judah was severe against Tamar, when he thought her to be with child by another man: Gen. xxxviii. 24, 'Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.' But when she showed him the tokens, the ring, the staff, and bracelets, and that he was the man, then he becomes gentle enough. So David, when his own story was represented to him in the case of a third person, that took away the ewe lamb from the poor man, he says in a heat, 'As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die,' 2 Sam. xii. 5; but when the prophet closeth with him, and told him, 'Thou art the man,' all this is spoken to thee, he was more calm. All this is spoken to show how favourable a judgment it must needs be that we pass upon ourselves: Ps. xxxvi. 2, 'He flatters himself in his own eyes until his iniquity be found to be hateful;' a man is well pleased with his own doings. That self-love is a cause, appears by

this, a man will not see sin, no, not when any man that looks upon his way may see it, till it break forth in shame, and makes him to be hateful; the mistake vanisheth not till all the town crieth shame upon him. While a man crieth out against sensuality, drunkenness, gluttony, he is so full of self-love, that he is loath to pass a sentence against his own soul.

Fourthly, Negligence, and want of searching, and taking the course whereby we may be undeceived. He that thinks better of himself than there is ground and reason for, the only way to bring him to himself is to put him upon often trial. So saith the apostle, Gal. vi. 3, 'If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.' But alas! this is a common case, and what more ordinary than for a man to conceit too highly of himself, and flatter himself with those excellences he hath not, and cry Peace, peace, when the wrath of God and sudden destruction is upon him? But how shall a man do to come out of this fool's paradise, that he may undeceive himself; see the next verse, 'But let every man prove his own work;' try their work and carriage by the rule of God's word, what he doth, and upon what motives, and for what ends; let him prove so as to approve himself to God: 2 Cor. xiii. 5, 'Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove yourselves, know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' Oh! search and see what is the frame of your hearts, what true grounds of confidence you have towards God. Now, when men will not so much as put it to the question, whether it be well or ill, no wonder they slightly return an *Omnia bene*, 'All these have I kept from my youth.' A natural man is under this dilemma, If I should not search, I should not know myself, if I should search I should not like myself; and therefore out of laziness and self-love he chooseth the latter. Plutarch saith, Evil men turn from their own lives as the worst spectacle that can be presented to them. We could not be so grossly deceived by Satan as we are, if we did not turn our eyes away from our own hearts and ways, but did oftener call ourselves to an account.

Fifthly, Security. As they will not search, so they will not know themselves when they are searched, and cannot endure thoroughly to be discovered to themselves. There is a voluntary examination of conscience, and an involuntary impression, by which conscience is awakened against our wills, either by the preaching of the word, or by afflictions sent from God. In both these cases men discover this self-conceit, in that they do defeat those methods which God useth when they are searched by God.

1. They cannot endure to be searched by the word: John iii. 20, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.' Men will stand out as long as they can, in defence of their own righteousness, and are loath to be convinced and discovered to themselves, and to be seen what indeed they are, and that is the reason they cannot endure a reproving light, a searching ministry. But the word doth seize upon them by chance, as sometimes it will. Thus Felix, when Paul rubs his privy sore, discoursing of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, it sets him all in an agony: 'Felix trembled,' Acts xxiv. 25. What then? He puts it off to a more convenient season. When God ransacks the

conscience by his word, they are not pleased with this, but seek diversions. Lusts quench and drown their convictions. The apostle James compares a careless hearer, chap. i. 23, 24, to 'a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of person he was.' Men content themselves with a slight transient glance, and are troubled for the present; they have but a weak impression wrought upon them, which is soon worn out. Or—

2. When God searcheth them by affliction; when they do not judge themselves, they are judged by the Lord. As Joseph's brethren, their consciences had slept many years securely in their sins, but God casts them down, and revives their thoughts; they have many tremblings and workings of soul: Gen. xlii. 21, 'They said one to another, 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 him, therefore is this evil come upon us.' Now how few are there that will hear the rod, or, if they be a little affected when the smart is upon them, they go away as heart-whole as ever, and when they are well, are as vain as ever, and do not profit by their troubles. Therefore, since there is so much ignorance of the legal and gospel covenant, so many sottish errors wherewith men are prepossessed, so much self-love, negligence, and loathness to search, so much security, and not improving conditions when God searcheth, no wonder a man is so conceited of himself.

Use. Let us take heed of self-conceit and self-righteousness. Especially this concerns you that have a civil and sober education, and are as to externals blameless. As you love your own souls, take heed of a self-righteousness. Though you do not run into the same excess of riot which others do, and are free from outward vice, yet God hath enough against you to condemn you for ever. Therefore study the covenants; lay aside gross conceits of God and holiness; take heed of being blinded with self-love; search often and see what claim you have to heaven; observe ordinances and providences, and improve your convictions, that you may turn to the Lord; else you may have a flattering hope, but can have no solid peace in your consciences, till with brokenness of heart you quit your own righteousness, and fly to Christ alone.

And that you may not be besotted with a dream of your own righteousness, consider—

1. How light every one of us shall be found when we are put in the balance of the sanctuary: 'All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits,' Prov. xvi. 2. Mark what is weighed, not *opus*, the matter of the action, but our work, with the motives, the principles, the ends of it, and the state of your hearts; and it is weighed, it is put into the balance. God knows all things by number and weight.

2. Consider how different the judgment of God and men will be: Luke xvi. 15, 'Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knows the heart; for that which is highly esteemed amongst men is abomination in the sight of God.' Mark, God may loathe it in the same degree that men respect it; for these are the terms propounded, 'highly esteemed among men,' and 'abomination in the sight of God.'

Our rose may prove a nettle with him, our gold mere brass, and our spices very dung when God looks upon us.

3. Consider that self is an incompetent judge in its own case; and therefore you, that are to endure God's judgment, should not stand merely to the judgment of self. If your own heart acquit you, you cannot rest upon that; you can find no evil in the action, but God can: 1 Cor. iv. 4, 'For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.' Alas! though your heart cannot charge you with anything, yet God can; and if your hearts condemn you, God may much more, for he knows us better than ourselves: 1 John iii. 20, 'For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.'

SERMON V.

Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me.—MARK x. 21.

IN this verse is contained the fourth and last part of the conference between our Saviour and this young man. Observe here—

1. The gesture and carriage of our Lord Christ towards him, 'Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him.'

2. The answer he gives him; in which there is—

[1.] An admonition of his defect, 'One thing thou lackest.'

[2.] A precept and injunction, which is twofold—particular and general.

(1.) Particular, for the trial of this young man, where is the duty, 'Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor.' And the motive or promise, 'And thou shalt have treasure in heaven.' The precept is particular, but backed with a general promise.

(2.) General, 'Come, take up the cross, and follow me.' These are the parts; let us insist upon them as they offer themselves.

Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him.—This clause hath troubled many interpreters, how Jesus could love this young man, who seemed to be so full of pride, and self-conceit, and whose heart was so addicted to worldly riches, that when he knew Christ's mind, he went away from him sad: but there need not so great ado about the matter. To open it, two things will be necessary to show you the cause of this love, and the kind of it, why, and how he loved him.

1. Why he loved him. Surely it was not for his outward feature, or external compliment. Christ's love was never set upon these things; but his goodness of disposition, moral integrity, and ingenuity, that was the reason why he loved him.

2. Now for the kind of this love. Christ, you know, had two natures in him, and accordingly we may distinguish of his love and affection;

there is the divine love and the human love of Christ, as he was God, and as he was man.

[1.] If you interpret it of his divine love, the difficulty will not be great; for there is a general and common love, and a special love. With the first, God loves all his creatures, especially mankind, and amongst them those that have any strictures of his image in them more than others. But then there is a special love, and so all those are saved whom God thus loveth. So God loveth his own people, either with a love of good-will when they are uncalled: Jer. xxxi. 3, 'Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love;' or else with a love of complacency, when called and converted: Zeph. iii. 17, 'He will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love.' Now this will easily salve the matter; there was a general love, or a liking and approbation of those moral virtues and good things which he saw in him, but not that special love which brings grace and salvation along with it. But—

[2.] Let us consider Christ as man, and so speak of his human love. Jesus Christ, as he took our nature, so he had the same affections and aversations that we have; and therefore as man he loved his parents, his kindred, his nation, his friends and acquaintance in their several relations. Some there were with whom he contracted a more special friendship; as Lazarus: John xi. 3, 'Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.' He loved Lazarus in a special manner, as a singular good man. So also his two sisters: ver. 5, 'And Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.' And John is called the 'disciple whom Jesus loved,' chap. xiii. 23. Christ in his own practice would sanctify holy friendship, and therefore it pleased him as man to have a special human love to some above others. Once more, there were others whom he loved with a larger love, as they had more or less of good in them, as this young man for his good nature and blameless life: 'Jesus, beholding him, loved him;' that is, showed some signs of inclination towards him.

Now this was either a love of courtesy or a love of pity.

(1.) A love of courtesy and respect. Origen interprets it, he kissed him, or showed him some outward sign of favour. Indeed if the word had been ἐφίλησεν, it might have been interpreted so; but the word is ἠγάπησεν. Others, more generally, he treated him kindly. So this word sometimes is taken for courteous speech, as Grotius and other great critics in the Greek tongue observe. He loved him, that is, spoke friendly and kindly to him. So in Homer, χαῖρε, ξένε, παρ' ἄμμι φιλήσῃ—Welcome guest, you shall be loved by us; that is, friendly entreated or received. And so again, he excuseth himself that he did not love him as soon as he saw him at first, that is, did not treat him so kindly; so Jesus loved him, that is, treated him with kindness.

(2.) A love of pity, pitying him who had done so much to so little purpose, who lost the benefit of all he did by a vain opinion of his own righteousness. As we pity moderate papists, sober Turks, or infidels, so Jesus Christ might love him with a love of pity. Well, then, it was a love of human affection, as one man loves another for his good qualities; not a love of familiarity and friendship, but either a love of courtesy or pity, seeing a man so young, so rich, so powerful,

and in so great corruption of manners had kept himself so blameless; this was that for which Jesus loved him.

I observe two points of doctrine from hence—

Doct. 1. There may be some amiable and good qualities in unregenerate men.

Here was a young man without saving grace, yet of a moral conversation, and as touching the externals of the law blameless.

Now, that there may be such good qualities in them, appears thus—

1. All are created with some inclination to good, though not to good spiritual, yet to good natural and moral. In our decayed condition there are some remainders of right reason, some impressions of equity, some principles of common honesty still left and preserved in us, though as to spiritual endowments, 'We are altogether become filthy and abominable,' Ps. xiv. 2; yet some moral inclinations are left, to show what human nature once was; as in a rifled palace, though the rich furniture be gone, the plate and the jewels, and though the fashion of it be much spoiled, yet some of the fabric is left still standing, to show what a magnificent structure it once was. Nature teacheth to deal justly with all, and startles and looks ghastly at some kind of abominations. The dictates of morality and common right are very legible in our conscience: 'The gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law,' Rom. ii. 14. As Job's messengers said, every one of them, 'I alone am escaped to tell thee,' so there are some principles of conscience that are left, and escaped out of the ruins of the fall, to warn us of our duty, and to make us give back at monstrous and gross impieties, and to leave us without excuse. Though men be born in sin, and are dead to all spiritual good, yet some restraints are left still upon nature, lest man should not show himself to be man.

2. For the good of mankind. God is the patron of human society, and delights in the welfare and preservation of it. He created not man, as he did the angels, to live several and independent from one another. We are all multiplied and propagated from one original root, that we might live in mutual society, and converse with one another. It is observed that ravenous and noxious creatures live single and apart, but the useful in herds and flocks; so man was made by nature a sociable creature. Now, there would be no such thing as human society if there were not some sweetness of nature and moral dispositions yet left in us. The world would be but one great forest of wild beasts if God had not left some authority in conscience to keep men within the bounds of honesty. And therefore, to uphold order in the world, there must be some amiable qualities; even in the unregenerate or corrupt state, some are more innocent and unblamable than others. I will set it forth by this similitude: As Nebuchadnezzar, when he carried the princes and chief men into captivity out of the land of Judea, he left some of the people behind him to till the land, lest it became a wilderness, so, that the world might not become a forest of wild beasts, there are some that observe the common dictates of nature, that men might be commodious and useful one to another; for did not these impressions bear sway, the world could not subsist, nor justice and honesty be maintained.

3. There are other things besides renewing grace that might cause these amiable qualities.

[1.] Bodily temper may incline men to some good. We see some are of a rougher temper, and others of a sweeter disposition. Some are soft, smooth, and docile, others stiff and stubborn. The scripture takes notice of the different dispositions of Esau and Jacob: Gen. xxv. 27, 'Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents.' Look, as blades, though all are made of the same metal, yet they differ much in goodness by reason of the temper, so there is a great deal of difference between men and men by reason of the temper of their bodies; some are ingenuous and shamefaced, and not so easily drawn to outrage and sin, but others are of a baser alloy. The complexion of the soul doth very much follow the constitution of the body, and therefore some are better natured and tempered than others, so that there may be amiable qualities in them, and yet without grace.

[2.] The increase of one sin may cause others to decrease, as a wen that grows big and monstrous defrauds other parts of their nourishment. Though all sin be kindly to a natural heart, yet some sins are more apt to take the throne, and other lusts are starved to feed that. As for instance, he that is covetous, by the force of his covetousness and parsimony is made an enemy to prodigality and a friend to frugality; as Judas, that loved the bag, was against profuseness and wastefulness, John xii. 5, 6. A prodigal man is not covetous, and so more prone to be liberal and free-hearted. A profane man is an enemy of superstition, and loves to be moderate and indifferent in religion. A superstitious man hates profaneness, and lays out his zeal upon every little trifle that can lay claim to religion, and so he may seem to be a greater friend to zeal. A voluptuary hates despair and morosity, and is more sociable and friendly in converse. Thus, as weeds destroy one another, so do many vices; so many vices occasion something that is amiable. Ambition makes men diligent, sober, and vigilant to improve their opportunities.

[3.] It may be occasioned partly by discipline and strict education, or else the miseries and calamities of the present life; for these things, though they do not mortify sin, yet they may much weaken and hinder the discovery of it. Solomon often tells us of the force of education, and that the rod of correction gets a great deal of folly out of the heart of children: Prov. xxii. 15, 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction driveth it far from him;' and as they grow up in years, God takes them into his own discipline. Pharaoh is devout under his plagues, and Ahab under a severe threatening walks softly. God's correction may work some commendable qualities in them.

[4.] By politic government, and laws which keep men within the bounds of their duty, so that they are orderly by constraint, and for fear of penalty, which, if they should follow their pleasure in sinning, they would be exposed to. Austin saith, *Leges humanæ munditoria instrumenta sunt.* He compares laws to brooms, which though they cannot make corn of weeds or of chaff, yet they serve to sweep in the corn, and keep it within the floor. Laws may make men good subjects,

though not good men. As Seneca tells us, the heathens observed many things; they may do many things, *Non tanquam dijis grata sed tanquam legibus jussa, magis ad morem quam ad rem*; not as pleasing God, but as required by the law; not for the thing, but for the fashion; they may be very harmless, put on a face of goodness, but it is not out of conscience; the magistrate makes them so, who is 'the minister of God for good,' Rom. xiii. 4.

[5.] Unregenerate men may be translated from the grammar school of nature to the university of grace; and though they never commence there, and took the degree of true sanctification, yet they may come very near it by common grace, and may not be far from the kingdom of God. This may be by the efficacy of the word, which is very persuasive and pressing. Take it as it works only in a moral way; as Herod heard John Baptist, 'and did many things, and heard him gladly,' Mark vi. 20. Or else they may have this common grace by experience of the providence of God over the church or themselves; when they see God's interest stands out against all assaults: Ps. cxxix. 1, 2, 'Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, now may Israel say: many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, yet have they not prevailed against me.' When they observe that all those that dash against the corner-stone are broken in pieces, that many good men, though molested and troubled, yet visibly have a blessing and a providence that attends them, and that the profane are overtaken in their sins by pursuing judgments, that it is never better with them than when they own that which is good, this cannot but move them to something that is amiable to some sense of religion, and siding with the better party. Or they may have the common gifts of the Spirit, Heb. vi. 4, 5; they may be enlightened, may have gifts of prayer and preaching; some vanishing tastes of the goodness and sweetness of evangelical doctrine, some motions and impulsions, and excitations to good. These are the reasons.

Use 1. It shows us how inexcusable they are in the sight of God, and how just their condemnation will be, that have nothing lovely in them. Certainly they might have had something or other lovely in them, even while they were natural, if they would give their heart to it; either wisdom or valour, meekness or zeal, humility or charity. Every temper yieldeth some way and means of glorifying God; and it is their own fault if they have not some endowment or other. I speak this not as to spiritual grace only, which they do not only neglect, but reject the means whereby to get it; they put away the word of God from them, shut the door upon themselves: Acts xiii. 46, 'Ye put the word from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life;' and esteem spiritual grace nothing worth, yea, it is folly to them: 1 Cor. ii. 14, '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.' Yea, they think it as dishonourable and prejudicial to them. But also in respect of moral endowments, I say certainly some crown or other they might have, if they did not uncrown themselves by sin. Natural men may have brave wits, but they besot themselves, and quench them in luxury and riot, and pervert those moral inclinations, those seeds of God that were in their nature, while they

drink, whore, and play away their consciences. There are none but have a conscience till they get the victory of it, and smother it, and outgrow the feelings and checks of it, and lose all sense: Eph. iv. 19, 'Who being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.' They might have lived virtuously and morally, till they brought upon themselves the tyranny of evil custom, and then no wonder if they are wholly given up to sensual lusts, and to walk in a sinful way. They have lost all former advantages, they have spoiled their natural temper, they have lost the benefit of their education, despised instruction, and the discipline of parents, lived in defiance of laws, 'received the grace of God in vain,' 2 Cor. vi. 1. In a word, they have slighted God's judgments, quenched their gifts, checked the motions of God's Spirit. Therefore certainly they are altogether without excuse that out-sin these helps. Natural conscience, temper, education, laws, ordinances, providences, and the Spirit's motions, they are all helps, and God forsakes men in none of these till they first forsake him, and by some notable sin provoke him to withdraw such helps; and therefore what will you say for yourselves that have not any of these amiable qualities and moral endowments? Will you say you would fain be better, but cannot? That cannot be, for many of these amiable qualities are found in natural men, and you have had many helps and advantages either to get or increase them in your souls. If many moral heathens go to hell that had not half those helps, and yet were exemplary in so many amiable qualities, what will become of you, if you refuse all the helps which God hath vouchsafed to you in his providence, and yet run into enormous evils?

Use 2. If there may be amiable qualities in unregenerate men, then do not rest in these things: Mat. v. 46, 'If you love them that love you, what reward have you? do not even the publicans the same?' and ver. 47, τί περισσὸν, 'What do you more than others?' What over and above? A natural man may have all these. You may live orderly, and yet if you have not faith you cannot please God: Heb. xi. 6, 'For without faith it is impossible to please God.' You may be blameless, yet if you be not born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven: John iii. 3, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Therefore do not rest in this, that you have some good qualities which are amiable and praiseworthy before God and men, but labour for the sanctifying virtue of God's Spirit, and the power of godliness, that you may be 'partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Peter i. 4; for if thy heart be not yet truly changed, thy person may be odious to God. It is not mine, but the advice of Jesus Christ, 'Make the tree good, and his fruit good,' Mat. xii. 33. A man may carry the fruits of Canaan, as the spies did, upon a dry staff; but learn to bear them from a living root. To be harmless, meek, chaste, just, temperate, all this is good; but it is much better when they flow from a renewed heart; then they are gracious evidences to you. A good nature without grace makes a fair show with the world, but it is of little respect with God as to your salvation. All this may be from temper and awe of men. How may a man mistake a still nature for meekness, fervency and height of spirit for zeal, want of affection to holy things for discretion, stupidity for patience, obstinacy for constancy!

But God knows how to distinguish. Will complexion and temper ever pass for grace in God's account? And usually if a natural man hath one good quality, he hath another bad one to match it. It is observed in history of Alexander, that he was an enemy to uncleanness, but extremely given to drunkenness. Julius Cæsar was not given to drunkenness, but exceedingly addicted to uncleanness. Natural men, if they have their amiable qualities, they have some domineering bad quality to match them. Nay, a good nature once corrupted doth prove the worst of all others, as the sweetest wine makes the tartest vinegar. Augustus[1] at first was of a good merciful nature. Suetonius observes of him that he was at first loath to consent to the persecution, but when he was once in, he was more inexorable and merciless than the rest of his companions. None have done more vile things against God and the interest of God than men accounted of a good nature, when once the temptation hath prevailed upon them. Herod Agrippa was a sweet-natured popular man, but he slew James, and would have slain Peter also, Acts xii. 1, 2, and all out of easiness and facility, to please the people. Usually none fall sooner into the snare of persecution and hatred of the saints of God than they; and the reason is, counsel is of great advantage upon those that are of a pliant and pleasing disposition, and all their parts and excellences are but like a sword in a cutler's shop, as ready for the thief as the true man to purchase. He is easily made a prey to Satan and turned against God; therefore do not rest in these things.

Doct. 2. That in some respect Christ loves those that are orderly and civil, and do but outwardly carry themselves according to God's commands.

I shall give the reasons, and then apply it.

1. The thing is good in itself, though the resting in it makes it useless as to the salvation of the person that goes no further: Micah vi. 8, 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' These things are agreeable to the reasonable nature, and the perfection of it lies in them. Now all good is the object of love; therefore, if it be good Christ loves it.

2. Because our Lord Christ is willing and ready to own the least good in us, that he might draw us on to more. Here was a towardly young man, and Christ would not discourage him; though he was not gracious, it is said he looked upon him and loved him: Mat. xii. 20, 'A bruised reed will he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench;' that is, not despise and reject weaklings. When a reed is broken we cast it away, it is good for nothing but to be trampled under feet; and we are discouraged from blowing while we see no flame, but smoke. But Christ is of another disposition, he will not cast away the bruised reed nor despise the smoking flax; so far as there is anything of goodness in a creature, though it be but smoke, Christ will own it.

3. Because these things tend to the profit of mankind, and Jesus Christ's heart is much set upon the good of mankind. His rejoicing was in the habitable parts of the earth, before there was hill or mountain: Prov. viii. 31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.' And his apostle doth press

[1] Qu. "Nero"?—ED.

this, 'that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works, these are good and profitable to men,' Titus iii. 8. Christ is a great friend and patron of human society, therefore will show his liking of it, and how pleasing all things are to him that tend to maintain it, as justice, equity, temperance, prudence, moderation, fidelity. Christ would put some mark of his favour on those that excel in these things. When he instructeth the young man in the commandments of the second table, and he said, 'All these have I kept from my youth,' Jesus loved him.

Use. Now let us see what use we may make of this.

1. Negatively. To show what use is not to be made of this passage; for men may be apt to abuse and make an ill use of Jesus' love of these moral virtues.

[1.] We cannot make this use of it, as if Christ did love moral virtues as meritorious of grace; they are not such things upon which God hath bound himself necessarily to give the grace of conversion. The Pelagians had this axiom, *Facienti homini quod in se est, tenetur Deus dare ulteriorem gratiam*—That let a man do what in him lies, God is necessarily bound by that to give him further grace. And the papists build upon the same ground their doctrine of *meritum ex congruo*, merit of congruity. As they hold merit of condignity in the works of renewed men, so they hold merit of congruity in the works of unrenewed men; as if God in right and equity were bound to recompense them with the reward of conversion. But the scripture puts conversion upon another bottom, and shows that it is not given according to the good works we have done, but merely of the Lord's grace and mercy: Titus iii. 4, '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.' The apostle speaks there of converting grace, wherein we have a negative and an affirmative cause. He could have said simply 'Of his mercy he saved us,' and no more; but he would disprove works, therefore he doth express it negatively, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done;' or at least he might have said this, 'Not only by works of righteousness which we have done, but also of his mercy he hath saved us;' and so might have allowed it as a con-cause, as having some influence, something in it to bind God. Oh, no! he excludes works altogether, 'Not by works of righteousness.' Or at least, if the apostle would express it negatively and positively, he might have said thus, 'Not by works which we have done, but of his mercy he saved us.' No; but he says, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done.' He describes the works which he rejects as being a cause of saving grace. All our moral righteousness, the best of our works, they have no influence upon God to give us grace, but merely 'of his grace he hath saved us;' therefore do not think that God by a certain infallible law is bound to give grace.

[2.] We must not so take this as that he doth love good qualities so as to make them equal with christian virtues or the graces of the Spirit. Morality is good, but we must not lift it up beyond its place. There is something better, and that is grace, 'those things which do accompany salvation,' Heb. vi. 9. I observe this, because there are many

secret atheists, that will cry up moral righteousness beyond its worth, and the virtues and honesty of the heathens, to debase the esteem of christian religion, which the world now is grown weary of. They think there was more honesty by the natural institutions of the heathens than by the law of Christ, and cry up moral honesty to the great detriment and prejudice of the true religion. I do confess, if we compare some honest heathens with many christians in name, that have defiled themselves with monstrous impieties, it is not hard to determine which are the better men. Loose professors dishonour their religion, but the sound grapes in the cluster must not be judged of by the rotten ones, nor is the beauty of a street to be measured by the filthiness of the sink and kennel. Those that are the sink and disgrace of christianity are unfit to show forth the virtue of it. I confess we are fallen into days wherein moral men may justify themselves, *Non quod boni sunt, sed quod mediocriter mali*, as Augustine saith—Not that they are perfectly good men, but they are tolerably good in comparison of many sinful christians. Compare those that have felt the power of religion with heathens, and then you may see the power of christian graces is far greater than of moral virtues. Compare the continency of Alexander and Scipio with the continency of Joseph; they forbore to defile Darius' wife out of gallantry, but Joseph he forbears to commit such wickedness that he might not 'sin against God,' Gen. xxxix. 9. They were not solicited by their captives, but he yielded not when solicited by his mistress, that was able to prefer him on the one side, or undo him on the other. What once was said of Alexander in a time of drought, when a soldier brought him a helmet full of water, he poured it out, saying, 'I will not drink; the hearts of these men would faint,' pointing to his companions, because they had not the like. Compare this with David's action: 2 Sam. xxiii. 16, 17, 'He would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord, and said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this; is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it.' So that if you compare these things, their morality is but like a field flower to a garden flower, or wild fruits to orchard fruits; it is a wild thing in comparison of grace, and not any way comes up to the height of it.

[3.] We must not from hence make this use, that we should think ourselves to be in a good condition because of moral qualifications. Men may be viceless, but yet if they be Christless, and graceless, and never brought to brokenness of heart (for certainly that is necessary to prepare men for faith, and for pardon of sin), they may perish for evermore. Without faith and gospel conditions and qualifications, you can never have any acceptance with God; though they may be profitable to others, yet they are not acceptable to God. *Sine Christo omnis virtus in vitio est*, saith Jerome; in point of salvation they fail and fall short, though in a civil and human respect they are useful and commendable; these moral virtues do not gave us a title to eternal life. Jesus loved the young man, as approving the matter of his obedience, but not his state and condition. He tells him, 'One thing thou lackest.' Oh! when you have all your moralities, something is lacking still. This moral righteousness proves a snare to you when it keeps you from evan-

gelical righteousness and seeking reconciliation with God. If we rest in it, and are conceited of it, 'Publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before us,' Mat. xxi. 31, and so we might have been better if we had been worse.

2. Positively. What use may we make of this, that Jesus loved this young man?

[1.] If Christ did love civility, much more will he love true grace in any of his, though mingled with much weakness. Certainly he that delights in the obscure shadow of his image will much more delight in the lively picture and impression of it upon the souls of his people, though we have our weaknesses. John xi. 5, it is said, 'Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.' Martha is mentioned, and in the gospel story we find her twice tripping. She was busy about the house, and neglected the one thing necessary, Luke x. 39, 40. At another time we find her questioning Christ's power: John xi. 39, 'Lord, by this time he stinketh;' yet Jesus loved Martha. There is much difference of growth in God's children, and some have their blemishes more than others, yet Christ loves true grace how weak soever it is. It is notable to observe what a veil and cover the scripture puts upon the imperfections of the saints: Heb. xi. 31, 'By faith the harlot Rahab perished not, when she had received the spies with peace.' Alas! there was dissembling in the case, and weakness, but the faith is mentioned and the lie covered. So James v. 11, 'You have heard of the patience of Job;' Ay! and of his impatience too, and murmuring, when he cursed the day of his birth; but the Holy Ghost puts a finger upon the scar, and covers the failing. So 1 Peter iii. 6, 'As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.' Mark, the scripture that is alluded to in that place is Gen. xviii. 12, 'Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?' The whole speech savoured of unbelief; there is but one good word in it, 'lord,' expressing her reverence to her husband, and the Holy Ghost takes notice of that, picks a jewel out of a dunghill. The Lord takes notice of the least act of sincere obedience to his commands, when it is mixed with many sinful failings.

[2.] We learn by Christ's example to honour others for their common gifts. Some respect is due to them that have any good in them. We are bidden, 1 Peter ii. 17, 'To honour all men.' How so? All are partakers of some excellency from God. How vile soever they be in other respects, they have something of the image of God, James iii. 9; some gift received from God, for which they deserve respect and honour; therefore we ought to give them some signs of respect, that we may be in a better capacity of doing good to their souls. The gifts of God we ought to esteem wherever we find them.

[3.] Thus we may learn, children, young men, and others, all may know how to get Christ's love if they be tractable. If you are free from all intemperance and disobedience, and of honest conversation, then you are such as this young man whom Christ loved; and though more be required of you, yet these things are pleasing to Christ, and want not their reward (what reward they have I will show by and by). Solomon tells us, Prov. xxx. 29, 'Many seek the favour of the ruler.' Jesus Christ is the King of kings, the great ruler of the world; is he

only unworthy, that you should not seek his grace and favour? He loves moral qualifications, therefore abound in these. On the other side, he hates those that are dissolute, intemperate, gluttons, drunkards, liars, wantons, and all those that are profane and wicked from their youth. By the rule of contraries, if he loves conformity to the law of God in externals, he hates those that walk contrary to his law; and he will show his hatred by public acts of vengeance, though it be upon children. If children do not reverence their superiors, he hath judgments for them; as the two she-bears out of the wood tore in pieces forty-two children, 2 Kings ii. 24. And then for grown men, God will have judgments for them. It is a sad time, and it calls for much weeping, lamentation, and grief, that we live in an age wherein moral wickedness abounds, drinking, whoring, swearing, murdering, stealing, and such like abominations. Take this observation; God doth not usually punish in this world for unbelief and want of love to Christ; he leaves it to the world to come; but for breaches of the moral law he doth: Rom. i. 18, 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.' When the two tables are violated by ungodliness and unrighteousnsss, then the wrath of God breaks out by some notable judgment. So Heb. ii. 2, 'Every transgression and disobedience' (of Moses) 'received a just recompense of reward;' and Hosea iv. 1, 2, 'The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; by swearing and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.' There are sins against the moral law reckoned up, which provokes the Lord's anger. As in temporal favours God expresseth love to those that are morally righteous, so in temporal judgments he hath expressed his hatred against immoralities. I confess, some gospel provocations God doth punish in this world, as, for instance, when men persecute the profession of the gospel, or when they grow weary of the gospel after they have long had it, then it concerns God as governor of the world to punish such, the good of the world being very much concerned. But chiefly his judgments are for sins against the moral law of God; when these are broken in our streets, there ought to be much weeping and lamenting before the Lord in a sense of these things.

[4.] It condemns those that will pretend to the peculiar love of Christ, when they are not moral, but froward, unduitful in their relations, unconscionable in their dealing, and have not learned to be sober, to possess their vessels in sanctification and honour. What! do you talk of being christians when you are not so good as heathens? Never think of the higher mysteries of religion, of believing in Christ, and communion with God, when you live so contrary to the light of nature; as the apostle speaks of the 'natural branches,' and the 'branches contrary to nature,' Rom. xi. 24. It is in vain to think of grafting things that are contrary to nature, if the natural branches be not grafted in. There are certain who are doubly dear, 'both in the flesh, and in the Lord;' not only 'in the Lord,' upon the account of religion, but 'in the flesh, upon the account of nature, as Onesimus was dear to Philemon when converted, Philem. 16. There were many

moral heathens of a sweet nature, that had great command over their passion. Many civil carnal men will rise up in judgment against high-flown christians, that pretend to great heights of faith and love to Christ, but are defective in morals. As it was said of the men of Nineveh and the queen of Sheba, that 'they shall rise up in judgment against this generation, and condemn it,' Mat. xii. 41, 42, so will these heathens, men morally just, exact, punctual in their dealings, rise up in judgment against many that pretend to believe in Christ. *Si non præstat fides, quid præstitit infidelitas?* How should this put you to shame, when those that are graceless cannot be taken tardy in those things wherewith you are charged? I say, if their moral principles and civil institutions bind them to the peace and good behaviour, and will not suffer them to do wrong, and all the laws of Christ will not confine you within your duty, how great will your condemnation be! See that you be not exceeded by them. I may represent it thus, when a schoolboy knows more and better of arts and sciences than a university man, is not this a great shame to him? I remember it is said of Sarah, Gen. xx. 16, 'Abimelech said, Behold I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold he is to thee a covering of thine eyes unto all that are with thee, and to all other; thus was she reproved.' Here is no word of reproof; how was she reproved? Why here a pagan king dismisseth her untouched, with gifts to her husband; he provides for her safety, and this was a reproof of Sarah's dissembling; his morality was a reproof to her that was acquainted with the true God, and a professor of the true faith, and yet was found tardy. You are shamed, and Christ is put to shame in you.

[5.] It invites us to go so far, for Jesus loved this young man; *est aliquid prodire tenus.* What was in this young man? Here is his care to seek after eternal life, his reverent esteem of Christ's person, his outward conformity to the laws of God, his abstaining from all gross sins from his youth. Oh! these are amiable properties and qualities, and those that are endowed with them, Christ loveth them.

Object. But here is an objection. How is this a motive? Christ was courteous and respectful to this young man; but now he is in heaven, what love doth Christ show now upon earth to those that are moral?

(1.) Moral virtues will at least procure a temporal reward. Christ loves virtue so that he rewardeth the show of it; it keeps off many temporal judgments, and procures many temporal benefits; as the Ninevites' repentance, though not real, kept off the judgment, Jonah iii. 10, and Ahab's humiliation kept off the judgment in his days: 1 Kings xxi. 29, 'Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.' It encourageth us to seek him, since he rewardeth a temporal repentance with temporal favours. Oh! what will the hearty humiliation of a true penitent do, when a counterfeit one is thus far accepted with God? And so that kind of zeal that was in Jehu was not without its reward: 2 Kings x. 30, 'Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth

generation shall sit on the throne of Israel,' though he did it with an imperfect heart. The Egyptian midwives, when they saved the children of the Israelites, though it were by a lie, the Lord multiplied them and blessed them: Exod. i. 20, 'Therefore God dealt well with the midwives;' and ver. 21, 'It came to pass, that because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses.' So Austin observes that the Romans, as long as they did excel in justice and temperance, were rewarded by God with victory and prosperity; as long as that empire kept honest in civil virtues, it had eminent success, and their commonwealth prevailed and overtopped the nations; but when they degenerated into beasts for impiety, all went to ruin.

(2.) There will be some serenity of mind resulting from the rectitude of your actions. Look, as the heathens, when 'they did by nature the things contained in the law,' they had the approbation of their consciences, 'Thoughts excusing,' Rom. ii. 15.

(3.) It is some advantage to grace; it is like the priming the post, that maketh it receptive of better colours. At least they do not aggravate their condemnation, nor increase their weakness, nor draw upon themselves penal blindness and hardness of heart and utter despair. However, it is like the embalming a carcase; though it do not restore life, yet it keeps the body from stinking. As long as they are at work, they are not given over to a reprobate sense: 'They are not far from the kingdom of God,' Mark xii. 34. An humble man, that hath some thoughts of God and of eternal life, certainly is sooner converted than an outrageous wretch that doth swagger and out-brave the ordinances of God; whereas men that are strangers to all goodness, and of an inveterate wickedness and falsehood, 'that are estranged from the womb, and go astray so soon as they be born, speaking lies,' as the prophet expresseth it, Ps. lviii. 3, are more hardly cured.

(4.) As to their eternal state, it will be more tolerable for such than for others. Though they fall short of heaven, yet *mitius punientur*, at least they have a cooler hell; their account is more easy; as the scripture speaks of περισσότερον κρῖμα, of 'a greater damnation;' Mat. xi. 22, 'It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you.' Cato suffers less than Catiline, Socrates than Nero; and certainly it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for those that despised the gospel; therefore a heathen could say, No such feast as to do our duty which God requires.

SERMON VI.

One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.—MARK x. 21.

Now we come to Christ's answer, and there take notice—

First, Of the admonition of his defect, 'Jesus said unto him, One thing thou lackest.' By the evangelist Matthew it appears that this

part of the answer was given to a question proposed: Mat. xix. 20, 'All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?' He saith confidently, 'All these things have I kept;' and Christ saith, 'One thing thou lackest.' Indeed, take the commandments in their full latitude and breadth of interpretation, he wanted all things; how is it then that our Saviour saith only, 'One thing thou lackest?'

1. Because it would have been tedious to convince him of all his defects, and therefore Christ would take the more compendious way, and insist but upon one thing, which was enough to show that he was not perfect, as he vainly dreamed. If a man brag that he is able to pay a hundred pounds, you convince him of his penury when you press him to pay one penny, and he cannot.

2. This one thing was sure, and would strike home; for our Lord knew his heart, and therefore was resolved to touch his privy sore, and doth propose such a precept as would cross his darling sin; and therefore he would only come with one thing, which would try him to the purpose. Men that esteem too highly of themselves, and yet have a secret idol in their hearts, they shall be put upon some special trial that will discover their weakness to the full.

3. That one thing which he lacked was the main thing, the principal thing of the law, which was loving God above all things; the sum of the law is, to love God above all, and our neighbours as ourselves. Now our Lord (who had power to try his love by any way he thought fit), by this particular injunction trieth him in his love to God and his neighbour. Chiefly he would convince him of want of love to God, or spiritual idolatry, making wealth his *summum bonum*, his chiefest good; this was the main thing in which he failed, and the cause of his other failings: and yet Christ doth it in such a way as to take in the other part of the precept, the love of our neighbour: 'Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor.'

4. Because the young man erred out of ignorance, Christ would not deal roughly with him, or by way of sharp reproof; he doth not rate him, and call him proud hypocrite, for saying, 'All these have I kept;' but he gently minds him of his defect, 'One thing thou lackest;' words of a mild condescension to one that was tractable. And while men are facile and teachable, we should not use roughness, but convince them of their errors by using all mildness and all condescension, as we ourselves would be dealt withal, if we lay under the power of prejudice and a dark understanding. Let this suffice from that clause; only learn from Christ's practice here, when we have to deal with such kind of men, two or three things—

[1.] That proud sinners must not be soothed up in their self-conceit, but convinced of their defects: 'One thing thou lackest.' To flatter men in their presumption is very dangerous: Luke xvi. 15, 'Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.'

[2.] That the way to convince them is by representing their principal and chief faults, some one sin; so Christ dealt with this young man, and so he deals with the woman of Samaria, convincing her of her sin, that though she had spent her time in marriage with five husbands,

yet after all this commits adultery: John iv. 18, 'Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband.' We are not to shoot at rovers, but convince those we have to do with of those sins they are most guilty of.

[3.] The more our failings strike deep upon the main articles of our obedience to God, the greater our conviction, and the more sense we should have of our condition before God. To love God above all is a fundamental article of the covenant. Now, when we are convinced that we fail in this, and want love, trust, and faith in God, we are nothing; therefore such kind of defects should make us look after our estate better.

Secondly, We come to Christ's precept, command, and injunction; and there—

First, Something of particular concernment, 'Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.' Where observe—(1.) The duty; (2.) The motive.

I. The duty, 'Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor.' The precept you see is very strict, and falls upon the heart of this young man, who was addicted to the world. 'Go,' without delay; 'sell,' not a part, but all, 'whatsoever thou hast;' and 'give,' not to thy friends that may relieve thee when thou art in straits, not to the rich that may recompense thee, but 'to the poor,' from whom thou canst look for nothing again: 'Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor.' This advice of Christ I will—(1.) Explicate; (2.) Vindicate; (3.) Improve to some practical use.

1. Explain how far this is a duty; for the misunderstanding of this sentence hath filled monasteries with monks, and deserts with anchorites. The great difficulty is, whether this be a precept or an evangelical counsel. The papists fancy some things to be evangelical counsels, that is, necessary to an higher and more perfect sort of living, which are not absolutely necessary in themselves, but counsels that he that can receive it, let him receive it, counsels of perfection, and not necessary precepts. I shall not deal with the thing in general, but only so far as it concerns this place, which, among others, is brought for this doctrine, but vainly; for the words here run in the manner of a flat and absolute precept, and not of counsel and arbitrary advice. Christ enjoins him to 'go and sell whatsoever he had;' and they are spoken in answer to his question, 'What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' And in prosecution of the debate between Christ and him, when he asked, 'What shall I do?' Christ referred him to his own covenant, or the tenor of the law: *q.d.*, thou expectest eternal life according to the covenant of works, which covenant requires thus and thus: 'Thou knowest the commandments.' To this the young man replies 'All these things have I kept, what lack I yet?' Then says Christ, 'Go sell whatsoever thou hast,' &c. Our Saviour would not contradict his own course of referring him to the covenant of works; nor would he else have spoken to the purpose, for the young man did not demand how he should attain an extraordinary state of perfection, but what he should do to be saved, or to obtain eternal life; therefore Christ would not only give him an evangelical counsel, or instruct him about an extraordinary state of perfection, but a necessary duty. Well,

then, a precept, it is not a general precept, binding all christians, for then it could not be omitted or neglected by us without sin, or without a great contempt of Christ's authority. Yea, many would sin if they should sell all, neglect their families, and cast themselves upon snares and temptations. There is no command given by Christ to all to do so, and this command obligeth none but those to whom it was given. There are some things that are due to God, *ex officio generali*, by virtue of the general duty we owe to him; some things, *ex vocatione speciali*, by special call are to be done, such was this command of our Lord, and the lawgiver had power to try this young man in anything he saw fitting. It was a personal command for trial, such as that was to Abraham, who was no more to dispute against it, but to offer Isaac, Gen. xxii. 1, 2; so this was a special command given to this young man to discover his hypocrisy, and make him sensible of his disease. The law doth not bid us sell all, but the law commands us to be ready to do the whole will of God, whatever it cost us, and condemns those evil affections and inordinate respects to temporal things which would hinder us from so doing.

2. Let me vindicate it; for it may seem in the thoughts of some as if our Lord had dealt hardly with this young man, in putting him upon so severe a trial. A young rich man comes to him with such affection, and yet for Christ to bid him sell all! But consider—

[1.] Such words and thoughts must not be heard against our sovereign Lord and lawgiver; and Christ speaks here as a *νομοθέτης*, a lawgiver, which the Ebionites could not endure, for they owned him only as a naked interpreter of the law, and therefore foisted in some passages to corrupt this part of the gospel (see Grotius). Christ hath absolute power to command. If he bid Abraham to offer up Isaac, he must do it; and the Israelites to spoil the Egyptians, it was lawful. Certainly then he that was the Lord of all might with very good reason bid this young man sell all.

[2.] Christ, who is the Wisdom of the Father, knew the best way of discovering this young man to himself, and therefore toucheth his privy sore, that, being sensible of his defect, he might know that his conceit of being perfect was but a vain dream, and it was in mercy to him to put him out of his dream.

[3.] The precept was not so hard, considering three things—

(1.) What was required of all those that were in a special manner called to be Christ's disciples, or trained up for the ministry in Christ's company, and by special converse with him. When he called any to be of his family, and to be as it were, his menial servants and constant attendants, they left all and followed him: Mat. iv. 19, 20, 'He saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men: and they straightway left their nets, and followed him;' their nets, that is, their whole estates; they had less to lose indeed than this rich man, but they could but lose their all. They that were to be trained up for the service of the gospel, were to walk up and down with Christ, and to live in an itinerary ambulatory manner, without any settled abode, and afterwards to go abroad and preach the gospel in all countries throughout the world. The possession and administration of earthly things was not consistent with their office, therefore he would have them to

leave all, and trust his providence, which, without their care and solicitude, would provide them necessaries for the present life. And if Christ would call this young ruler to the like employment, it was but convenient he should bid him sell all.

(2.) Consider, it bindeth all christians, *quoad animi affectum*, in vow, purpose, and preparation of the heart, though not actually, to leave all and follow Christ. These are not hard terms, if you consider what is required of every one that will be saved Christ doth not hide his terms from any; for what is here 'sell all, and give to the poor, and take up the cross and follow Christ,' is expressed by self-denial: Mat. xvi. 24, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.' Self-denial in effect implies as much. We should all in the preparation of our hearts follow Christ naked, destitute, and deprived of all things, and be contented so to do if he should see fit.

(3.) The precept will not seem so hard if you consider the state of that country, which was near destruction; and that was one reason why the believers in that age sold what they had, and cast all into a common bank: Acts iv. 32, 'The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, for they had all things common;' and the reason of the command Christ gives, Luke xii. 33, 'Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.' It was a prudent course, when there was such a general destruction to come upon them.

Doct. That we ought upon God's call to be ready to forsake all that we have in the world.

Here I shall—(1.) Consider when God calls us to forsake all; (2.) Why we ought to do so.

First, When God calls us to forsake all that we have; such a particular precept or command we cannot now expect. Now Christ is ascended into the heavens, and governs us not by oracle but by his word; not by his personal presence, but by his Spirit. But yet still in some cases we are to forsake all; they may be referred unto two heads—

1. When God by his providence reduceth us to a poor condition.

2. When we cannot obey any particular precept of God without danger of being undone by it.

[1.] When God by his providence reduceth us to a poor condition, either for our chastisement or our trial, then we are willingly and cheerfully to forsake all. This is no strange thing, to hear of those that have flowed in wealth, and yet by the mere providence of God (though not by their own misgovernment or default) have been reduced to great necessity. Our estates in the world are liable to many hazards, by which this may be brought about, as by fire, inundation, or hostile depredations; by state injury, false witness of others, or negligence of servants, or suretyship for friends, or oversight of reckoning, or trusting of customers, or unfaithfulness of factors, or piracy by sea; by these and many other such-like means may our estates be wasted and come to nothing, and we brought to great poverty. Job, the richest man in

the East, was brought to sit upon the dunghill. Belisarius, that great captain that had twice relieved Rome and vanquished so many enemies, was brought to beg for a halfpenny to sustain his life, *Date obolum Belisario.* Now we ought to have a ready mind, prepared for all providences; and this is the true voluntary poverty of christians, not monkish vows, but this willingness to be at God's disposing. It ought not to be sought for, but we must not be over-sorrowful if it happens, but humbly acquiesce in the will of God, and bear poverty, if laid upon us, with a constant patient mind: Job i. 21, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'

[2.] God still calls us to forsake all when we cannot obey any particular precept of God without danger of being undone by it. When God by his providence maketh it impossible for us to preserve our fidelity to him, or obedience to any known command of his, without sacrificing our interests, and parting with all that we have in the world, we must impartially perform it, and do our duty, though it be with the loss of estate and life itself: Rev. xii. 11, 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death;' Rev. ii. 10, 'Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be ye faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' And Moses, when all the pleasures and treasures he enjoyed in Pharaoh's court came once to be the pleasures of sin, and he could continue there no longer without sin, he left all: Heb. xi. 24–26, 'By faith Moses, when he came to years refused to be call 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 of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.' In these two cases we are to sell all.

Secondly, For the reasons why we must do so.

1. God hath an absolute right to all that we have by his own eminency and prerogative. He is called 'the possessor of heaven and earth,' Gen. xiv. 19, not only the maker, but the possessor. We are not lords, but only stewards: Luke xvi. 2, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' A steward must be ready to give up the estate when the supreme Lord calls for it. We have not *dominium*, the dominion and sovereignty, only *dispensationem*, a dispensation and trust; and when the supreme Lord calls for all we have, we must willingly resign all into his hands: 'I will take away my corn, my wine and my wool, and my flax, saith God,' Hosea ii. 9. Every one is allowed to do with his own as it pleaseth him. God cannot injure his creature, for when he takes these things from us, he doth but dispose of his own. The Lord of his bounty communicates many good things to us, but still he retains the dominion of them in his own hands, that he may dispose of them according to his own pleasure. If God saith, Keep, you may keep it; but if he saith, *Vade, vende omnia*, Go, sell all, who art thou, O man! that repliest upon God? We are not absolute and perpetual owners, and must part with it when the

Lord shall require it. We are not possessors, but stewards or tenants at will. God allows us to dispense and use these things for a time for his glory, and for the supply of ourselves and ours, and to do good to others; and then we are to resign and give up all again when he calls for it, or shall be pleased to take it from us by his own immediate hand, or by other means. He giveth us wealth with this condition.

2. Because it is impossible we should be christians, if we come not to Christ with this mind and resolution to forsake all for our duty to him; all hath been ratified by our own consent; see Luke xiv. 33, 'Whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' How forsake all? Not actually, but so as to be ready to forsake all if Christ please. Christians, whoever comes to Christ, he lays himself and all he hath at Christ's feet, his life, goods, and lands, to be used and disposed of as Christ shall direct, and not to take them up again but as Christ will permit; and so he forsaketh all things, though not actually, till God calls him to it, yet *preparatione animi*, in a full resolution to run all hazards and extremities that his duty to Christ shall expose him to. *Esse christianum grande, non videri;* it is a costly thing to be a christian indeed, though it seem the cheapest matter in the world. But whoever is a christian indeed makes a full and absolute resignation of himself and all he hath: 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me,' Mark x. 37. He that loveth anything more than Christ can never hold out in heaven's way. When the profession of religion grows cheap and is low, God sends some trouble or other to raise the price, that those that will go to the cost may be known what they are.

Use 1. For reproof unto two sorts—

1. Those that are so unwilling to part with a little portion of their goods, when the Lord hath need of some supply from them for his servants and their poor fellow-christians. They are so far from being content to part with all for the glory of God and good of their brethren, that they are backward, and will part with nothing for the maintenance of God's worship and relief of the poor; it must be drawn and wrung from them, as if all were lost. Men act as if their goods were at their own dispose. Oh! how dwelleth the love of God in them! 1 John iii. 17: 'Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother hath need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?'

2. It reproveth those that shift and wriggle, and dispute themselves out of their duty, and all to shake of the cross and avoid suffering; whereas they should with a ready mind take it up: Gal. vi. 12, 'As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ;' that is, they did Judaise to avoid trouble from the Jews. Though they were not guilty of a total apostasy, yet, to take off the edge of the Jews, they disputed themselves into such evil compliance. It is true to escape suffering by lawful means is commanded: Mat. x. 23, 'When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.' To remove ourselves when a storm comes, this is commanded: Prov. xxii. 3, 'A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself, but the sim-

ple pass on, and are punished.' But to do anything to prejudice the truth, to shift and turn, and all to shake off the cross, this is sinful and forbidden.

3. It reproveth those that do with such impatience suffer the loss of any outward thing, either by God's immediate providence, or by the violence of men for the profession of the truth. Oh! this should not be, but you should cheerfully and willingly yield it up to God: Lev. x. 3, 'And Aaron held his peace;' Heb. x. 34, 'Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods;' 1 Cor. vii. 30, 'We should mourn as if we mourned not.' In all worldly losses we are to show that we expect better things, and that our hearts are not here, and that we have such an esteem for Christ, that he is so worthy, and so necessary for us, that we should be glad to follow him naked.

Use 2. To press us to be of such a spirit to be willing to part with all, when Christ will have us, and when the sense of our duty and his honour requires it of us. This seems to be a hard lesson, but, to help us to learn it, something must be avoided and something considered.

1. Something must be avoided. As—

[1.] Love of the world and addictedness to the creature. We must hang loose to outward things, or we shall never be ready to forego them for Christ's sake. If there be any secret idol in your heart, God will bring it forth, and put it to the trial, whether you love him or your idol most. Now the world is a great idol to keep us from God: 1 John v. 3–5, '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. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' The connection between these verses is thus: Whoever will keep the commandment must overcome the world, which is a great let thereto; therefore we have need of a heart to look after better things, and loosen the heart from the world, which is that faith that overcometh the world. This precept is hard, but it is only to those that are wedded to present things, therefore contempt of the world and of the possessions and riches of it is necessary for all that will not make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, and render themselves incapable of the duties of their holy calling.

[2.] Distrust of God's all-sufficiency, and trust in the means, is that which makes this precept difficult. He that durst not trust in God will certainly be unfaithful to him. Here is our danger, resting in the means, as if there could be no supply but from creatures: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches.' There is the great bane of men, we cannot see how we can be well without friends, wealth, liberty, favour, preferment, and such and such revenues by the year. We would fain be on the surest side and on the gathering hand, and that is the reason it is so hard to forsake all, and trust ourselves alone with God's all-sufficiency; and therefore, if you would bring your heart hereunto, you must strengthen faith in the providence of God, and bring thy heart to lean upon that, and not inferior means, and trust him upon his word, then it will be easy. It is no unreasonable thing that I require of you, it is but that which is due to any honest man; especially if you have

had trial of him, you will trust him upon his word, even without a pawn; so you should trust God, though you can see nothing but nakedness, and poverty, and all manner of inconvenience. In time past God hath not been wanting to you, he hath given you better things, and will he deny thee daily bread?

2. Some things are to be considered, if you would thus forsake all for the discharge of a good conscience. There is God's right and our own complete resignation when we first took Christ (I suppose you have done so, or certainly you are not christians); our hopes in the world to come; heaven is worth something. But I shall pitch only upon two things—

[1.] Others have quitted wealth upon far meaner, lower, and more inconsiderable respects than you are called to do it, therefore certainly you should quit it for conscience of your duty to God. Anacreon restored five talents to Polycrates, because he was so troubled with cares about keeping of them, saying, *οὐ τιμοῦθαι ἀντὰ τῆς ἐπὶ ἀντῆς φρόντιδος*, those things were not worth the care laid out about keeping of them. Another cast his wealth into the sea, saying, *Pereas ne me perdas*—Let it perish, that it might not hinder me from the study of philosophy. Nay, men will do more for their lust. How many do sell all, and for what? To serve their vanity and lust, to keep up gaming, to please the flesh, that they may supply their riotous excess, and living beyond their compass. And shall poor base lusts, which are unreasonable, and for which God will condemn them, do more with them than the love of God with us?

[2.] Consider what you were, and within a little while what you shall be. When you came into the world, you were contented with a cradle, and when you go out of the world, you must be contented with a grave: Job i. 21, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither;' 1 Tim. vi. 7, 'For we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.' What were we? We came into the world shiftless and helpless, but God made provision for us, and hath kept us hitherto. Though you have been born of noble and rich parents and to great estates, this provision was made ready for you by God without any care of yours, and therefore if God hath taken anything away from you, *Accepit sed dedit*—He gave it at first, and God is where he was at first. Well, and what shall we be? That hath a great influence. Surely we must be naked again; death will strip us of all our comforts, therefore we do but part with that which we cannot keep, and it were better to do so than to venture your souls that must live for ever. Therefore it is not unreasonable and hard, when Christ bids us to forsake all.

I come to the second part of Christ's advice, 'Go sell all;' but he doth not stay there, 'and give to the poor.' To throw away riches as Crates did, who threw his goods and money into the sea, is no virtue, but a vain ambition; better to distribute to others what is superfluous to ourselves. Our Lord, in this injunction to the young man, doth not only require selling, but distribution, or liberality to the poor. The note is—

Doct. One special end and use unto which rich men should employ their wealth should be the help and relief of the poor.

1. In general, it is not, Give to the rich, but to the poor. Christ speaks of feasting and entertaining one another, which may have its place and time: 'When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just,' Luke xiv. 12–14. And therefore one great thing in our feasting should be to consider the poor. The sweetest influences should fall upon the lower ground. There are many that even truck with their kindnesses, but it is not charity so much as merchandise when men show respect to those that can respect them again. Oh! but do it to the poor that can make you no recompense.

2. Of the poor there are three sorts. There are *pauperes diaboli*, the devil's poor, such as have riotously spent their patrimony, and have reduced themselves to rags and beggary by their own misgovernment. These are not wholly to be excluded from our charity, when their necessity is extreme; we ought to give something to the man, though not to the sin. It may work upon them, especially when we join spiritual alms with temporal, and mind them of their sin, by which they have reduced themselves to such necessity. Again, there are *pauperes mundi*, such as come of poor parents, and live in poor estate in the world; these are to be relieved, whether they be gracious or ungracious, good or bad; for we must have 'brotherly kindness,' that is, to our fellow-saints, and 'charity;' 2 Peter i. 7, 'Add to brotherly kindness, charity.' There is a common bond of nature between them and us, they are our own flesh: Isa. lviii. 7, 'That thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh.' Then there are *pauperes Christi*, such as have suffered loss of goods for Christ's sake, or, being otherwise poor, do profess the gospel: Rom. xii. 13, 'Distributing to the necessity of saints;' and Gal. vi. 10, 'As we have therefore opportunity let us do good to all, but especially to the household of faith.' There is an order which God hath instituted; first we are to take care of our own family, children, parents, or kindred: 1 Tim. v. 8, 'If any provide not for his own, and especially for them of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' Then God hath made us stewards for strangers and foreigners. Now among strangers, those that profess the same faith with us are first to be regarded, and there especially those that best evidence the reality of their faith by a holy life; then after these we are to extend our charity to all men as occasion is offered.

Reasons of this—

[1.] Christ hath commended them to us as his proxies and deputies. He himself can receive nothing from us, being exalted into the heavens; but now, that we may not deceive ourselves with a cheap love to Christ, he hath devolved his right upon the poor as his deputies: Mat. xxvi. 11, 'Ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always.' He hath left them always with us that we may exercise our bounty towards them. We pretend very much love to Christ; if Christ were sick in bed, you would visit him; if in prison or in want, you would relieve him; what is done to one of these is done to him: Mat. xxv.

40, 'Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'

[2.] It is a great honour put upon us to be instruments of divine providence and preservation to others. God hath substituted the poor to receive, and you to give, so that you are in the place of God to relieve and comfort them. The Lord could supply them without you, but he would put the honour of the work upon you, it is the greatest resemblance of God. Our Lord hath told us, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' Acts xx. 35. More blessed, that is, more like the blessed God. Oh! it is a very great mercy to be able and to be willing to give. *Nihil habet fortuna magna majus quam ut possit, et natura bona melius quam ut velit.* It is the greatest thing in a great estate, that you are able to distribute to the necessities of others; and it is the best thing in a good-natured man, that he is willing to give. As the true advantage of wealth is in relieving others, so nothing showeth our conformity to God more: Luke vi. 36, 'Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.' It is Chrysostom's observation, Christ doth not say, If you fast, or if you pray, or if you prophesy, or if you be learned, you shall be like your heavenly Father; but if you be loving, if you be merciful, and distribute to the necessities of others, then you are like him, you hold the place of God, and are as it were a God to him.

[3.] Consider the profit of it. It seems to be a loss, but it is the most gainful trade in the world. Alas! to distribute to the poor, to scatter our substance, it is like scattering our bread upon the waters: Eccles. xi. 1, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.' There is so much profit in it, that it is the best way to keep what we have, to increase what we have, and to make it comfortable.

(1.) To keep what you have. Your goods are best secured when deposited in God's hands; you provide bags that wax not old. Many an estate in the world is blasted for want of charity, and given to the fury, depredation, and spoil of men: James v. 2, 3, 'Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten; your silver and gold is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.'

(2.) To increase it. It is compared to seed: 2 Cor. ix. 6, 'He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully.' The husbandman gets nothing by keeping his seed-corn by him. When thou givest to thy poor brother, it is said, 'The Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thy hand to,' Deut. xv. 10. All your works of liberality and mercy shall be abundantly repaid: Luke vi. 38, 'Give and it shall be given to you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto you.' See how it is expressed in many words, the more to strike upon our senses, to awaken our stupid heart. But above all, Prov. xix. 17, 'He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again.' Saith Austin, *Si vis esse mercator optimus, fenerator egregius, &c.*—Would you put out your money to the best advantage, and be true usurers indeed, lend it to the Lord; the interest shall be infinitely

greater than the principal. Never was there such usury heard of; and what better security than God's? God is a sure paymaster, and will pay you to the full, a hundred for one, which is an usury not yet heard of in the world. You can expect nothing from the poor, for they have nothing to give you; but God is their surety, he who is the great possessor of heaven and earth, that never broke his word. You have his hand and seal to show for it, his bond in the scripture, and his seal in the sacraments. You will say these are but words, but venture a little and try: Mal. iii. 10, 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open to you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' The widow's oil, the more it ran the more it increased, and the loaves multiplied by distributing; whereas, on the contrary, if you forbear to give, God will forbear to bless.

(3.) You will enjoy the remainder more comfortably. Wells are the sweeter for draining, so the oftener you are distributing and dispersing to the necessities of others, the more sweetness and the more comfort you will have in your estates. There are terrible passages in scripture against rich men, how hard it is for a rich man to be saved. It is a difficult thing for a man of an estate to get to heaven, and there is no way to free ourselves from the snare but to give alms: Luke xi. 41, 'Rather give alms of such things as you have, and behold all things are clean to you.' Then you may possess an estate with a good conscience, otherwise it will certainly prove a snare. Nay, this is the way to have the comfort of it for ever: 'Thou shalt have treasure in heaven;' whatever shift you make, be not backward in this, rather sell than not have to give. Your riches in the world leave you on this side the grave; however all your gold and silver, how much soever you have, the use of it will cease when you are laid in the grave; but here is treasure that we may have in heaven. What is that? The comfort of those estates we have charitably spent in this world: Luke xvi. 9, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations;' 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19, 'That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life.'

[4.] The necessity of it in order to your account. It is not an arbitrary thing, whether you will do this or no. God will reckon with us; one day he will ask you, What have you done with your estates? whether you 'have sowed to the flesh or to the Spirit?' Gal. vi. 8. All the world will be divided into these two ranks. Alas! what sorry accounts will they make, when so much is spent in pomp, so much in pleasure, in vain fashions, in bravery of apparel, so much in feasting, in riotous banquets and luxury, so much in plays, in cockpits, in sports, and other such kind of things, and so little or nothing on the poor! Many will spend liberally on their lusts, but hardly a penny for the relief of others; they will feed their dogs, and starve their children. Conscience will call you to an account now, much more when you shall appear before the great God at the last day. When a man is to be tried and exa-

mined for his life, it would be a great advantage to know the questions that shall be asked him beforehand. Christ hath told us beforehand the questions that shall be put to us: Mat. xxv., Have you fed, have ye visited, have ye clothed? are there none in prison to be visited? none hungry to be fed? none naked to be clothed? It is not, Have you heard? have you prophesied? have you eaten and drunk in my presence? No; but works of mercy are produced, that your faith might be found to praise and honour.

[5.] The equity of it in regard of God's mercies to us.

(1.) We have all from God: 'He giveth us richly all things to enjoy,' 1 Tim. vi. 17. Now God doth require his rent, and some acknowledgment to himself as the great landlord of the whole earth, of whom we have received, and from whom we hold all we have. Now the rent that God requires is that something should be given and distributed to the uses of the poor. When the children of Israel brought their first-fruits, wherewith the poor and widows were relieved, they were to make their acknowledgment: Deut. xxvi. 9, 10, 'The Lord hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey; and now behold I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given.' So David, 1 Chron. xxix. 12–14, 'Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, O God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name: but who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee;' and ver. 16, 'O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thy holy name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own.' Sure we received not all for ourselves, as the stomach receiveth not meat for itself, and the liver receiveth not blood for itself, but to disperse it to the rest of the body; so we are but stewards and dispensers of what we have, not proprietors.

(2.) God had pity on the lost world. Indigent creatures have not so much need of temporal relief as we had of God's sending his Son. Among all the treasures of heaven nothing is more excellent: 2 Cor. viii. 9, 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.' They are a part of our thank-offering: Heb. xiii. 15, 16, 'By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name; but to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' When he had proved Christ to be a sin-offering, he tells us that there is a thank-offering required of us. What is that? Praise and thanksgiving is one, and alms is another; these are things pleasing in the sight of God.

All this is spoken because there are so few true christians in the world, whatever feigned respects they pretend to Christ. Alas! many that have great estates, hundreds by the year, yet have not a heart to be helpful to their poor brethren and neighbours, but are very backward, full of grudging and repining when they give anything. How many are there that are liberal to their lusts, that can spend whole farms and

lordships upon gaming, drinking, riot, luxury, lawsuits, costly apparel, and bestow so little upon the poor members of Christ Jesus. Do these men believe there will be a day of judgment, and a heaven and a hell? Oh! rouse up yourselves; give, but give upon a right principle; it is not a sin-offering, but a thank-offering; and give not for self-esteem, and to be well spoken of by men: Mat. vi. 1, 'Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them;' but give in obedience to God. And for the *quantum*, how much you should give, that is not defined, but do not sow sparingly; God trusts love in the time of the gospel, therefore give not grudgingly. Draw out thy soul to the hungry: 2 Cor. ix. 7, 'Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, nor of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver.' Live honey is best, that which flows of its own accord; so myrrh that sweats out of the tree of its own accord, that is most precious. Oh! give readily to the poor, that you may have the Lord's blessing and treasure in heaven.

II. The motive, 'And thou shalt have treasure in heaven.' Thou shalt not part with thy goods, so much as change them for those that are incomparably better.

1. There is a reward for those that are faithful to the laws of Christ, and willing to lay out their estates for him; it is not cast away, but well bestowed; they sow their seed here, they shall have their harvest hereafter. The poor cannot recompense thee, and therefore God will: Luke xiv. 14, 'Thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.' A cup of cold water is a small thing, yet it shall not want its reward: Mat. x. 42, 'And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.'

2. This reward is propounded to encourage us. Christ not only instructs us by commands, but allures us by promises. There is a dispute whether we may look to the reward. I say not only we may, but we must; the oftener we look to heaven, the better we shall forego present things.

3. Our reward in heaven is called 'treasure,' something that is not only answerable to what we quit for Christ, but it far exceeds it. It is called, Eph. i 18, 'The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' We shall have true riches instead of transitory, which we cannot long keep, and eternal riches that will ever last. Our treasure in heaven is more precious and more certain: Mat. vi. 19, 20, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.'

4. This reward is not only in this life, but in the life to come. The worldling is 'rich in this world,' 1 Tim. vi. 17. The believer hath treasure in heaven. Let gentiles seek earthly things, that have not a right to heavenly. Bracelets of copper, glass beads, and little bells, and such like trifles are valued by rude barbarians, that are contemptible with us. The use and valuation of earthly things in the world to come ceaseth, it only holdeth on this side the grave; and therefore the great

business of christians should be to make over their estates into heaven, that they might receive it by exchange there; for though the use of it ceaseth on the other side of the grave, yet we may have the comfort of it for everlasting.

SERMON VII.

And come, take up the cross, and follow me.—MARK x. 21.

SECONDLY, Having done with the particular precept, I come to the general precept given to this young man, 'Come, take up the cross, and follow me.' The duty that is enjoined is double—the one an help to the other, and the one necessarily follows the other, 'Take up the cross, and follow me.' Whoever follows Christ must prepare his shoulders for the cross, for without taking up the cross we shall never follow Christ to any purpose. 'Take up the cross;' it is an allusion to the punishments that were in use when Christ lived in the world; the malefactors bore their own cross to the place of execution, and then they were nailed to it alive; so let him reckon upon that, he must bear his cross. 'And follow me;' there is a twofold following of Christ—special and general.

1. Special, as those disciples that were his menial servants, of his own family, trained up for the ministry; these did follow Christ up and down, because they were chosen witnesses, and were to be conscious and privy unto all his actions, that they might better give an account of them to the world: Acts i. 21, 22, 'Wherefore, of those which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.' And so 'follow me' is, Come, take lot and share with me, abide with me, be my disciple.

2. The phrase bears a more general sense: John xii. 26, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me;' and so to follow Christ is either to take his direction or imitate his example.

[1.] When we take his direction. We are said to follow Christ when we take him for our Lord and master, and live according to his holy doctrine. As they that have such a one for their master in any sect of philosophy are said to follow him, so they that take Christ for their teacher, as the great prophet of the church, herein they follow him: Mat. xvii. 5, 'Hear ye him.'

[2.] We are said to follow Christ when we imitate his example; as 1 Cor. xi. 1, 'Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.'

From the words thus explained, three points of doctrine may be gathered—

(1.) In order to eternal life, it is required that a man should not only sell all and give to the poor, but that he should follow Christ, or enter himself as one of his disciples.

(2.) Whosoever entereth himself as one of his disciples, and gives up his name to Christ, must follow him or imitate his example.

(3.) All those that would follow Christ must prepare their shoulders for the cross.

Doct. 1. In order to eternal life it is required, not only that a man should sell all and give to the poor, but that he should follow Christ, or enter himself as one of his disciples.

Here I shall inquire what it is, and why it is necessary.

First, What it is to enter ourselves as one of Christ's disciples? I shall lay no other duty upon you than what you are engaged unto by your baptism; therefore I shall only explain what your baptism binds you to, which is a bond upon you to enter yourselves as Christ's disciples. It is a renouncing all other lords and masters, a choosing Christ, and believing in him alone for salvation, and a resigning up ourselves to do his will.

1. A renouncing all other lords and masters which are opposite to Christ, viz., the devil, the world, and the flesh. The devil: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.' Before there is any entrance into the kingdom of Christ there is a translating from the power of darkness; that I take to be the power of the devil. The world: Gal. vi. 14, 'The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.' Then for the flesh: Rom. viii. 12, 'We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.' In our natural state we are under the power of all these three, as it is set forth: Eph. ii. 2, 3, 'Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom we had all our conversation in time past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind.' There are all the three enemies of our salvation that must be renounced mentioned. There is the custom and corrupt course of the world. Alas! the generality of the world live a sensual, flesh-pleasing life, that was their rule; and the prince of the power of the air, that was their guide; and the flesh, or the bent of corrupt nature, that was their principle. While we are in our corrupt state, the devil hath power to rule us, and the example and common customs of the world doth encourage us, and corrupt nature within doth strongly urge us to sin against God. And therefore, when we do indeed enter ourselves the disciples of Christ, these enemies of his and ours must be renounced, that we may have another rule, another lord, and another principle. Another rule, which is the law of God; another Lord, which is Jesus Christ; another principle, which is the Spirit of Christ dwelling and working in us. There must be first an emptying of heart before it can be filled with grace. There must be a dispossessing of those strong and cursed inmates that have such hand and power over us, that Christ alone may rule and govern us.

2. There must be a believing in Christ, or a resting upon him alone for salvation. When the eunuch offered himself to be baptized, Philip tells him, 'If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest; and he answered, and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,' Acts viii. 37. Faith in the Son of God is the great qualification necessary

to Christ's disciples, that as they forsake the devil, the pomps and vanities of the world, and the inclinations of the flesh, so they may cleave to him alone as Lord and Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins to his people: Acts v. 31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.'

3. It is required that we resign up ourselves to do his will, and walk according to his directions, if we would be Christ's disciples; for otherwise we do but give him an empty title, and we may as much mock him as the Roman soldiers did, that put a robe upon him, and cried, 'Hail, king of the Jews.' When we cry him up as our Lord and Saviour, and do not resign up ourselves to his use and service, we mock him as they did. Take three scriptures to prove this: Luke vi. 46, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' *Cui res nomini subjecta negatur, is nomine illuditur*—Tertullian. It is a mockage to give Christ a title, and deny him the duty which belongs to it. The greatest part of the christian world live in a bare outward profession of Christ's name, without any care and conscience to walk answerably; they seem to have renounced the devil, the world, and the flesh, but their hearts are in a secret league with them still; they call Christ Lord and Saviour, but do not rest upon him for salvation, nor obey him, therefore this will be of no use to them as to eternal life. So 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 that is in heaven.' Though we profess christianity, and seem to have a great respect to Christ's memory, yet without the practice of faith and obedience, we shall have no benefit by Christ, and shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven. Only those who, being condemned by the law, fly to Christ by faith, and study to bring forth the fruits of newness of life, shall be saved by him. Again, John viii. 31, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.' There are disciples in name, and there are Christ's disciples indeed, such as are so in truth, life, and practice. Whatever privileges men may have by their outward profession and show, yet they have no ground of solid comfort till they persevere to walk according to Christ's direction, and continue in his word. Thus when we renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and cleave to Christ as prince and saviour, and resign up ourselves to his use, when this is done in reality, then do we enter ourselves indeed to be his disciples. This is implied in our baptism, as in the primitive times, when they did ἀναθεματίζειν ἑαυτοὺς τῷ Θεῷ (as Justin Martyr phraseth it), they did solemnly renounce Christ's enemies, and profess to choose him for their Lord and master, and yielded up themselves to be guided by him in his own way to heaven. And the apostle telleth us, 1 Peter iii. 21, 'Baptism saveth us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God;' that is, an hearty acceptance of God's offers, and an engagement in his strength to do his commandments.

Secondly, Why this is necessary beyond alms and all other amiable qualities?

1. Because heathens and men of a false religion may excel in charity and other moralities, and yet without true grace they are

nothing. The apostle tells us, 'The gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law,' Rom. ii. 14; and that they excelled in charity as well as other things, appears by Titus iii. 14, 'Let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses.' Who are they that he calls 'ours also?' Compare it with ver. 8, 'That they which have believed in God be careful to maintain good works;' that is, those of our religion, as well as the Jews and pagans. The gentiles were much given to charity. Paul saith, Acts xxviii. 2, 'The barbarous people showed us no little kindness.' Mercy had an altar in every city of Greece. The Alkoran of the Turks says, that if men knew what a pleasant thing it was to give alms, rather than want somewhat to give, they would slice out their own flesh. So that the gentiles, and men not under the institution of Christ, those that are without the covenant and promise and grace, may be addicted to alms. But now all this is nothing without true grace: 1 Cor. xiii. 3, 'Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' A man would think there were a contradiction in the apostle's speech; for how can one bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and yet want charity? If this be not charity, what is? I would not interpret it, If I bestow all my goods upon the poor hypocritically, for it is a hard thing to conceive hypocrisy should go to such a length; but there is the grace of charity, and the natural amiable quality of charity. If a man have not a renewed heart, if it be a mere natural motion, without spiritual grace (and that cannot be till they enter themselves disciples to Christ in the way spoken of), it is nothing. The apostle commends the Macedonians, that were a poor people, yet did exceedingly stretch themselves to contribute to the poor saints at Jerusalem: 2 Cor. viii. 5, 'And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.' And here was the true method, before they gave their goods, they offered their hearts to God, they gave up themselves to the Lord Christ to be his disciples, they entered themselves into his service. This is the true fountain of charity, and then it comes to something.

2. There is need of faith in Christ in order to our acceptance with God, and reconciliation with him; and therefore all the good works we do will not profit us till we become disciples of Christ. Why? Till we believe, his atonement and reconciliation is not reckoned to us, for the gifts of enemies are giftless and unacceptable. Since the fall there is no way of acceptance with God till we change our copy and come to claim by a new covenant. Nothing will render us acceptable to God but complete innocence, or else repentance and faith in Christ. While we stand upon our own bottom, alas! the least failing is damnable, and spoils all the good we do; for 'without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. xi. 6; Rom. viii. 8, 'They that are in the flesh cannot please God.'

Use. To show the necessity of becoming the disciples of Christ, that you may not satisfy yourselves with anything you do without it or beneath it, till you have taken Christ for your Saviour.

But you will say, What need this ado? We are christians; are not we dedicated to his service, baptized in his name? I answer three things—

1. There is the more need of entering yourselves disciples of Christ because you are baptized, that you may fill up your baptism with answerable duty. The apostle Paul presseth to put on Christ: Rom. xiii. 14, 'But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ;' and that because they had put on Christ: Col. iii. 10, 'Seeing ye have put on the new man.' We are more engaged by our profession and covenant sealed in baptism; if we have put on Christ sacramentally, we must put him on really: Rom. vi. 11, 'Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' And indeed this is so far from being an objection, that it binds us the more strongly. However God may deal with infidels, to be sure it will not fare well with you if you mock God with an empty formality, and put him off with a baptismal regeneration, without a real regeneration, if ye put on Christ in profession, and do not really put him on, and know his grace in truth. All are engaged the more strongly that live in the church, not only by the common necessity that is upon all mankind of running to a redeemer, but because of their profession: Rom. vi. 3–5, 'Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death: therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto 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.'

2. In baptism you were entered by others, therefore in grown years you must enter yourselves by your own consent disciples of Christ. There is a personal act required of all that come to age, that they may stand to the covenant, and own what their parents promised for them. As the parents of the blind man said, John ix. 21, 'He is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself.' You did by your parents, according to God's institution, covenant to renounce the pomps and vanities of the world, and accept of Christ, but now you are of age, you must speak for yourselves; then every one must come with his own hand, and enter themselves into God's muster-roll: Isa. xliv. 3–5, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring, &c. One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.' As they grow up they shall engage themselves unto the Lord. Therefore christianity is called a confession, and Jesus Christ is called 'the apostle and high priest of our profession,' Heb. iii. 1; and every christian is a confessor: Rom. x. 9, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth,' &c.; one that must openly own Christ, and personally profess his subjection to the gospel of Christ: 2 Cor. ix. 13, 'They glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ.' Our renunciation of Christ's enemies, and profession of our faith and resignation to God, should be made with our own mouths when we are able.

3. This personal consent must not only be outwardly professed, but the heart must be renewed, and the bent of it set towards God; for we have not only to do with men, but with God; therefore, Rom. vi.

13, 'Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.' All this is spoken to show the vanity of those that say that there is no conversion in the church, no regeneration but by baptism; these are pernicious errors, that strike at the root of holiness. As there is a conversion from paganism to profession, or confession of the name of Christ, so there is a conversion from confession to reality. We are all bound to enter ourselves as Christ's disciples.

Doct. 2. They that enter themselves disciples to Christ and give up themselves to him must follow him, that is to say, imitate his example.

Reasons.

1. In the general, because this is agreeable to the general sense of religion that is in the hearts of all men. *Ea demum vera est religio imitari quem colis*—This is true religion to imitate what we worship; otherwise men are not true to the religion they do profess. The heathens were so bad, because they were taught *Jovem colere potius quam Catonem,* to worship Jupiter rather than Cato. So christians are to be much better, because it is Christ whom they worship; therefore they are to be pure as he is pure: 1 John iii. 3, 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as he is pure.' A man is not true to his religion if he doth not prize that, and follow after that which he conceits to be most excellent in his god. To despise holiness in men, and pretend to love it in God, is gross hypocrisy. Reason will tell us that the first cause should be the highest rule, that the divine essence and being, as it is the beginning of all beings, so it should be the rule of all perfections.

2. There are many special reasons why Christ should be propounded to us as our pattern and example whom we should follow and imitate.

[1.] Because he is a pattern of holiness set up in our nature. It would discourage us to consider of the deep ocean of the deity; rather we are taught to coast it in our passage to heaven by the banks of Christ's example. He came down from God not only to restore us to God's favour, but to set us an example: 1 Peter ii. 21, 'Leaving us an example that we should follow his steps.' The life of Christ is a living rule, religion exemplified, a visible commentary on God's law. The angels obey God, and we are referred to their example in the Lord's prayer, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven;' but this could not be so encouraging as when it is done by one in our nature.

[2.] Because there are many advantages by this pattern in our nature; as—

(1.) Our pattern is more complete than if God had been our pattern. There are some graces wherein we cannot be said to resemble God, and therefore we must look for a pattern elsewhere, as humility, faith, fear, hope, reverence, obedience; none of these things are in God, for he hath no superior, and these things imply inferiority and subjection. There are some parts of holiness which stand in a conformity to God, others which stand in a subjection to God, such as man oweth to God as his superior, which hath no resemblance to anything in God's nature, for God is not subject to any; but knowledge, wisdom, justice, mercy, love, purity, we have them in a lower degree, some shadow of them. Now in all these Christ is our pattern: Mat. xi. 29, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart;' in all things that have respect to

suffering and subjection, in patience and self-denial. Our rule was perfect at first, but not our pattern.

(2.) It is an engaging pattern. We are engaged by the rule of our obedience, but much more by Christ's example. The practice of Christ maketh every duty lovely to us, for the disciple is not above his Lord. Masters many times, to shame their servants, will take the work in hand which they grudge at: John xiii. 14, 'If I then, your Lord and master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet.' Shall we forbear to follow such a leader?

(3.) It is an encouraging pattern, partly as there is an efficacy in this pattern; as with the gospel or law of Christ there goeth along the ministration of the Spirit, so also with the consideration of his example. It is not a bare moral inducement, but it is accompanied with a real influence of the Spirit. Christ doth not only bless to us his doctrine, but his example; he hath purchased grace that we may do as he hath done before us; he hath divided his Spirit, and shed it abroad among his disciples. Every duty is sanctified by his subjection to it; all his paths drop fatness, and the way to heaven is made more easy because he hath walked in it before us. Partly as it assureth us of his sympathising with us in our hard service; he knoweth the weaknesses of human nature, and its reluctancies to the law of God. Christ 'learned obedience by the things that he suffered,' Heb. v. 8; and having experienced the hardships of suffering, his heart is entendered towards those that are in the like case: Heb. ii. 18, 'For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' Partly because of the perfection of his obedience to cover our infirmities. God hath had full obedience from Christ, and therefore where a poor soul doth its utmost, it can rely on God for acceptance, which is a great encouragement in our work: Rom. v. 19, 'By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.'

Use. To persuade us to follow Christ.

1. Our general profession of being christians doth oblige us to be like him; head and members should be all of a piece. If we take the name of Christ upon us, we had need express him to the life: 1 Peter ii. 9, 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' If a man should put your name to the picture of a swine, you would account it a disgrace. Oh! what an affront is it to Christ to put his name to the picture and image of the devil! We do but express him in scorn and contempt. When we are wrathful, unclean, covetous, unchaste, sensual, proud, unholy, and say we are christians, what a dishonour, scorn, and contempt do we put upon Christ! What did the heathens say heretofore? *Estimari a cultoribus potest ipse qui colitur*—You may know what one he is whom they worship by them that worship him. We profess to bear the image of Christ, yet are vain, turbulent, carnal, unthankful, unholy. Oh! what is this but to carry the name of Christ in disgrace up and down the world?

2. We shall never be like him in glory unless we be like him in grace also: Rom. viii. 29, 'For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.' Here the

foundation is laid. If you would appear before God with confidence, and not be ashamed at the great day, be like to him, then you shall have boldness: 1 John iv. 17, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in the world.' Otherwise how can we look him in the face? Therefore let us follow him, *assequi nunquam possumus, sequi tamen nunquam desinamus.* Though we cannot follow him as Asahel did Abner, close at the heels, yet let us follow him however, though it be but as Peter followed Christ, afar off, to the high priest's hall.

But wherein should we follow Christ? I answer—

[1.] In his self-denial. This is the first lesson in christianity, and one of the hardest. Christ came from heaven to teach us this lesson; and his birth, life, and death was a continual lecture of self-denial. His birth, it was a great step from God's bosom to the virgin's lap. None can deny themselves as Christ, who, when 'he was rich,' viz., in all the fulness and glory of the Godhead, 'yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich,' 2 Cor. viii. 9. None was so rich as Christ, and therefore none can deny themselves as Christ did. We may talk of flocks and herds, and lands and lordships, and the ornaments of the present life, but he had the possession of a perfect and unbounded happiness and glory, and yet he was born of a woman, he had a poor mother, in a poor place, and was wrapt up in cheap swaddling clothes. He that was God's fellow, the heir of all things, the Lord of angels, was thrust among the beasts of the stable. Certainly Christ came into the world with such a slender provision that we might not stand upon greatness and bravery. His whole life after he was born was exercised with labours and sorrows: Rom. xv. 3, 'Even as Christ pleased not himself;' that is, he did not study the interest of that life which he assumed. Certainly if any had cause to love life, Christ had; his soul dwelt with God in a personal union, in such a near fellowship as we are not capable of, and yet he pleased not himself, but gave up himself for our sins. It is ridiculous to profess him to be our master and not to follow his example. We have no reason to stand upon our points as we do, to be delicate and tender of our interests, when Jesus Christ pleased not himself. We murmur if we have but a little bad entertainment in the world for his sake, and yet we cannot be worse used than Christ was: Mat. x. 24, 25, 'The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.' We have no cause to complain if we be reduced to coarse apparel, when we remember the swaddling clothes of Christ; or to complain of a hard bed and prison when Christ, was laid in a manger. Christ would teach us hereby that an innocent poverty is better than all the pomp of the world. And for his sufferings, from the cratch to the cross, still he was a pattern of self-denial; therefore they that indulge themselves in all the delights of the flesh seem not to believe in Christ, who was a man of sorrows. We are in a base condition, but two or three degrees distant from dust or nothing, yet how are we for pleasing and satisfying ourselves, even to the dishonour of God, and wrong of conscience!

[2.] In his humility. Christ did not this out of necessity, but choice: Mat. xx. 28, 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to

minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' He came not in the pomp and equipage of princes, but in the form of a servant. How should this check aspiring after and affecting domination, especially in the church. They that love pre-eminence, and would be great and high, seem to affect another Jesus. They that rend and tear all to pieces, either to uphold their greatness or grow greater, have not the same mind that was in Jesus. You should be humble and lowly, and condescending to the meanest offices. It is worth your observation, that in the gospel we are so often told that, after the Lord Jesus had performed some eminent miracle, he withdrew himself, and retired from the multitude, that so he might not be mixed with their praises. Thus when he received that glorious testimony from heaven, declaring him to be the Son of God: Mat. iii. 17, 'And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' he retired into the wilderness. So when he had raised his fame by curing diseases, he ascended up into a mountain, or retired into a ship, and leaves the multitude; and when they would have crowned him king, he refused it: all these were arguments and instances of his humility. Hear and wonder at what you read: John. xiii. 3, 'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.' A magnificent preface! Now one would have thought that some rare act of empire, sovereignty, and dominion should have followed. No; ver. 4, 5, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash his disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. The disciples did not wash the feet of their Lord, but the Lord washed the disciples' feet; and what was the meaning of this? See ver. 15, 'For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.'

[3.] In love to the saints: John xiii. 34, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another;' and John xv. 12, 'This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.' Oh! how express are these injunctions. There is nothing in which Christ was more eminent than in his love; no rancour of spirit, no boiling up of envy, but all love. The apostle propounds it to husbands: Eph. ii. 25, 'Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church.' Now how did Christ love his church? With a great love, so as to die for his church. The love of Christ was sincere, not for by-ends; he loved saints as saints, because of his interest in them. So should we love those in whom we see most of the image of God. It was not a blaze, but a constant abiding love; whom he loves he loves unto the end; so must we love the saints. It is true Jesus loved some above others: 'John was the beloved disciple,' John xxi. 20. There was ἐκλέκτων ἐκλεκτότεροι, the flower of the disciples, whom he loved most, but he loved them all. We should love not in word, but in deed and in truth. Oh! be filled with love to God and love to the saints, who have his image stamped upon them. You that are believers have cause to love one another. Have we not all the same Father? Are we not children begotten of the same holy seed, the word? Do we not all suck at the same

breasts of the promises? Do we not all sit at the same table, at the Lord's supper? Are we not all clothed with the same robe of Christ's righteousness? and do we not all expect the same glory?

[4.] In his usefulness and profitableness, and of this the whole gospel is a narrative and history. Therefore when the apostle would sum up the life of Christ, he tells us this, Acts x. 38, 'He went about doing good, giving eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, speech to the dumb, healing every sickness, and every disease among the people,' Mat. ix. 35. Full of compassion to the souls of men, Jesus Christ was nothing else but charity covered over with flesh and blood; he was always either giving of blessings or forgiving of sins. All his miracles were not actions of pomp, but of relief and succour, unless it were blasting the fig-tree and sending the herd of swine into the sea, and the fig-tree was barren and the swine was of little use in the Jewish countries. All the miracles of Christ were salutary and healing. We never read he destroyed one man by his miracles, but saved many: Eph. v. 1, 2, 'Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.' Oh! that we could learn this! None is born for himself, but for the community, and it is better to give than to receive.

[5.] In his piety towards God. If you consider the history of Christ, you will find him much in acts of devotion; he was frequent, and fervent, and reverent in prayer. Frequent: Mark i. 35, 'And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed;' and Luke vi. 12, 'He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.' Alas! we are weary in our ordinary stinted offices of the day. How soon do we grow weary of calling upon God! but Christ spends whole nights in prayer. He was fervent: Luke xxii. 44, 'And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly.' And he was reverent; when he was in the garden, 'he kneeled down and prayed,' Luke xxii. 41; 'And he fell on his face, and prayed,' Mat. xxvi. 39. He was a most diligent observer of the sabbath: Luke iv. 16, 'As his custom was, he went into the synogogue on the Sabbath-day;' he was diligent in frequenting the public assemblies. Oh! how doth this confute those that, out of height of spirit and a proud conceit of themselves, are above ordinances, and say they were appointed only for christians of the lower form. He praised God for mean and coarse fare, when he had but five barley loaves and two fishes: 'He took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples,' John vi. 11. Alas! when our tables are full furnished we have scarce any serious thoughts of God, that giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

[6.] In his spirituality and heavenly-mindedness. Christ came from heaven, and he lived in heaven all the while he was upon the earth. When he was at the well of Samaria, conferring with the woman there, he discourseth of the well that springs up to everlasting life: John iv. 14, 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' He drew her from a discourse of ordinary water to a discourse of the water of life. When he was at supper at the pharisee's house, he discourseth of eating bread in God's

kingdom: Luke xiv. 15, 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.' When he had wrought the miracle of the loaves, he discourseth of the bread of life and the manna that came down from heaven: John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.' When he was at the feast of tabernacles, where they were wont to pour out water, and so to make a pool near the temple, he discourseth of rivers of water and of the flowings of the Spirit: John vii. 38, 39, 'He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.' A rare pattern for us to follow. We should labour as to see all things in God, so to see God in all things, and to be heavenly-minded in all our enjoyments.

[7.] In his obedience to his mean earthly parents. Do you think this is a slight matter? Christ was God blessed for evermore, yet he submitted to his poor parents. It is said, Luke ii. 51, 'He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.' Though his parents were mean and despicable, yet he was subject to them, and (as it is most probable) he wrought in their mean trade; for the Jews said, Mark vi. 3, 'Is not this the carpenter?' Not only the carpenter's son, but the carpenter; and Justin Martyr says, he was employed in making of yokes and ploughs. The great God becoming man, was subject to his parents. What a lesson hath Christ set to children! Whatever you be, you can be no greater than Christ, and your parents can hardly be meaner than Joseph, and will you be stubborn and disobedient, and rather govern than be subject.

[8.] In the sweetness and beauty of his conversation, and yet in a strict and winning way. Many men's troubles come from themselves; they are rough and sour, and do not walk amiably. There is a great deal of wisdom required of christians, that they should walk so strictly, and yet so pleasingly, that they may both represent and endear their religion to others. As it is said of Athanasius, that he was *magnes et adamas;* he was a loadstone to draw the hearts of the people, and an adamant in the resistance of sin. But what do I speak of Athanasius, when a greater than Athanasius is here? Jesus Christ did so sweetly dispose himself in all kind of conversation, that he grew up into favour both with God and man: Luke ii. 52, 'And Jesus increased in wisdom, and in stature, and in favour with God and man.' The meaning of which is this, the Lord Jesus was always perfect, and full of holiness, and not capable to receive more than he had; but he growing from a child to a man, he grew more in wisdom and favour with God and man. As for example, suppose the sun in the firmament were a vegetative and growing creature, it would be full of light the first moment of its creation, yet growing bigger, its light would increase, though it were always full; so Christ was always full of knowledge and full of grace, yet according to his receptivity and capacity, so was grace conveyed to him. How many are there that decline, and pass from zeal to lukewarmness, from exactness in the ways of God to liberty and licentiousness! This is to be a falling star, and to imitate the apostate angels, who fell from the state of purity and blessedness in which they were to a state of sin and misery. But Christ increased

in grace, and in favour with God and men; it was a high point of wisdom in Christ so to carry all things that he might gain upon all that he conversed with.

[9.] In the holiness and purity of his life. Though he lived in the midst of enemies that hated him, and were watchful and malicious to spy out all occasions against him, yet saith he, John viii. 46, 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' The devils themselves acknowledge his holiness: Mark i. 24, 'I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.' The apostle telleth us, Heb. iv. 15, 'He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin;' and 1 John iii. 5, 'In him is no sin;' and 1 Peter ii. 22, 'Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.' He took upon him our natural, but not our sinful infirmities. Christ took the nature without the sin of the nature; the sun of righteousness was like the beams of the sun, that shines all over a sinful world without being tainted with its pollution: Heb. vii. 26, 'Such an high priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.' Christ suffered the torments of hell, at least equivalently, to free us from hell; yet he would not, nor could, commit the least sin, though it had been to free all men that ever had been in the world. Now, 'as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation,' 1 Peter i. 15. Imitate Christ in his holiness, which was a part of his glory, and will be of yours: Mat. v. 8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Here we should be walking pictures of Christ, that others may see the face of Christ in us. Tread in his steps. Live so holily, that if the bible should be lost, it may be found again in our holy lives.

[10.] In his wonderful patience and meekness. Never any suffered so much, and never any suffered so patiently. How much wrong do others do, but will suffer none! and how much wrong did Christ suffer, but did none! 1 Peter ii. 23, 'Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously;' Isa. liii. 7, 'He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth;' and Isa. l. 6, 'I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.' Job, though a pattern of patience, yet in the extremity of his afflictions fell into impatience, and cursed the day of his birth; but there was no iniquity in Christ, no guile found in his mouth, not one impatient word fell from him; he was made up all of patience. Now in this should the saints imitate Christ: Rom. xii. 12, 'Be patient in tribulation.' The example of Christ's meekness should be the great allay to us when we are transported with the gusts of passion. What an unconformity is there between Christ and us, when there are such mists raised in the soul that the light of reason cannot be seen! Men drunk with passion, how unconformable are they to the meekness of our Saviour! Christ rendered sweet language for bitter, blessings for curses. Did Christ do so? so should christians.

[11.] In love to his enemies. Take that eminent example of Christ, who died for enemies: Rom. v. 10, 'When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.' As for those enemies which

were the instruments of his death, which shed his blood, yet when he was upon the cross, he breathed forth his soul in prayer for them: Luke xxiii. 34, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' He would give his enemies the morning-market of the gospel. He gave his disciples charge to go abroad into the world, 'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem,' Luke xxiv. 47; there where his blood was shed, there would he have the virtue and comfort of it preached. And the apostle presseth this same duty upon us from this example of Christ: Col. iii. 13, 'Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.' We are of touchy, spiteful, revengeful spirits, and cannot pass by the least wrong, and think it a disgrace so to do; we think a man is a dolt, and hath no mettle in him, if he be not presently heated into a distemper; but Solomon says, Prov. xix. 11, 'The discretion of a man defers his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.' This was the temper of Christ, to exercise love and tender affection to his enemies. Now, if we imitate Christ in these hings, then are we christians and disciples indeed.

END OF VOLUME XVI.

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